

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0453
Valid 08/09/2022

194 HIGH LANE
BROWN EDGE

**CONVERSION OF FORMER
POST OFFICE TO FORM
ADDITIONAL LIVING
ACCOMMODATION**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The building is essentially a large semi-detached dwelling dating from the 1930s. The property has a band of painted render at first floor either side of the windows, above the original brick work below first floor window cill level and the ground floor below. Centrally between the two neighbours, there is a central bay window column that is curved at ground floor, with a tile clad gable feature above. The other dwellings in the row to the south west have similar characteristics typical to the age and type of dwelling – prevailing use of red brick with limited sections of render or tile cladding and bay window features.

The property sits at the north east end or beginning of the row of very similar properties in the larger village of Brown Edge. The property is opposite the Holly Bush Inn and a recreational ground on the other side of the road.

On the ground floor adjacent to the entrance hallway there was formerly the simple, but period, post office shop window. To the side of the dwelling a small flat roof ground floor brick addition created more floor space. The Council has granted a prior approval for the use of the whole building to be used as one large dwellinghouse, absorbing the commercial into the residential. That use change was permitted development but it did not provide for any physical alterations. Part 1 GPDO provisions, for dwelling alterations, not available where the dwelling results from a permitted change under Part 3.

The applicant has already carried out a number of unauthorised alterations:

- The shop window to the front of the brick side addition has been replaced with a garage door;
- A window in the side elevation has been blocked with concrete block;
- The main, period, shop window to the front has been replaced with a plastic window and the surround has been built up with concrete block;
- The period door, the stain glass surround, and a decorative lintel has all been removed and replaced with a upvc door fitted within a block surround;
- A tiled canopy has been installed across the front elevation above ground floor; and

- The access with the highway has been altered and widened and a new ramped up driveway has been constructed across the front of the property accessing a raised level behind a stone wall.

PROPOSAL

The application is for the conversion of the former post office to form living accommodation. It does not explicitly seek consent for all of the alterations that have occurred, the new access and driveway, in particular, are not detailed. However, the submitted plans propose the full render treatment of the whole dwelling. The render would obviously cover the areas of concrete block fill, but also all of the original brick work and tile cladding. The new tile canopy, garage door, and new windows and doors are detailed on the plans and would be retained.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
 SS1 Development Principles
 SS8 Larger Village Strategy
 DC1 Design Considerations
 T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

SMDC Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2020/0033 Change of use of post office to dwelling. Prior approval granted
 SMD/2021/0599 Change of use of one large dwelling into two. WITHDRAWN.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 29th October 2022
 Neighbour consultation period ends: 29th October 2022
 Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Brown Edge PC: Awaited

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The property is within the 'larger village' of Brown Edge where Local Plan strategy SS8 applies. To meet housing need within the villages the strategy supports well designed householder development that is compliant with design policy DC1 of the Local Plan and the Council's Design Guide.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Local Plan Policy DC1 requires all development to be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, the policy requires the development to be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating *materials* appropriate to the character of the area.

The SPD guidance says that "The key to a sensitive approach is to take note of what is there already before preparing the design and to work with the building's character"... "New buildings should use facing materials that either match or complement those of the surroundings".

With the change of use, the resizing and installation of replacement of windows is perhaps inevitable. However, the work should be carried out using materials that compliment or match the surroundings, rather than stand out or jar against them. The conventional preference is that the alterations be carried out using a brick that matches that of the original or adjacent dwellings, replacement glazing features that replicate the character and style of the period

The proposed full use of the silicone render as a complete covering, would conceal much of the building's original character that compliments and contributes to a particularly dominant section of the street scene where a row of dwellings that are of a particular age and type assert a well-established character and appearance. Within this row the property forms the end to a row of dwellings that are of a particular age and character type, where red brick, tile cladding and bay window details are a common architectural detail and render is used in limited sections.

In support of the proposal the application points to the use of white render and paint on some of the terraced Victorian cottages to the north east and the painted stone of the 19th Century Holly Bush Inn opposite. However, in the case of the terraced cottages, they are an entirely different dwelling type that forms a short row that ends to the side of the application property, and in the case of the Inn it has its own unique setting and place within the locality. Referencing and trying to repeat the facing materials present on those buildings is misguided, it would be at odds with the buildings and street scene of which the property actually forms a part and would neither be complimentary or in keeping with any of the areas character. The applicant has attempted to reference materials and colours that have been used on buildings that are nearby, but distinct and separate from, in terms of character, positioning and appearance – there are no merits in those regards.

The property, at the end of a row of dwelling types that assert a strong character typical to their type and age, would in this exposed and prominent position, appear as an oddity that would stand out and disrupt visual continuity and shared identity. The dwelling is within a row of similar dwellings all built from and presenting red brick, with some limited use of render, as the prevailing facing material and it is this that dictates the character, appearance and distinctiveness of the locality. The proposed full use of render would lack, and work against, the tone, texture, and colouration of the relevant part of the locality. This would be contrary to and cause conflict with the Local Plan design policy DC1 and the SMDC Design Guide, cited above.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed use of silicone render to cover the whole of the existing dwelling, the existing garage, would not relate well to the prevailing pallet of facing materials shared by this dwelling and type and that of its neighbours within the locality. Red brick is the dominant material and sections of render or tile cladding are used to provide detailing and accent. This would make for a dwelling in an exposed and prominent location that is odds with the character and appearance of the streetscene. This would be harmful to patterns of visual continuity and a shared identity and would adversely effect the character and appearance of the area and fail to preserve local distinctiveness. The development, would in these regards, cause conflict with policy DC1 of the adopted SMDC Local Plan (2020) and the SMDC Design Guide.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 03/11/2022

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council