



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 August 2023

by L Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/W/23/3318892

194 High Lane, Brown Edge, Staffordshire ST6 8QB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr. C. Willis against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref SMD/2022/0453, dated 5 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 3 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is conversion of former post office to form additional living accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for conversion of former post office to form additional living accommodation at 194 High Lane, Brown Edge, Staffordshire ST6 8QB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SMD/2022/0453, dated 5 August 2022 subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Existing Plans and Elevations
 - Proposed Plans and Elevations
 - Location Plan and Site Plan

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant has provided an amended plan with their appeal statement demonstrating revisions to the extent of the proposed render to the front elevation. However, I am conscious that interested parties have not had the opportunity to view or comment on the amended plans. In the interests of fairness and natural justice I have therefore considered the appeal on the original plans submitted with the application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a semi-detached dwelling and former post office dating from the 1930s, in the village of Brown Edge. The area is predominantly residential,

with a public house, car park and a recreational area situated across the road from the property. The building has painted render at first floor level, above the original brick work below the first-floor window sill level and the ground floor.

5. The Council has granted a prior approval for the whole building to be used as one large dwellinghouse, absorbing the commercial floor space into the residential use. That use change was permitted development but it did not provide for any physical alterations. The Council has listed various unauthorised alterations that have already been undertaken. The appeal proposal is to render the front, side and rear elevations of the property. The existing tile hanging to the front gable end would be removed, and a new tile canopy, garage door, windows and doors which have been completed already would be retained.
6. I noted from my site visit that the properties along High Lane are comprised of a range of styles, types and periods. No. 194 High Lane is at the end of a row of properties of a similar age and style. However, the dwellings are by no means uniform, with differing fenestration, doors and in some cases roof pitch. Some of the properties have canopies, and not all are semi-detached. There are varying amounts and colours of rendering on the different properties, with some having no rendering at all.
7. The row of houses adjacent to the site are terraced Victorian cottages, which again are not wholly uniform. The majority are fully rendered but they are painted in different colours. The properties on the opposite side of the road to No. 194 are also eclectic in terms of design, size and style, with various extensions to frontages, and a range of materials and colouration.
8. Although red brick is the dominant material of the properties in the individual row in which No. 194 is located, the surrounding properties, including the Victorian cottages and the mixed house types along High Lane contribute positively to the street scene as a whole. There is no strong prevailing vernacular in the immediate locality. Rather, it is the mix of house types, ages and facing materials that add interest and variety to the village, and make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area. As the dwellings in the locality differ in age, design, architectural detail and materials, the proposal would not disrupt a regular rhythm of development or have a negative effect on visual continuity.
9. Whilst the proposed silicone render would cover the original brick work and tile cladding, I do not consider that the building's original character is of such merit that this would be unacceptable. Some of the brickwork is mismatched, and there are no significant features of the original dwelling which make a particularly positive contribution to the street scene or the character of the area.
10. I conclude that the proposed development and use of silicone render would not cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area and would preserve local distinctiveness. Accordingly, I find no conflict with Policy DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) which 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 and incorporating materials appropriate to the character of the area. The scheme accords with guidance from the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Design

Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2018) which seeks to ensure that new buildings should use facing materials that either match or complement those of the surroundings.

Conditions

11. I have had regard to the national Planning Practice Guidance on conditions. In addition to the standard commencement condition I have attached a condition specifying the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt. A condition relating to materials is necessary to ensure that the appearance of the development would be satisfactory.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L Hughes

INSPECTOR