

**Report to:** PLANNING COMMITTEE      **Date of Meeting:** 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**Subject:**      **DC/2018/02220**  
**The Blundellsands Classic, 19 Blundellsands Road West**  
**Blundellsands Liverpool L23 6BA**

**Proposal:** Replacement of existing white painted softwood timber windows and doors with new white uPVC windows and doors

**Applicant:** The Blundellsands Classic      **Agent:** Mr Richard Gee  
Limited      Roman Summer Associates  
Ltd

**Ward:** Blundellsands Ward

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## Summary

The Blundellsands Classic is sheltered accommodation within Blundellsands Park Conservation Area.

The proposal to change the windows and doors on a key public frontage from timber to uPVC is considered to be a harmful alteration, which would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area.

## Recommendation: Refuse

**Case Officer**      Mrs Carol Gallagher

**Email**      [planning.department@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:planning.department@sefton.gov.uk)

**Telephone**      0345 140 0845 (option 4)

Application documents and plans are available at:

<http://pa.sefton.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=PJKJXZNWIHZ00>

# Site Location Plan



## The Site

The Blundellsands Classic, 19 Blundellsands Road West is sheltered accommodation which includes three storey apartments and bungalow accommodation. The application is for 133 windows and doors to the elevation facing The Serpentine South as shown on the location plan.

## History (Relevant)

DC/2017/02329: Replacement of existing painted softwood timber windows and doors to existing three storey sheltered accommodation apartment block and bungalows to be replaced with new white uPVC windows and doors (alternative to DC/2017/01553 - refused 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017). Approved with conditions 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

DC/2017/01553: Replacement of existing painted softwood timber windows and doors to existing three storey sheltered accommodation apartment block and bungalows to be replaced with new white uPVC windows and doors. Refused 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

S/2000/0775: Partial demolition of the hotel and conversion of the remaining building to 3 No flats and the construction of 50 residential apartments (53 units) (Alternative to S/2000/0216 refused 28<sup>th</sup> September 2000). Approved within conditions 21<sup>st</sup> February 2001.

S/2000/0216: Partial demolition of the hotel followed by the conversion of the remaining building into 3 No flats and the construction of 57 residential apartments (60 units). Refused 28<sup>th</sup> September 2000.

## Consultations

### Conservation

The apartments are a modern extension to the original Blundellsands Hotel, constructed in 2002.

Whilst the proposed replacement windows do attempt to mimic some traditional type features (such as butt joints and grained wood effect), uPVC is not an appropriate material within the Conservation Area as it cannot create the same traditional appearance of timber, nor match its finer proportions or detailing. Equally, it is important that extensions, in sensitive historic contexts, such as Conservation Areas, conform to a high standard of design and utilise quality materials.

This is important in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area.

The apartments are regarded as having a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area (as described in the Conservation Area Appraisal - adopted in March 2008) due to its high density, proximity to the road and materials being poor imitations of historic materials. The introduction of modern plastic windows on this highly visible and prominent elevation would further exacerbate this harmful impact, and therefore uPVC replacement windows are regarded as inappropriate replacements.

The setting of the former Blundellsands Hotel, constructed in the late 19th Century, which is identified as an important secondary landmark of Jacobethan style with its red brick and welsh slate roof (Conservation Area Appraisal), would be compromised by the introduction of uPVC windows to the modern extension, harming the positive contribution the former hotel makes to the special character and appearance of the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area.

## Neighbour Representations

No objections to the scheme and a petition of support signed by 49 residents of The Blundellsands Classic and endorsed by Cllr Sam Marshall, who wish to highlight the following:

1. We have the utmost respect and appreciation for heritage and we applaud the Local Planning Authority and Planning Committee for taking tough decisions to preserve and protect this. Like you, we cherish this Conservation Area.
2. But we feel that there are circumstances when a balanced, common sense and proportional stance needs to be taken.
3. In the case of our homes, this is a large, modern building with modern deteriorating windows that require urgent replacement. This is not a building of any heritage note that warrants or deserves special protection.
4. We feel that the replacement of poor quality modern windows with better quality windows will enhance the building. The use of uPVC flush sash windows system, as a material in the specific circumstances of this case, is entirely appropriate and will cause no harm to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
5. We therefore – very respectfully – urge members of the Planning Committee to support our stance and approve this Planning Application.

## Policy Context

The application site lies within an area designated as Primarily Residential in the Sefton Local Plan which was adopted by the Council in April 2017 and is within Blundellsands Park Conservation Area.

## Assessment of the Proposal

The proposal is to replace the white painted softwood timber windows and doors to part of the Blundellsands Classic (excluding the original part of the hotel, which fronts Blundellsands Road West/ The Serpentine South) and install white woodgrain uPVC doors and windows to the remaining elevations (i.e. those which front the highway and are in public view).

In the Design & Access statement provided by the agent, the reason given for the preferred uPVC windows & doors is *“the white timber frames have perished and are rapidly deteriorating, resulting in draughts and uncomfortable living conditions for many of the elderly residents of the Classic. Added to which the poor appearance of those windows results in a poor, shoddy appearance which does little to preserve the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area”*.

The issues to consider are the principle of development and the impact on Blundellsands Park Conservation Area.

### Principle of Development

The application site is a complex of apartments within a residential area. Flats or apartments do not benefit from ‘permitted development’ rights, which means planning permission is required for changes to the materials used for windows and doors.

### Impact on Blundellsands Park Conservation Area

The application Ref No DC/2017/02329 was a compromise negotiated with the Local Planning Authority following the refusal of the previous application (DC/2017/01553) and followed a meeting with the Board of the Blundellsands Classic, the case officer and the Conservation Officer.

The application gave consent for all windows and doors not visible from The Serpentine South to be replaced with a high standard of uPVC and all existing windows and doors visible from The Serpentine South to be repaired/redecorated.

This application is to replace the timber windows and doors visible from The Serpentine South with uPVC.

This elevation is highly visible from the highway and public view due to its proximity to the street and height. According to the window schedule submitted, the proposal affects a total of 133 windows and doors over 4 levels.

The original part of the building (formerly the Blundellsands Hotel) is identified within the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area Appraisal as an important secondary landmark of Jacobethan style with its red brick and welsh slate roof.

The apartments are a modern extension to the original hotel building and were granted Planning Approval in 2001. They are regarded as having a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area (as described in the Conservation Area Appraisal) due to the high density, proximity to the road and materials being poor imitations of historic materials.

Introduction of modern plastic windows and doors on a highly visible frontage would further exacerbate this harmful impact and are therefore regarded as inappropriate replacements.

The Blundellsands Park Conservation Area Appraisal gives advice in relation to windows and doors:

#### *Windows and doors*

*The original buildings within Blundellsands would have had a mix of painted timber sash and casement windows. However, a significant percentage of the houses within the area have had their windows replaced either with uPVC or inappropriate casement windows.*

*This is particularly damaging to the character of not only the individual properties but also to the street scene. The fineness of the traditional framing and glazing bars is unobtrusive, yet reinforces the vertical emphasis of the facades. Thus, the introduction of thicker framing members (almost always necessary with uPVC), removal of glazing bars, reconfiguration of the window etc., all have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the property and overall visual quality of the area.*

*Though less common than replacement windows, replacement front doors are also detrimental to the character of the area. Where uPVC is used, replacement doors are particularly obtrusive and lack quality of design and detail found in timber originals.*

Local Plan Policy NH12 states that:

*“Development within conservation areas or affecting their setting will only be permitted where the proposal is of high quality design and preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting”.*

It goes on to say that *“Development must ensure that replacement or new features are of an appropriate style and use materials which are sympathetic to the age, architecture and features of the affected property”, and*

*“Development which harms elements which make a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area or its setting will not be permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that public benefits outweigh the harm”.*

It is considered the introduction of modern uPVC windows and doors does not comply with this policy in the following respects:

- they are not of an appropriate style and do not use materials which are sympathetic to the age, architecture and features of the affected property
- they would harm elements which make a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area, and
- they would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Blundellsands Park Conservation Area.

Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that *“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification”*.

The apartments are regarded as having a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area (as described in the Conservation Area Appraisal) due to their high density, proximity to the road and materials being poor imitations of historic materials. Introduction of modern plastic windows would further exacerbate this harmful impact, and therefore uPVC replacement windows are regarded as inappropriate replacements.

The original proposal was to replace the timber windows and doors of the entire complex with uPVC. This was refused in October 2017. Following discussion about the level of harm the proposed changes would cause to the Conservation Area, an amended scheme to replace windows and doors which were not on a public frontage was approved in April 2018. This comprised about 70% of the total complex.

The current proposal relates to the frontage onto The Serpentine South which is highly visible.

The applicant’s reasons for wanting to change to uPVC are noted. However the use of well fitted and maintained timber windows will resolve concerns about draughts and uncomfortable living conditions. uPVC cannot create the same traditional appearance of timber, nor match its finer proportions or detailing. It is considered that in this prominent position such materials would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## **Conclusion**

Taking the Blundellsands Classic development as a whole, permission has already been granted for the use of uPVC materials to the windows and doors of the majority of the complex where the elevations do not have a public frontage.

The applicant has given reasons for changing the materials in the remaining part of the complex.

However, this part comprises a highly visible street frontage where the use of uPVC would be very obvious. It is not considered that the justification provided by the applicant outweighs the harm which uPVC would cause to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

It is therefore recommended that the application be refused.

## **Recommendation - Refuse**

### **Reason for Refusal**

This application has been recommended for refusal for the following reason:

The proposed development, by virtue of the use of inappropriate materials, would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area and is considered contrary to the provisions of Policy NH12 of the Local Plan, the Blundellsands Park Conservation Area Appraisal and paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Informative**

The refused plans are: The site outlined in red as shown on Drwg No 6247 - 01, The Flush Sash detailed brochure, Drwg No`s 6247 07, 6247 - 12 and the drawings titled: First floor window schedule, window type elevation, 1 of 2 and 2 of 2, second and third floor window schedule.