



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2025

by Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/W/24/3354949

**Alvechurch Sports and Social Club, Radford Road, Alvechurch,
Worcestershire B48 7LD**

- 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 Westbourne Leisure against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/00324/FUL.
 - The development proposed is for the refurbishment of the existing building and extension to accommodate new bed and breakfast accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the refurbishment of the existing building and extension to accommodate new bed and breakfast accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis) at Alvechurch Sports and Social Club, Radford road, Alvechurch, Worcestershire B48 7LD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/00324/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - The character, appearance and significance of the Alvechurch Conservation Area (the ACA); and,
 - The surrounding road network with particular regard to the provision of car parking.

Reasons

Alvechurch Conservation Area

3. The appeal site is located within the ACA a small conservation area that primarily focuses upon The Square and the roads that converge around it. From the submissions before me, and my observations on site, I understand this area follows the layout of the planned mediaeval market settlement. Buildings are predominantly close to the highway and human in scale, with timber frames and brick finishes being characteristic. Although there are some modern buildings within the ACA, these are largely sympathetic. I find the significance of the ACA to stem from the close layout of development along historic roads and the extent to which historic buildings are still intact and readily legible in relation to each other.
4. On the opposite side of Radford Road to the appeal site is Crown House a Grade II Listed Building. It has a broad frontage of white painted brick with timber framed gables and the roof is finished in clay roof tiles. I note from the listing before me

that it is potentially from the 16th Century with later 18th, 19th and 20th Century additions. This building reflects and contributes towards the legibility of the surrounding historic environment and the ACA as a whole.

5. The appeal building is set back from the road, separated from it by a deep car park that wraps around the side of the building. The building is of a more modern design and is visually taller than is typical of the area. Although finished in brick, it has two flat roofs and a mixture of windows that ultimately result in a building that has little cohesion with the ACA. The host building does not, in light of this, make a positive contribution to the conservation area.
6. The proposal would, with the exception of a small number at the rear, replace the existing windows with sashes across all elevations. The fenestration would therefore be coherent across the building and would be more in keeping with the windows within the ACA. Additional windows would be added, including on the front elevation which would break up some of the more prominent blank areas, softening the buildings appearance. Given the above, the proposal would result in some improvement to the building and its contribution to the conservation area.
7. The proposed extension would, by way of its siting at the side of the building, be set away from ready public views. Its prominence within the street scene and ACA would further be limited by the low height of the building and the use of the roof to contain the first floor. The resultant length and height of the building would also be more suggestive of the more human scaled, long rows of buildings around The Square. The proposed extension would not, therefore harm the significance and interest of the conservation area and, would instead, have neutral impact.
8. The proposal would not unacceptably affect the character, appearance or significance of the ACA and would, as such, comply with Policies BDP1, BDP19 and BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan (the DP) and Policy HDNE1 of the Alvechurch Neighbourhood Plan (the ANP). These collectively, and amongst other matters, require developments to be of a high quality that preserves or enhances the character, appearance and significance of heritage assets and their settings. The proposal would also comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) under Section 16 which similarly requires development to sustain and enhance heritage assets.

Road Network

9. The appeal site currently provides 49 parking spaces that serve both the social club and the village centre. Although I understand that the agreement between the social club and Council, for the public use of the car park, expired in November 2024, it appeared to still be used publicly at the time of my visit.
10. The proposal would reduce the provision of parking from the existing 49 spaces to 34 spaces. These spaces would serve the proposed 28 bedrooms as well as the social club. Although there is a suggestion that the car park may also be made available for public use (up to 30 minutes) this is not part of the scheme before me. Therefore, while there would be a loss of spaces and an increase in on-site demand, the restriction of public parking would ultimately result in a reduction in overall demand. I am content that the resultant car park would be able to accommodate the proposal.

11. I note the Council's concerns regarding the loss of public parking at the site but, as the formal agreement has come to an end and could not be relied upon permanently, this has not been determinative in my considerations.
12. I am also content that, should there be any demand that could not be accommodated on site, there is sufficient existing provision within the wider area that could accommodate this. I am mindful that the local Highway Authority concluded similarly. On-street parking to the detriment of highway safety is unlikely to occur given the parking restrictions on the highways around the appeal site.
13. The addition of a bed and breakfast at the appeal site is unlikely to significantly alter the way in which it is served by commercial vehicles, whether delivering or collecting. I am nevertheless content that the types of larger vehicles typically associated with such a use would still be able to manoeuvre on site.
14. There are no proposed changes to the site's existing vehicle access, and I found during my observations on site that visibility from the access was good. It has also not been demonstrated that the surrounding highway network is particularly unsafe. Therefore, the increase in movements associated with the proposal would not be so significant as to adversely affect highway safety. This is especially so when considered against the likely drop in movements associated with public parking on site.
15. In light of the above, the proposal would not adversely affect the surrounding road network as a result of changes to the provision and use of parking provision at the appeal site. The proposal therefore complies with Policies BDP1 and BDP16 of the DP and Policy GAT2 of the ANP. These collectively require regard be had for the road network's ability to accommodate the proposal, and that the development provide sufficient parking in accordance with the Council's car parking standards.

Other Matters

16. Given the orientation and relationship of the proposal to the neighbouring properties, as well as its distance from the shared boundaries and its overall height. The proposal would not result in any unacceptable overshadowing or overbearing impact. Moreover, for these reasons, as well as the proposed obscure glass, the proposal would not result in any loss of privacy to the detriment of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
17. No substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the economy of the surrounding area. This matter has not, therefore, been determinative. While no family rooms have been identified on the provided plans, this is not unacceptable. Moreover, I note that at least one accessible room has been provided.
18. I note the concern raised regarding the use of *Sui Generis* as the building's use class and consider this to be suitable. The proposal would also not result in the loss of an asset of community value.

Conditions

19. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and the advice on planning conditions set out by the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. In the interests of clarity and enforceability, I have made some changes to the wording.

20. For certainty, I have set out the timescale for the commencement of development. A condition is also necessary, for certainty and enforceability, requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
21. Details of the external materials, dressings and features are required to protect the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area. Similarly, to protect the conservation area, it is necessary to secure the provision of the proposed windows. Moreover, given its location within the ACA where archaeological finds may be present, an archaeological investigation is necessary. This must be started prior to the commencement of works to ensure no loss of archaeological interest.
22. The proposed extension has the potential to affect the way in which existing surface water drainage is dealt with. A drainage plan is necessary to ensure that the proposal does not result in risks from flooding or surface water runoff.
23. An arboricultural method statement is needed given the close proximity of trees surrounding the appeal site. To ensure the protection of trees during the works, this document would be required prior to the commencement of works. It should also cover any required pruning and so a separate condition covering this would not be necessary. Also to ensure the protection of any retained trees, a condition requiring the provision of a root protection area is necessary. To ensure biodiversity gain at the site bat boxes would also be required.
24. To ensure highway safety, accessibility for all, and to promote sustainable transport options, conditions are required securing the provision of the parking area, including accessible spaces, and of bike storage.
25. Given the small scale of the development it would be overly onerous, and unnecessary on highway safety grounds, to require the submission of a construction environmental management plan. A travel plan would also not be required given the site's central location, that a business already exists here and, that it already benefits from good access to public transport.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawings: Location Plan, Proposed Block Plan, Site Sections 12C, Proposed Layout 04G, Proposed Elevations 06G, Proposed Window Details 15, Proposed Site Layout 07G, Proposed Room Section 14, General Arrangement and Tracking 01b sheet 1 & 2.

- 3) Prior to their first installation, details of the proposed roof tiles, lintel heads, sills, rainwater goods and the colour of the paint finish of the brickwork shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4) Prior to their first installation, details of the form, colour and finish of the materials to be used externally on the walls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 5) Prior to their first installation joinery details at a scale of 1:5 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 6) The new accommodation should not be occupied until the alterations to the fenestration of the existing building as shown on approved plan 6G, have been installed.
- 7) No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation(s), has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:
 - a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
 - b) The programme for post investigation assessment.
 - c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
 - d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
 - e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation.
 - f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 8) No works or development above ground level shall take place until a scheme for surface water drainage has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall be indicated on a drainage plan. There shall be no increase in runoff from the site compared to the pre-development situation up to the 1 in 100 year event plus an allowance for climate change. If a connection to a sewer system is proposed, then evidence shall be submitted of the in principle approval of Severn Trent water for this connection. The scheme should include run off treatment proposals for surface water drainage. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first use of the development and thereafter maintained.
- 9) Prior to commencement of development, an arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan should be submitted in accordance with the recommendations made within the Ruskins Tree Consultancy Arboricultural Report.
- 10) Prior to the commencement of any works on site including any site clearance, demolition, excavations or import of machinery or materials, the trees or hedgerows which are shown as retained on the approved plans both on or

adjacent to the application site or any within a distance of influence of any ground or development work on any adjoining land shall be protected with fencing around the root protection areas. This fencing shall be constructed in accordance with the guidance in the British Standard BS5837:2012 and shall remain as erected until the development has been completed.

- 11) Prior to first occupation, in order to provide a net gain in biodiversity four schwegler bat and/or bird boxes or equivalent shall be placed on site in suitable locations at least 3 metres above ground level facing to the south or east and kept thereafter in perpetuity.
- 12) The Development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the parking and turning facilities have been provided as shown on drawing 1132-07G.
- 13) The Development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until sheltered, safe, secure and accessible cycle parking (7 spaces) to comply with the Council's adopted highway design guide has been provided in accordance with details which shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the approved cycle parking shall be kept available for the parking of bicycles only.
- 14) The Development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until 2 accessible car parking spaces have been provided and thereafter shall be kept available for disabled users as approved.