

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0630
Valid 12/05/2022

**CONSERVATIVE AND
UNIONIST CLUB HIGH
STREET
BIDDULPH**

**THE REDUCTION IN HEIGHT
OF TWO CHIMNEY STACKS
TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH
ENDS OF THE BUILDING
(RETROSPECTIVE).**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Neighbouring amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is a large brick Edwardian building located within the Town Centre in the vicinity of various shops/services. The characteristics of this historic building include the sash square paned windows, symmetry and decorative brick work. The property has two chimneys however at the time of visit, the chimneys has been shortened and therefore, is to be considered retrospectively. It is located within the Biddulph Town Development Boundary.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for retrospective planning permission for the reduction in the height of two chimneys located to the north and south of the ridge line by approx. 500mm.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

SS6 – Biddulph Area Strategy
DC1 – Design Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Design Guide SPD 2018

SITE HISTORY

None relevant

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 14/05/22

Neighbour consultation period ends: 03/06/22

Public Comments

Neighbour comments - No representatives received

Biddulph Town Council Comments – Objection. There was concern that the removal of the chimneys fundamentally changed the character and appearance of the building. This was a building that the Town Council had considered for ‘Local Listing’.

The new chimneys are out of character, not in-keeping with the style of the building and surroundings. This should be rejected on design grounds and the original specification should be reinstated.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The site is within the town settlement of Biddulph, one of the three market towns identified in the Local Plan. Here Local Plan strategy policy SS6 applies. The policy focuses on improving the impact and identity of Biddulph and strengthening its role as a visitor destination by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the town, including heritage assets.

As such development must comply with the other policies of the Local Plan, in particular Design Policy DC1 and the SMDC design guide.

Design

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2019) requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture.

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings.

New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Paragraph 5.2 of the adopted Design Guide state:

Alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building. The key to a sensitive approach is to take note of what is there already before preparing the design and to work with and not against the buildings character. The aim should be to revitalise the building without altering its fundamental character.

The Conservative And Unionist Club building is a building of distinctive appearance. For context, this is a street-view photo taken in May 2019 showing what the property looked like before works were made.



This is following the works:



While the property is not listed and does not sit within the Conservation Area, the reduction in the height of the chimneys is out of character with the historic building. It is considered that part of the building's charm is lost as a result of the Edwardian

chimney pots, brick detailing and different coloured brick being taken away. The removal of the chimneys fundamentally changes the character and appearance of the building and the replacement chimneys are out of keeping with the style of the building.

The Council recognises that where there are safety concerns, this should be taken into account as part of the planning assessment, however, no evidence through the submission of photos or a structural survey have been provided as part of this assessment to support the removal of a period feature that is highly visible within the market town. It would appear pointless to ask for a survey following the works the original chimneys should be reinstated and redirected to Planning Enforcement. Therefore, the works which have been carried out are contrary to policy DC1 of the Local plan.

Impact to neighbouring amenity

Paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF (2019) and policy DC1 seeks to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

No objection raised. The replacement chimneys will not harm the overall living conditions of the immediate neighbours that are made up of local shops and services. This application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Local plan.

CONCLUSION

The lowering of the original chimneys fundamentally changes the character and appearance of the Edwardian building to being detrimental to the style of this historic building. In addition, insufficient information has been submitted to determine the safety issue for the loss of the two original chimneys. Should later evidence be submitted, it does not outweigh the loss of the chimney features that adds to the charm of this building within a prominent location in the market town of Biddulph and therefore, should be reinstated. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy DC1 of the Local Plan and is to be recommended for refusal.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Refuse

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 1/07/22

X *J. Colley*

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council