

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2023

by L Page BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D1835/D/22/3311290

71 Humber Road, Worcester WR5 1LQ

- 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 Ms Aleksandra Sassi against the decision of Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00744/HP, dated 21 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is render to front elevation.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development has been taken from the Council's decision notice for concision and clarity about the acts of development.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The site is located at 71 Humber Road and the existing dwelling is constructed of red brick. The dwellings immediately neighbouring the site are also constructed of red brick and form a cul-de-sac at the end of Humber Road. Together they create a strong sense of uniformity in their appearance. The majority of other dwellings along Humber Road are also constructed of red brick and whilst there are examples of dwellings with render, these are limited in number and do not change the established context of this particular road.
5. Mersey Road includes a significant number of dwellings constructed of render and cladding. Together they also create a strong sense of uniformity in the road's appearance. Dart Road includes dwellings constructed of red brick and render. Again, the number of dwellings constructed this way creates a strong sense of uniformity in the road's appearance.
6. However, the site is detached from the context of Mersey Road and Dart Road and is clearly part of the uniformity of red brick construction along Humber Road. In essence, each of these roads is largely self-contained in its own context where the uniformity in the approach to construction is a distinctive and established feature that is important to uphold.

7. Whilst some red brick would be retained, the proposal would render the front elevation of the dwelling and there would be a clear difference between the materials used in the proposal and the prevailing materials used at other dwellings along Humber Road. The contrast with the immediate neighbouring dwellings would be noticeably stark. As such, the proposal would erode the established context and uniformity¹ along this particular road and would not effectively integrate with its immediate surroundings.
8. I acknowledge the age of the existing dwelling and that some of the materials have a degree of deterioration. However, the degree of deterioration appears to be minor and when looking at the dwelling as a whole its appearance is not a detraction. Consequently, any benefits derived from renewing the appearance of external materials would be limited and would not outweigh the harm derived from lack of integration with prevailing materials.
9. Overall, the proposal would not conform with the existing context and would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policy SWDP 21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan 2016. Among other things, the policy sets out that all development will be expected to be of a high design quality. It will need to integrate effectively with its surroundings, in terms of form and function, and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Other Matters

10. I accept the general importance of insulating homes in order to combat climate change. However, there is no empirical evidence or other material specifications submitted in support of the proposal demonstrating that the render in question would achieve appreciable energy savings to the extent that the harm established under the main issue would be outweighed. Consequently, the matter has not been determinative in my decision.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

Liam Page

INSPECTOR

¹ which can be objectively defined and is not a purely subjective exercise.