
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2025

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C3430/D/25/3369405

5 Sandy Lane, Brewood, Staffordshire ST19 9ET

- 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 Mr Warren Haynes against the decision of South Staffordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00758/FULHH.
 - The development proposed is cladding existing garage with feather edge Oak cladding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development set out on the appeal form differs significantly from that set out on the application form and within the banner heading above. The appeal form states the development as excavation of front garden to create lower level parking, new natural stone walling with soft landscaping behind, refurbishment of existing garage with render and new oak door, replacement of existing concrete drive with new permeable block paving. The plans submitted with the application¹ show the proposed development to more closely reflect the description of development set out on the appeal form. I have therefore assessed the appeal on this basis.
3. I saw on my visit that the front garden had already been excavated and the stone walling and planting to the front of the proposed parking area and along the boundary with the neighbouring property had already been constructed. There was also a new staircase to the rear of the parking area, which is not referred to in the description of development but is shown on the submitted plans. The tegula block paving, render to and new oak door for the existing garage, and planting beds to the side of the garage and front of the staircase had not yet been installed. From my observations, the parts of the development that had been completed appeared to broadly reflect the submitted plans. Nonetheless, for the avoidance of doubt, I have determined this appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.

Main Issue

4. The Council's reason for refusal set out in the Decision Notice refers to harm to the conservation area. However, the Officer Report also identifies potential for the proposal to impact the setting of nearby listed buildings.

¹ Drawing No: 2201/09/PL/06 Revision F

5. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to give special regard to preserving these buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.
6. Following my site visit it was apparent that the proposal would have an appreciable effect on the setting of nearby listed buildings. I have therefore considered this as a main issue of the appeal. The main parties were given an opportunity to make representations on the effect of the proposal on the settings and significance of the listed buildings and have therefore not been prejudiced by me considering the appeal on this basis.
7. The main issues in this appeal are therefore the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area and whether it would preserve and enhance the Brewood Conservation Area; and
 - the setting and significance of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

Character and appearance

8. The appeal site is located in the Brewood Conservation Area (BCA). I have therefore approached this appeal in the context of Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the BCA.
9. From the evidence before me and my observations on site, the significance of the BCA, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is the architectural value of the historic buildings and how their layout and composition relate to the evolution of the village. A key part of its significance is the distinction between the urban character of the village centre, around Market Place and the more rural character of the lanes that extend away from it, which include Sandy Lane.
10. The Brewood Conservation Area Management Plan (2010) (BCAMP) identifies Sandy Lane as the road most heavily 'populated' with trees and, therefore, the road with the most rural appearance. Key characteristics include the roughly hewn sandstone walls that line Sandy Lane and the absence of any pavements. The sandstone walling is complemented by hedging, shrubbery and trees, which confer a rural character. The mature trees and hedging and small areas of sandstone walling are identified as positive features in Area 3, the rural periphery, of the BCA.
11. I saw on my visit that the character and appearance of Sandy Lane differs from the adjacent Market Place. Most of the houses on Sandy Lane are set back from the highway and, on the side of the road where the appeal property is located, they are also set above it, meaning that they are not readily apparent in views along the lane from the town centre. Front boundary treatments are a combination of stone and brick walls with hedging and trees, which creates a large degree of verdancy and provides a degree of enclosure to the lane.
12. I have before me some photographs of the appeal site before any of the proposed development commenced. The removal of the existing bank and vegetation has made the frontage of the appeal property and the neighbouring property, No. 7 Sandy Lane, more open than their immediate neighbours. The overall effect on

views along the lane towards the edge of the village are limited. However, given the loss in the sense of enclosure and the reduced amount of vegetation, the section of Sandy Lane adjacent to the appeal property now feels distinctly different from the sections either side.

13. As a result of the more open frontage, the existing garage is a more obtrusive feature than before. The staircase to the rear of the parking area is also a noticeable and incongruous addition. Together with the loss of the vegetated bank and the introduction of a paved parking area, this would urbanise the frontage of the appeal property to a significant degree and subsequently erode the rural character and appearance of Sandy Lane. I am mindful that the BCAMP identifies the maintenance of this rural character as a key issue for the BCA.
14. The new stone wall to the front of the parking area includes a moderate sized planter, and more planters would be integrated into the frontage as part of the proposal. However, although the new vegetation would help to soften the frontage and integrate it to a small degree into its surroundings, I am not satisfied there would be enough landscaping to fully address the urbanisation of the frontage deriving from the new retaining walls, paved parking area and staircase. Furthermore, there is a noticeable difference between the more formal, structured appearance of the contemporary stone planters and the natural appearance of the vegetated bank and organic arrangement used in the older sandstone walling.
15. For the reasons above, the proposal would significantly erode the character and appearance of the BCA. It may be that some of the elements of the proposal, such as the removal of the vegetation and lowering of the sandstone wall, would not have required planning permission. Nonetheless, while the loss of the vegetation has had a significant effect on both the sense of enclosure and verdant character of Sandy Lane, this does not justify the further loss of enclosure and urbanisation arising from the loss of the bank and introduction of the parking area and staircase, which would not be fully mitigated by the proposed landscaping. These elements of the proposal alone result in appreciable harm to the significance of the BCA, albeit this harm would be localised.
16. In this case, I find that the harm to the significance of the BCA would be less than substantial. As such Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
17. Paragraph 212 of the Framework gives great weight to the conservation of the BCA, irrespective of whether any harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm. In this case, while the proposed changes to the existing garage and driveway would provide a moderate benefit to the character and appearance of the BCA, they would not outweigh the harm I have identified to its significance arising from the other elements of the proposal.
18. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with Policies EQ3, EQ4 and EQ11 of the South Staffordshire Council Core Strategy (2012) (Core Strategy). These policies seek to ensure that the design of all development is of the highest quality that respects local character, distinctiveness, and the historic context of the site, including that of the landscape, as well as conserving and enhancing South Staffordshire's historic environment.

Significance of Listed Buildings

19. The appeal property is also located close to several listed buildings, including the Old House and Grain Ridge, 2 Sandy Lane and Speedwell Castle, which are all Grade II Listed. The significance of these listed buildings derives from their architectural value and historic interest. The Old House is located next to the appeal site. Its listing includes the low brick wall topped with iron railings to the front garden, which is positioned directly adjacent to the proposal.
20. The Old House and Grain Ridge are set back and above the highway a similar distance to the appeal property. They appear within the largely residential context of the houses along Sandy Lane, with the lane providing a rural and verdant setting. From the evidence before me, previously they would have been reasonably well contained by the boundary hedge and vegetated bank between them and the appeal property. However, now these features have been removed, there is a large degree of intervisibility between the properties. Although this provides more space for the buildings to be appreciated, the proposal would be a prominent feature in their immediate setting, especially the Old House.
21. The incongruous features of the proposal, such as the staircase, and erosion of the rural character and appearance of Sandy Lane would harm the setting of these listed buildings, albeit the harm to their significance would be limited.
22. In this case, I find that the harm to the significance of the listed buildings would be less than substantial. Nonetheless, despite this harm being at the lower end of the scale, the proposed changes to the garage and driveway would not outweigh the great weight afforded to their conservation. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with Policy EQ3 of the Core Strategy in this regard.
23. 2 Sandy Lane and Speedwell Castle can be seen together with the frontage of the appeal property in views along Sandy Lane towards Market Place. However, these listed buildings are some distance from the appeal property and do not sit within the rural and verdant section of Sandy Lane. Given this, the impact of the proposal that I have identified on the character and appearance of this part of Sandy Lane, would not harm the setting and significance of these listed buildings.

Conclusion

24. I have found that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the BCA, as well as the setting and significance of nearby listed buildings. This harm would not be outweighed by public benefits. The proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan read as a whole.
25. The environmental benefits arising from the improvements to the existing garage and driveway and the modest economic benefits arising from the construction of the proposal would neither outweigh nor address the harm that I have identified.
26. Having had regard to all relevant material considerations, it has not been demonstrated that there are any of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Hannah Guest INSPECTOR