



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2026

by **K Townend BSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 March 2026

Appeal Ref: 6002965

Mill House, Oak Street, Cheadle ST10 1NX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for the development of land without complying with conditions subject to which a previous planning permission was granted.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Lesley Goodwin against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref is SMD/2025/0450.
 - The application sought planning permission for conversion of existing store/workshop building to residential use without complying with conditions attached to planning permission Ref SMD/2021/0123, dated 02/08/2021.
 - The conditions in dispute are Nos 2, 4 and 5 which state: 2) *The development hereby approved shall be carried out in complete accordance with the submitted amended plans and specifications as follows:- Location Plan, Block Plan, MH02 Rev A, MH05 Rev A, MH06 Rev A, MH07 Rev A, MH08, MH09.* 4) *All window frames shall comprise white painted timber finishing materials.* And 5) *All external doors shall comprise timber materials.*
 - The reasons given for the conditions are: *"To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, for clarity and the avoidance of doubt" and "In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area."*
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the conditions are reasonable and necessary in order to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Cheadle Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal building is a former store/workshop which, at the time of my visit, was undergoing conversion to residential use. It lies within the CA, which is a designated heritage asset, and at the end of a row of Victorian terraced houses. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) ('the Act') provides, at section 72(1), that with respect to any buildings or other land, in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character, or appearance of that area.
4. The Cheadle Conservation Area Appraisal details the historic development of the area and the characteristics which are of special architectural or historic interest. Insofar as it is relevant to the appeal, I consider that the significance of the CA is mainly derived from the tight knit layout of the buildings, set at the back of the pavement, and the historic development of, and association with, industrial uses.

5. The appeal building, due to its industrial heritage and character, and the traditional materials and design of the windows being reflective of vernacular industrial buildings, contributes positively to the character and appearance of the CA. I consider that the traditional qualities of the building, including its materials, are important to preserving the special character and appearance of the CA.
6. The approved scheme for conversion of the building included the design and materials of the windows. Although I accept that the original application form for the conversion sought uPVC windows, and the appellants suggest that they did not agree to timber materials, the evidence before me indicates that the agent working on the appellants' behalf did agree to timber at that time. The agreed details and materials would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the CA.
7. The appeal proposal seeks to carry out the conversion works without complying with the two conditions requiring the windows and doors to be timber and to amend the approved plans so as to alter the design of the windows. The proposed window design, which seeks to change the layout of the windows on the front elevation, would have a more domestic appearance than the approved tripartite design, which would have reflected the industrial heritage of the building. The use of domestic, cottage style, windows would significantly detract from the appearance of the historic building and its interpretation as an industrial building. This would result in harm to the heritage of the building and harm the way this building is interpreted in the CA.
8. Even if the uPVC frames would be no bulkier than timber frames, the use of uPVC, albeit finished in a white colour, would have a more uniform and even finish than painted timber with its natural, irregular grain and surface imperfections. They would not age or weather in the same way as timber and the artificial and contemporary appearance would be clearly distinguishable from timber. The use of uPVC would not result in the same appearance as timber windows and would, therefore, not be an appropriate material for use in a historic building. Overall, the proposed use of uPVC would be discordant and would detract from the well-preserved historic character and appearance of the appeal building.
9. The proposed loss of traditional materials on this historic building should be resisted to preserve the character and appearance of the building and the special character of the CA. The harm to the appeal building from uPVC would diminish the contribution it makes to the character of the area. Furthermore, given the location of the appeal building, at the end of a row, on the corner of two streets, and with high levels of visibility across the nearby car park, the proposal would have at least a moderate degree of prominence. The proposal would, therefore, not preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
10. UPVC is an inauthentic, modern material that would be out of keeping with the traditional materials that characterise the historic buildings and the CA as a whole, even if there are other uPVC windows in the area. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the use of uPVC and the loss of traditional joinery as one of the items that is having a negative effect on the CA and the appeal proposal would compound this harm.
11. I accept, as noted by a local Councillor, that there are other uPVC windows and doors in the immediate area which I saw while on site. Indeed, the variations in

style and appearance of these replacement windows contrast unfavourably with the simple, elegant and consistent nature of timber framed windows. Both individually and cumulatively, I consider that these changes detract from the character and appearance of the CA, as noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Moreover, the harmful effect of these existing uPVC windows would not justify the further harm that would result from the appeal.

12. That the existing windows are generally in poor condition, and even if the replacement of the existing windows is a necessity, this would not justify their replacement with uPVC windows when timber replacements would preserve and enhance the CA.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, including Conservation Areas, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Given the nature of the proposal, I find the harm to be less than substantial and that this would be of a moderate level of less than substantial harm. Nevertheless, the harm is of considerable importance and weight. The Framework goes on to advise that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
14. The appellants contend that the proposal would be beneficial as it would be more economically viable, more durable, energy efficient, and require less maintenance. However, while I note these benefits for the developer and future occupants of the residential units, they are limited in their scope as public benefits. Therefore, these benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. There is no compelling evidence that the conversion to residential use is dependent upon the proposal to alter the design and material of the windows and doors.
15. For the above reasons, I conclude that the disputed conditions are both reasonable and necessary in order to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Cheadle Conservation Area. The conditions, as imposed, comply with Policies DC1 and DC2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, 2020. Collectively these policies seek to ensure that all development is well designed and reinforces local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area, conserve and, where possible, enhance heritage assets, ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment, protect designated heritage assets, and promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area.
16. It would also conflict with the relevant requirement of the Framework which seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Finally, it would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA as required by Section 72(1) of the Act. This carries considerable weight and importance to my decision.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Townend

INSPECTOR