

14/00206/FUL**BELL HOUSE HIGH STREET GREAT WAKERING****REPLACE EXISTING TIMBER WINDOWS WITH UPVC
DOUBLE GLAZED WINDOWS**APPLICANT: **SANCTUARY HOUSING GROUP**ZONING: **RESIDENTIAL**PARISH: **GREAT WAKERING**WARD: **FOULNESS AND GREAT WAKERING**

In accordance with the agreed procedure this item is reported to this meeting for consideration.

This application was included in Weekly List No.1235 requiring notification of referrals to the Head of Planning and Transportation by 1.00 pm on Wednesday, 28 May 2014 with any applications being referred to this meeting of the Committee. The item was referred by Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins.

The item that was referred is appended as it appeared in the Weekly List, together with a plan.

1 NOTES

- 1.1 Bell House is a sheltered housing complex situated in the centre of Great Wakering. It is located on the southern side of the High Street on the corner of Crouchmans Avenue. The site abuts the Conservation Area with the Grade II listed White Hart public house neighbouring the site to the east.
- 1.2 The property gained planning consent in 1979 and is constructed primarily of yellow brick with rendered and weather boarded sections. It is two storeys and has a lengthy 67m frontage onto the High Street. This long section has two shorter wings extending off it to the rear providing six main elevations to the building.
- 1.3 An application has previously been submitted to replace the windows. The application, reference 12/00378/FUL, was refused on 8 August 2012 for the following reasons:-
 1. This visually dominant building is positioned immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area and a Listed Building where the use of uPVC

windows will fail to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area and will detract from the setting of the Listed Building. The design of the windows in particular the inevitable wider uPVC frames and appearance of the material itself is considered inappropriate and would result in an unsatisfactory appearance detrimental to the area generally and in particular to the adjacent Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Building contrary to policy BC1 to the saved Rochford District Council replacement Local Plan (2006).

2. The proposal requires the comprehensive replacement of the existing windows but insufficient information has been provided to justify the loss of the existing windows and their wholesale replacement, that if allowed, would substitute windows of an inferior design, materials and appearance to the detriment of the character and appearance of the adjacent Great Wakering Conservation Area and the setting of the adjacent Listed Building.
- 1.4 The proposal is to replace all the existing windows and glazed doors, which are single glazed and wooden framed, with double glazed uPVC windows and glazed doors of a similar style and similar mahogany colour. There are approximately 170 windows and openings spread across the six elevations of the building. There would be no difference to the size of the window openings although double glazed uPVC windows typically have thicker frames than single glazed wooden frames.
 - 1.5 The applicant has submitted a supporting statement to justify the development proposal. The windows are those originally fitted when the building was constructed in the 1980s and with a typical life expectancy of 30-40 years for such materials have reached the end of their anticipated life. The majority of windows are stated to be in poor decorative condition, many showing signs of rot. Internally many of the seals have failed making the windows draughty and thermally inefficient, subsequently providing an uncomfortable living environment and increased fuel bills for the elderly residents. The replacement of the windows would reduce the heating bills for all 41 residents and Sanctuary Housing Group who are responsible for heating communal areas. The uPVC window and doors would also assist in reducing the ongoing maintenance cost for the social landlord as wooden windows would typically require ongoing decoration every five years. It is also cited that the replacement would provide greater security and a safer living environment for residents.
 - 1.6 The Conservation Area Adviser does not consider that the use of uPVC windows in this location would help preserve the character of the Conservation Area or improve the setting of the Listed Building. The Adviser considers that if replacements are required to the public realm and Listed Building elevations they should be of timber or metal to match the originals although the use of uPVC at the rear of the building may be acceptable, where it would not be seen in connection with any conservation issues.

- 1.7 The application is supported by a petition from 20 residents of Bell House in support of the replacement proposals. It is further cited by residents that the windows are rotten and provide no insulation from the cold as they are single glazed. Furthermore, cleaning the windows causes many residents to get splinters in their hands. It is also cited that the doors provide minimal security for residents.
- 1.8 The application is for the same development as that previously refused, however, additional information has been submitted to justify the replacement of the windows, as well as a petition in support of the proposal. The replacement of the wooden windows is not considered objectionable but the use of uPVC, as cited in reason 1 of the previous refusal, remains an inferior and inappropriate material for a building of significant size in a location at the entrance to the Conservation Area and next to a Listed Building, which would neither preserve or enhance the setting. Although sympathetic to the needs of the applicant's desire to provide a cost effective replacement and the need to enhance the security and living conditions of existing residents it is not considered that these factors justify an unwelcome and inappropriate form of development in a sensitive location. It is considered that the use of timber or aluminium frames of suitable design would be more appropriate, especially for the elevations fronting the public realm and Listed Building..

2 REPRESENTATIONS

- 2.1 ECC HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION - This building is immediately outside the Conservation Area boundary but, because of its considerable size, it has a considerable impact on the appearance of the High Street and the Conservation Area beyond. It also lies adjacent to a listed pub.
- 2.2 I appreciate that the existing windows are in need of replacement/repair for both visual and functional reasons. I could have no objections to their being replaced with double-glazed units, but I do not consider that uPVC would be an acceptable material for use where there are conservation considerations. New window units, where they would have any impact on the character and appearance of the CA, should be of either timber or metal. There may be a case to be made here for the use of uPVC for the rear windows, however.
- 2.3 The application contains inadequate detailed information about the design of the proposed windows themselves. The tiny manufacturers' drawings merely show the glazing patterns. Where an application is solely for windows, large scale, detailed designs of the window types should be presented.
- 2.4 For the above reasons, I cannot recommend permission for this application.
- 2.5 RESIDENTS - A petition in support of the application has been signed by 20 residents of Bell House.

2.6 MP CORRESPONDENCE - A letter has been received from James Duddridge MP stating that he has met with a number of residents at Bell House regarding their desire for replacement windows.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That planning permission be refused for the following reason:-

- (1) This visually dominant building is positioned immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area and a Listed Building where the use of uPVC windows will fail to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area and will detract from the setting of the Listed Building. The design of the windows, in particular the inevitable wider uPVC frames and appearance of the material itself, is considered inappropriate and would result in an unsatisfactory appearance detrimental to the area generally and in particular to the adjacent Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Building



Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning and Transportation

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

HP6, BC1, of the Rochford District Council Adopted Replacement Local Plan

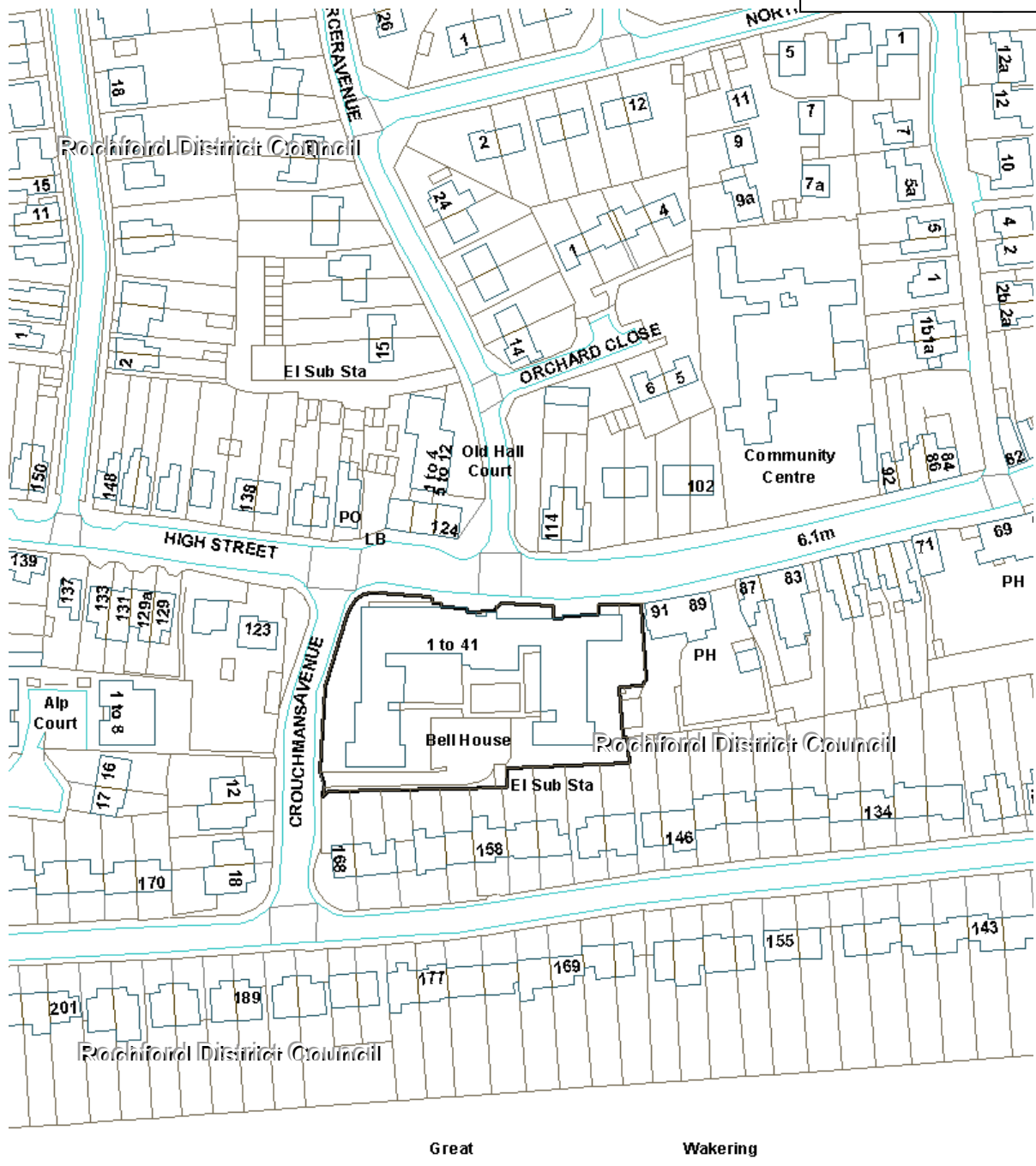
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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

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