

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2024

by **Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th September 2024

Appeal Ref. APP/U4610/D/24/3346462

4 Wyld Court, Coventry CV5 9LQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Miss Sophie Ayers against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application ref. is PL/2024/0000281/HHA.
 - The development proposed is: Application for proposed extension to be rendered along with existing house walls (retrospective). Resubmission of planning application HH/2022/3318.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the exterior rendered finish upon the character and appearance of the Wyld Court street scene and the general locality.

Reasons

3. Before the sand coloured render was applied over all the exterior masonry of no. 4, including the recently built 2-storey side and single-storey rear extensions that were permitted under application ref. HH/2022/3318, the appeal property's walls were finished in buff coloured facing bricks with brown tile hanging.
 4. The application form for ref. HH/2022/3318 indicated that the extensions would be clad in "*brickwork to match existing*", whilst condition 3 of that planning permission required facing materials "*...similar in appearance to those used predominantly in the construction of the exterior of the existing building.*" Even so, it is important that the appeal scheme is considered on its own merits.
 5. Paired with no. 6, the appeal property is a semi-detached, 2-storey house situated within Wyld Court, a small cul-de-sac leading off West Ridge and ending with a footpath link to Allesley Park.
 6. Wyld Court hosts 6 pairs of 2-storey, semi-detached houses with one additional property (no. 2) being sited at the end of a short terrace facing West Ridge. Given the layout of no. 2, no. 4 is viewed as the first house on the eastern side of the cul-de-sac and consequently its front and side elevations are prominent when viewing
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from the junction with West Ridge and on the approach down Wyld Court. The front of the house is also open to general public views from within the cul-de-sac.

7. Even though the locality does not possess any outstanding examples of urban architecture or fall within a conservation area, this is nonetheless a pleasant residential area with strong established character and legibility. Brickwork for the main walls with tile hanging and different coloured bricks for the advanced bays provide key elements of the character and appearance of the overwhelming majority of properties in Wyld Court and further afield. In particular, the buff coloured bricks and brown tile hanging at no. 4 appropriately replicated the prevalent local materials and contributed to the sense of coherence in the locality.
8. The Council's Householder Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted in 2023, explains, amongst other things, that extensions in general will usually be expected to respect the materials of the original building and that for side extensions facing materials should normally complement the existing dwelling.
9. Whilst I understand the importance of not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change, the approved extension scheme was not in the category of being an outstanding and innovative design proposal. The application the subject of the appeal did not follow Appendix One of the SPD in that it was not accompanied by a supporting design narrative to ensure that the proposal was well justified and appropriately responsive to local context and to show how local character has informed architectural outputs which yield an innovative design outcome.
10. This is not a case where the area has no established character or the character is poor quality where there would be a clear and justifiable need to bring about improvements to the existing built environment. So, opportunities to reflect existing materials as part of new developments should be the starting point of any design proposals here, rather than seeking changes in the built environment that divert from current characteristics.
11. The fully rendered walls appear wholly and prominently at odds with the original host building, the semi-detached pair and the other nearby houses and diminish the sense of coherence that enhances the visual amenities of the Wyld Court street scene. The proposal would not be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and would dilute the sense of place provided by the consistency of the well-established palette of brick and tiled materials. The extensions should have ordinarily been clad in brickwork to closely match the original elevations of the existing house as anticipated by the SPD and as approved under application ref. HH/2022/3318.
12. In the same cul-de-sac of 13 houses, it is only at no. 14 where render was used on a 2-storey side extension to evidently match the existing render on the house. However, the overall effect of that development is not comparable to the situation at the appeal property. The gable end of no. 14 is hidden from the street. The white render that has been used on the front of no. 14 is broken up by a tiled canopy across the original house and the side extension, a brick-built porch and the retention or inclusion of vertical red brick columns. Thus, its rendered front face does not appear as stark and unrelieved as the one that is now displayed across the whole front of no. 4. Moreover, no. 14 is tucked away in the bottom corner of the cul-de-sac beyond the turning head and set on a staggered building line (with

- no. 12) behind the line of the other houses to the south. It is nowhere near as prominent as no. 4 and any visual linkage between nos 4 and 14 is minimal.
13. Rendered properties are not prevalent elsewhere in this residential area. The 3 examples provided by the appellant are few in number and not accompanied by any relevant planning history. Render has been used only on a panel between the upper and ground floor levels at the front of 131 Frilsham Way, possibly as a replacement for tile hanging. The similarly located panel at 145 Frilsham Way has been retained with feature cladding material and there is a vertical brickwork column in evidence too. Like the situation at the appeal property, the full coverage of render at 6 Buckhold Drive stands out as incongruous in its own street scene and is not a good example to follow.
14. Whilst applying a sand coloured render might minimize any contrast in colour with the examples of buff and yellow coloured brickwork in Wyld Court, I consider the fully rendered walls to be unacceptable in principle because they do not sufficiently replicate the shading, pattern, texture and pointing of the brickwork or the varied and attractive palette of brickwork and tiles which comprise the main walling materials within this locality. The unrelieved and consistent overall finish provided by the render is disappointing in this particular physical context. There is no specific evidence that it would have been difficult to obtain buff coloured bricks which offer a reasonable match to the original brickwork.
15. I find on the main issue that the exterior rendered finish harms the character and appearance of the Wyld Court street scene and the general locality. As the development is not of high design quality, does not respond to the physical context of the site, fails to respect and enhance its surroundings or contribute positively towards the local identity and character of the area and has not resulted in the housing stock being improved, there would be conflict with the aims of Policies DE1 and H5 of the adopted Coventry Local Plan. The scheme would also depart too far from the SPD and the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework insofar as they relate to achieving well-designed and beautiful places.

Other material consideration

16. Within the context of an appeal under section 78 of the Act it is not within my remit to formally determine whether the rendering of the brickwork of the existing house requires planning permission as claimed by the Council and questioned by the appellant. However, I have considered the evidence as to whether permission is required so far as it is material to this appeal. If the appellant wishes to ascertain whether this aspect of the development is or would be lawful, she may make an application under section 191 or 192 of the Act.
17. In my opinion, within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, rendering over brickwork would be assessed under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A as an alteration to a dwelling rather than under Schedule 2, Part 2, Class C as painting of the exterior of the building. That being the case, it would amount to permitted development subject to the condition that the materials used in any exterior work shall be of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing dwellinghouse.

18. This condition seeks to ensure that any works to enlarge, alter or improve a house result in an appearance that minimises visual impact and is sympathetic to existing development. This means that the materials used should be of similar visual appearance to those of the existing house, but does not mean that they need to be the same materials. For example, the external walls of an extension should be constructed of materials that provide a similar visual appearance - for example in terms of colour and style of brick used - to the materials used in the existing house walls. I find it difficult to accept that rendering the house, in whatever colour, would produce a result that would be of similar appearance to the bricks that were used in the construction of the original house. This limits the weight I attach to the claim made by the appellant but my finding is for the purposes of this appeal only and does not prejudice any future application for a lawful development certificate.

Conclusion

19. My finding on the main issue is decisive to the outcome of this appeal. There is conflict with the development plan. The harm cannot be mitigated by the imposition of planning conditions and it is not outweighed by other material considerations. For the reasons given and taking into account all other matters raised and the absence of objections from local residents, I conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR