

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0019
Valid 01/03/2022

57 WILLOW HOUSE
OSTLERS LANE
CHEDDLETON

FITTING OF AGATE GREY
COMPOSITE CLADDING TO
THE UPPER HALF OF THE
FRONT ELEVATION OF THE
PROPERTY.

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Design
- Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site comprises a detached brick, render and tile dwellinghouse and its associated curtilage, situated in the Cheddleton Ward. The site is within the Cheddleton North Development Boundary, where the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan seeks to concentrate development. The proposed site is enclosed by neighbouring dwellings comprising a section of Ostlers Lane. The Beeches, Ostlers Lane lies to the South-West of the proposed site and No. 49, Ostlers Lane is situated to the North-East. The Ostlers Lane highway runs adjacent to the proposed site on the West.

It is noted that a number of properties within the row have been extended; however the established inter-war character of the street has been retained.

PROPOSAL

This is a retrospective application for the fitting of agate grey composite cladding to the upper half of the front elevation of the property.

From an examination of historic photographs, is clear that a number of other material alterations have been made to the front of the dwellinghouse, including demolishing the ground floor front bay window and extending outwards with a single storey front extension and adding overhanging barge boards to the middle gable.

Whilst they are not referred to in the description of development, these have also been considered under this application as they are considered to be an integral part of the development operation which has taken place.

The application was received following a public complaint and subsequent investigation by the Council's Planning Enforcement Service.



Figure 1 – The dwelling prior to works being carried out



Figure 2 – The dwelling following completion of the works.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS8 Larger Villages Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14
Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

Part 5 – Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1995/0334 – New pitched roof over flat roof. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 26/04/2022
Neighbour consultation period ends: 15/04/2022
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

One of the neighbours made a comment about a mistake on the plans:

“Labelling the centre line of the hedgerow as centre of hedgerow (boundary) is incorrect in relation to the boundary between 49 and 57 Ostlers Lane. Here the hedge belongs to us, as owners of number 49 and the boundary between 49 and 57 is delineated by the outside (southern) edge of the hedge, which ignoring seasonal growth, has been trained to follow the line of the former boundary fence, that ran to a boundary post just beyond the southern edge of our front wall.”

Town / Parish Comments

No comments have been received.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan the Council expects all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect and where possible enhance the environment. A concentrated focus on future growth is to be directed to larger settlements, including Cheddleton. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In compliance with Policy SS8, new development should be directed to the most sustainable locations. The site lies within the town of Cheddleton, which constitutes a larger village within the Staffordshire Moorlands. The Larger Villages Areas Strategy is based around areas where a focus of new development will be directed, with the aim of ensuring that all development enhances the character and appearance of the settlement.

The proposed site is within the Development Boundary, thus the proposed works are acceptable in principle, subject to conformity with other relevant national and local planning policies. The main issues which need to be considered as part of the assessment of the proposed works include design, neighbour amenity and highway safety.

Design

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place. The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that all works should harmonise with the parent building.

The materials used in the construction of the principal elevation do not match those used in the construction of the existing dwelling, as well as from surrounding

dwelling in the area. Although the surrounding street scene is comprised of a varied selection of house types, a prominent feature of the street scene is the brick and render used in the construction of the dwellinghouses. These are materials which are typical of the inter-war detached and semi-detached houses that characterise Ostlers Lane. Agate grey composite cladding has been fitted to the upper half of the principal elevation of the property and white render has been used on the bottom half. Although the white render is deemed appropriate, the agate grey composite cladding is not considered appropriate or to be in character with the host dwellinghouse or the surrounding street scene.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD states that development needs to be designed and built in sympathy with the property which it serves, and that materials used in the construction of alterations to dwellings should generally match those of the parent building. The surrounding street scene is comprised of traditionally built brick dwellinghouses, including the introduction of render to a number of them. The timber cladding is not an appropriate material to be fitted on the principal elevation, as it would completely differ from the brick used in the construction of the host dwelling. The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD states that: *“There is no tradition of external timber boarding in Staffordshire Moorlands.... Vertical boarding has been used more recently on large agricultural sheds as an alternative to metal sheeting but such buildings are regarded as exceptions, as the development is seen in the context of traditional buildings or open landscape.”* Additionally, the Design Guide SPD states that “new materials need to respect the building and its setting”. It is felt that as the host dwelling is constructed from brick and render, timber cladding would visually be out of character. There is no tradition of timber being used in a domestic setting, including in the Cheddleton area.

I note that as part of the retrospective works, the original ground floor front bay window has been demolished and extended with a single storey front extension. The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guidance SPD states the following:

“Windows are among the most important features of an elevation.”

“The design of replacement or new windows needs to relate to the age and style of the property in question.”

The addition of the front extension means that the original bay window feature, which again is a typical and defining architectural feature of a property of this era has been removed from the principal elevation of the dwelling and replaced with windows which would run flush with the new principal elevation, completely altering one of the main focal points of ornamentation on the principal elevation. Thus, the visual aesthetic of the house would become less pleasing. The Council believe that the removal of the bay window and addition of the extension to the principal elevation contributes to the character of the dwelling being lost.

Furthermore, one of the windows over the garage, which was of similar proportions to the other principal windows in the front elevation has been reduced in size to equivalent of the small window alongside. This has resulted in an increased solid to void ratio on this part of the elevation, which creates a very “defensive” appearance which is not in keeping with the property and exaggerates and draws attention to the inappropriate composite timber cladding which forms the wall.

The works, by virtue of their size, scale and siting do not maintain the character of the existing dwelling and area. The works would therefore not accord with the provisions of local plan policy DC1 and section 12 of the NPPF in this regard.

Amenity

Paragraph 127 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

The application site is bound by No. 49 Ostlers Lane to the North-East and The Beeches, Ostlers Lane to the South-West. There are no other properties with curtilages which adjoin the site. Thus as there are properties with curtilages which adjoin the site, it becomes important to assess whether the amenity of these neighbours would be compromised. Therefore, amenity impact assessment is essential on the direct neighbouring properties to the West and East sides of the application site.

As the proposed works consist of changing the brick and render exterior of the principal elevation to agate grey composite cladding and render, it is clear that this would not impact light or privacy amenity of any of the neighbours. As part of the retrospective works, the original ground floor front bay window has been demolished and extended with a single storey front extension. The surrounding street scene is comprised of detached dwellings with spacious curtilage plots, thus meaning that the retrospective front extension would be a long enough distance from both neighbours to stop their amenity from being impacted.

It cannot however be ignored that the visual amenity of the neighbours would be impacted by the works. Whilst the surrounding street scene is comprised of predominantly brick and render dwellings, agate grey composite timber cladding has been used in the construction of the new principal elevation of the dwelling. Agate grey composite timber cladding is incongruous with the surrounding area, meaning that the dwelling is now out of keeping and visual amenity has been adversely impacted.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development does not lead to an increase in on street parking.

The retrospective works would not increase the number of bedrooms of the

dwelling. Therefore, it is clear that no additional parking spaces will be required for the number of people inhabiting the dwellinghouse. Although an extension has been made to the front of the dwelling, it is not large enough to compromise the available off-road parking on the driveway to the front of the dwelling.

Thus, the proposed extension would have no impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy T1.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above, the application is recommended for refusal. Due to the application not being of an appropriate design and having an adverse effect upon visual street scene amenity, it is not deemed acceptable under planning policy. Agate grey composite timber cladding is not deemed an appropriate material to use on the visible principal elevation of the dwelling, as it is completely incongruous to the surrounding area. Timber is not a traditional material used within domestic settings in Staffordshire Moorlands, thus its installation does not respect the building which it is on, or the surrounding setting. The removal of the bay window and other changes to fenestration add to the harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene generally. Therefore, the application is recommended for refusal.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

Case Officer: Hannah Hollins

Recommendation Date: 26/04/2022

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council