



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 April 2025

by A Phillips MPlan BA CertHE MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R3515/W/24/3354720

73 St. Johns Road, Ipswich IP4 5DE

- 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 Glencastle Financial Services Ltd against the decision of Ipswich Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is IP/24/00632/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the cladding of road facing elevations of a commercial building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have omitted the word 'retrospective' as this is not an act of development. During my site visit I observed that cladding had already been installed.
3. The appellant states that the planning application was supported by a Planning Statement. However, the only supporting document of this nature that has been submitted with the appeal is a Design and Access Statement. I have taken this document into account in the determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

5. The local area is a Victorian suburb with a regular rhythm of buildings predominantly defined by the use of red brick. However, there are also examples of the use of render in a variety of colours, painted brickwork, use of mock Tudor style walls, stone built terrace houses with red brick detailing and a few other houses built from either buff/brown or multi-colour bricks. I did not view any other building in the local area, which had cladding as its external appearance.
6. The appeal site is on the corner of St Johns Road and Cauldwell Hall Road and forms the end of a group of single storey flat roofed commercial buildings. The appeal building is pre-dominantly glazed and prior to the development had red brick external walls. The proposal has installed grey horizontal artificial mock timber cladding on the public facing elevations, which appears incongruous and at odds with the appearance of the street scene and area.

7. It is noted that the Ipswich Urban Characterisation Study - California Character Area (CCA) states that new development with a contrasting style is acceptable, though also defines that red brick predominates. The CCA goes on to state that there is scope for additional contrasting finishes 'e.g. timber cladding', subject to their use being justified in terms of their impact on the surrounding streetscape.
8. While I am of the view that there is no requirement to use red brick, the artificial cladding used here does not have the aesthetic quality of timber cladding nor are there other examples of this type of cladding in the local area; as a result, it appears incongruous and detracts from the street scene. Therefore, whilst the CAA notes that there is scope for additional finishes such as timber cladding the proposal conflicts with Policy DM12 of the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document Review 2022, which seeks to protect and reinforce local neighbourhoods, ensure the visual appearance of the street scene and ensure good design. This policy accords with the National Planning Policy Framework that seeks to ensure well designed development.

Other Matters

9. The appellant has provided another appeal statement in their final comments, which is for a site on the opposite side of Ipswich. It is also noted that the Inspector in this case was able to view similar clad dwellings in the street scene. Given the distance and the difference in street scene appearance the appeal decision holds limited positive weight.
10. While I accept that the red brick on the appeal site is not structural, the same is for paint on brickwork that the appellant is referring to in support of their proposal. This argument put forward only has very limited positive weight in favour of the proposal.
11. The appellant's argument that the cladding was required to resolve damp conditions that affecting the buildings use holds only limited positive weight. There are other means by which damp can be managed and no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate it was the external brick that was the problem.
12. It is also acknowledged that it might not be practical or realistic to clean or renovate the existing brickwork. However, it has not been demonstrated that repair/renovation could not be achieved by a less incongruous scheme. Therefore, only very limited positive weight in favour of the proposal is given to this argument.

Conclusion

13. I have found that the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Phillips

INSPECTOR