

Application Number

P/2016/0545

Site AddressHolme Court
Lower Warberry Road
Torquay
TQ1 1QR**Case Officer**

Saffron Loasby

Ward

Wellswood

Description

Replacement balconies to the south, east and west elevations (description amended 22 July 2016)

Executive Summary

This application is being presented to Planning Committee because a member of the Holme Court (Torquay) Association, who is the applicant, is also an employee of Torbay Council.

The scheme proposes replacement balcony materials comprising clear toughened glass on all balconies in the block of flats known as Holme Court. They are all predominately south facing, however also allow views to the east and west. One objection has been received with regard to increased noise and overlooking.

The site is located in the Warberries Conservation Area. The proposal is considered to be an appropriate alteration to the original property and the wider street scene. The proposal would maintain the quality of the street scene within the context of the Warberries Conservation area and would conserve the character of the conservation area. As such it would be consistent with Policy SS10 in the Torbay Local Plan.

Recommendation

Approval, subject to no further representations being received during the consultation period that have not been previously considered by the Development Management Committee.

Statutory Determination Period

Extension of time agreed until 08.08.2016 to allow the application to be considered by the Development Management Committee.

Site Details

The site, Holme Court, Lower Warberry Road is a block of residential flats located within the Warberries Conservation Area. The building comprises a white render, 8 storey building (including the ground floor) with Upvc windows

and small external balconies.

Detailed Proposals

The application seeks permission to replace the existing painted steel balustrades and the obscured GRP (glass reinforced plastic, also referred to as fibreglass) infill with light weight stainless steel balustrades and toughened glass. The glass used on the balconies will be clear and the privacy screen separating the balconies that neighbour each other (primarily down the middle of the building) will comprise of 20% white acid etch effect thus retaining an element of privacy to each occupant. The replacement balconies are proposed to the whole of the building and are considered to improve the character of the property within the Conservation Area according to the submitted Statement of Historic Significance.

It is understood that the application was presented to residents prior to the formal submission where it was fully supported.

Summary of Consultation Responses

Senior Historic Officer: No objection.

Summary of Representations

One representation was received from the occupier of a residential property to the east of the application site. Concern has been raised by the use of clear glass and the potential to increase noise levels.

One representation was received from an occupier of Holme Court fully supporting the scheme and the improvements it will have on the building and to the residents.

These representations have been sent electronically for Members consideration.

Relevant Planning History

None relevant to this application.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The key issues are as follows:

1. The principle of development
2. Impact on character and appearance of the Conservation Area
3. Impact on neighbour amenity

1. Principle of Development

The proposed works are to an existing block of flats in an area of predominately residential character. The site is located in the main built up area of Torquay and is not isolated in its wider context. The principle of development is considered to be in accordance with the requirements of Policy SS3 Presumption in favour of

sustainable development and subject to meeting other policy criteria.

2. Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

The proposal comprises the replacement of the existing glass reinforced plastic (GRP) which is predominately white in colour with clear toughened glass. The existing balustrades are unchanged from the original development of the building and in need of updating.

The building, whilst in a Conservation Area, is relatively modern in terms of design and the windows as existing comprise Upvc. These will remain unchanged as part of this application. The elevations of the flats have a fairly uniform appearance and replacing all of the balconies with the same materials will help reduce any adverse impact on the wider context of the Conservation Area. The glass material is considered to be acceptable and reflective of materials used on other balconies in the area.

The proposal is considered to be an appropriate alteration to the original property and the wider street scene. The proposal is therefore considered to maintain the quality of the street scene within the context of the Warberries Conservation area.

3. Impact on neighbour Amenity

Concern has been raised from a local resident regarding the potential to exacerbate overlooking and increase of noise on the adjoining private amenity space of neighbouring properties. In this case the occupier resides in Daphne Close, to the east of the application site. The relationship between the existing flats and the rear gardens of those adjoining the application site has long been in place. The flats appear on historic maps between 1969-to mid 1970's and the houses being developed a little later. The design and materials of the balconies in Holme Court have not changed since this time and the refurbishment is considered to be long overdue.

It is the east facing elevation of the block of flats that has been questioned with regard to overlooking; however the balconies all predominately face south. The potential to overlook is already present and the inclusion of new glass balcony returns will not exacerbate this. The glass located between properties will be slightly opaque and 2m in height, therefore privacy between flats will not be adversely impacted.

With regard to noise, it is not considered that the new material for the balconies will have an adverse impact on the noise levels coming from the balconies being used by its residents. Glass is generally a good material for absorbing noise and reverting back to the original source; however the representation raised concern about people talking on phones and shouting from balconies to and from the pool area. It is unlikely that the material will exacerbate or reduce this.

Conclusions

The proposed development is considered to be appropriate for planning approval. The change in material to glass will not have an adverse impact on the street scene or Conservation Area and nor will it unreasonably increase noise levels or overlooking. The development of the agreed works are likely to result in a significant amount of work over a potentially lengthy time period and therefore a condition has been included to restrict the construction process during certain hours in order to protect neighbour amenity.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

The development, hereby approved, shall be constructed only between the hours of 08.00hrs and 1800hrs Monday to Friday, 0900hrs to 1300hrs on a Saturday and not on Sundays or Bank Holidays unless with the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the area.

Relevant Policies

SS10 - Conservation and Historic Environment

DE1 - Design

DE3 - Development Amenity