

PLANNING COMMITTEE

12th September 2024

Planning Application 24/00576/S73 Minor material amendment in Variation of condition 2 of planning permission ref: 23/01115/FUL for patios and balconies to apartments including retaining walls and fencing, acoustic fencing and decorative fencing and gates, cladding, re-roofing and repainting of existing building.

The proposed amendments relate to the provision of insulated brick panels between windows, existing aluminium windows to be replaced with dark grey aluminium and the brick retaining walls to be replaced with concrete walls with composite cladding and wood cladding

Highfield House, Headless Cross Drive, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5EQ,

**Applicant: Mr George Doupnik
Ward: Headless Cross And Oakenshaw Ward**

(see additional papers for site plan)

The case officer of this application is David Edmonds, Principal Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527881345 Email: david.edmonds@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site comprises three adjoining buildings, which were formerly in office use but are in the process of being converted to residential use as per the planning history listed below. The buildings are three storeys in height with one of the three blocks being set at a higher level due to the prevailing topography. The buildings are set in the southern portion of the site, with the northern portion of the site predominantly laid to hardstanding forming vehicular parking. To the north beyond the application site is the water tower and reservoir. The site is bound by Headless Cross Drive to the west, Coldfield Drive to the south and the Bromsgrove Highway A448 to the east.

Proposed Description

The application proposes a series of amendments to works associated with the conversion of the building to residential use.

The approved plans for application 23/01115/FUL comprise: - the addition of balconies to each residential unit, including associated ground excavation/build up at ground floor level to account for the topography of the site. The approved plans illustrate cladding of the external walls with buff brick slips and off-white render, the like of like replacement of roof tiles and painting of external paintwork in light grey. Additionally, the proposals included the installation of 2.5-metre-high acoustic fencing to the Bromsgrove Highway boundary and at the ground floor of the southern patios - brick retaining walls with decorative metal fencing over to ground floor patios on northern elevation and 1.8 metre decorative bow top railings to part of Headless

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Cross Drive boundary with associated 1.8-2 metres high wall, railings and gates to the vehicular access.

The currently proposed amendments involve inserting insulated brick panels between retained window openings to improve thermal efficiency, the replacement of the existing dark brown framed windows with 'anthracite' (dark grey) aluminium windows and for the inner retaining walls, on the north elevation, to be constructed from concrete and be finished with light grey composite cladding and the small sections of external wall on the front, sides and rear, be clad in brown timber.

Relevant Policies & Guidance:

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 39: Built Environment

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Others

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Redditch High Quality Design SPD

Relevant Planning History

21/00521/CUPRIO	Change of use from office (use class B1) to form 69 apartments (use class C3)	Prior Approval Required and Granted	26.05.2021
23/00992/CUPRIO	Conversion of part of an office block into residential flats. 17 x 1 bed and 7 x 2 bed (previous app 21/00521/CUPRIO)	Prior Approval Required and Granted	26.10.2023
23/01236/CUPRIO	Prior approval application (Class MA) for Conversion of part of an office block into 21 residential flats comprising 9 x 1 bed and 12 x 2 bed (previous app 21/00521/CUPRIO)	Prior Approval Required and Granted	19.12.2023
23/01115/FUL	Addition of patios and balconies to apartments including retaining walls and fencing. Acoustic fencing to Northern boundary. Decorative fencing and gates to entrance. Cladding, re-roofing and re-painting of existing building.	Planning Permission Granted, subject to conditions including condition 3 relating to form colour and finish of materials	22.02.2024

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Consultations

Worcestershire Highways - No objection since there is no material nor significant change to the highway/ transportation implications of the development.

Public Responses- A site notice was displayed on 16.07.24 which expired 09.08.24. Press notice – 12/07/24 which expired on 29/07/24. No public comments have been received.

Assessment

This application is submitted under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for an amended design for the whole development granted planning permission under reference no. 23/01115/FUL., If permission is granted it would result in a new planning permission for the whole development on the site. Therefore, the assessment, whilst focussing on the amendments also provides a summary assessment of the whole development, whilst recognising that the design granted permission under reference no. 23/01115/FUL is a fall-back position.

Proposed amendments

Subdivision of the window openings with insulated brick panels. This would result in an appearance which is more residential than office and would create more visual interest in the continuous alignment of the elevations of a large building.

Replacement windows from brown to charcoal grey aluminium. This would harmonise with other aspects of the approved colour scheme and would appear sleeker, than the upvc windows approved under planning permission reference 23/01115/FUL.

Retaining wall cladding. The use of composite cladding for the retaining walls rather than brick slips would introduce an external face material different from the host building and that of the brick slips which are part of the approved design. However, given that the walls on which it would be applied are not conspicuous it would be acceptable. The use of natural wood, rather than brick slips, on the more conspicuous retaining walls would be an acceptable since it would blend in with the proposed wooden acoustic and boundary fencing.

With respect to the proposed amendments officers are mindful that the building sits alone in its own grounds with no nearby direct neighbours, the closest structure being the water tower which is finished in pale/grey concrete. Whilst there are more traditional red brick and slate tile roofed dwellings at Highfield Avenue and Highfield Road to the west, the building neither replicates this style or is read alongside it. Views of the existing building are limited to glimpses from Coldfield Drive through gaps in an otherwise substantial tree screen. Similar significant screening exists on the Headless Cross Drive boundary such that views of the building are not possible.

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Having regard to all these factors it is considered that the revised building material finishes and changes are acceptable.

Remaining development

The remains of the scheme are as previously approved, namely;

External materials –The existing building is finished in dark brown brick. The proposal which sought the over clad high level brick work with ‘yellow stock’ (buff) brick slips and ‘pearl’/ ‘antique’ render the bottom portion of the dwelling in off white render the form, colour and finish were details approved under condition 3 of planning permission reference no. 23/00115/FUL. The metalwork would be painted grey. The roof would be replaced like for like and this would not require planning permission.

Addition of balconies and patios. The cut and fill involved with creation of the patios respects the sloping landform and reduces the extent of retaining walls and the balconies do not cause any overlooking due to the isolation of the application building. Overlooking between balconies would be prevented by 1.8 metre high obscure glass screens and limited overlooking from balconies at higher level to those below.

Installation of fencing –The acoustic fencing will not be prominent in public views from any vantage point except when within the site when it will be seen in the context of the tree screening beyond. The further 2.5-metre-high fencing would benefit the proposed occupiers of these residential units and would be a consistent boundary treatment

Retaining walls with decorative metal fencing over to ground floor patios on northern elevation Given that the land continues to slope upwards towards the car park beyond the patio the extent of these retaining walls will not be visible within the site. There are no changes to the 1.1-metre-high decorative railings above the retaining walls and views of them are limited by the topography. Both would be seen in the context of the existing three storey building

Gate/wall/railings. Given that these will not provide a solid boundary and the landscaping which they will be seen against they are considered visually acceptable part of the proposal is set well in the site access such that it will not appear prominent in wide public views.

Other matters The installation of solar panels is shown on the plans, however this is considered to constitute permitted development by reason of Part 14, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended). The installation of smoke shafts and vents are indicated at various positions on the roof slope. Given the limited number proposed in the context of the size of the buildings subject to the works it is considered that these elements do not

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materially affect the external appearance of the building and therefore do not constitute development requiring planning permission.

Overall, these aspects of the scheme, remain, as they did under consideration of application 23/01115/FUL acceptable with respect to their impact on the character and appearance of the site.

In conclusion, the proposed development would accord with the policies in the adopted local plan, SPD and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than 22nd February 2027

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

- Proposed Site Plan 23/51 P4-G
- Proposed Site Sections 23/51 P6b
- Proposed Elevations 23/51 102g
- Proposed Floor Plans 23/51 P2-B
- Proposed Floor Plans 23/51 P1B

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives

- 1) In dealing with this application the Local Planning Authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner, seeking solutions to problems arising from the application in accordance with the NPPF and Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Authority has helped the applicant resolve technical issues such as:
 - impact of the development upon amenity of neighbours,
 - improving the design of the proposed development,
 - securing highway improvements

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- Others – securing additional plans and an upgrade to proposed cladding facing public areas

The proposal is therefore considered to deliver a sustainable form of development that complies with development plan policy.

Procedural matters This application is reported to Planning Committee for determination because the application is for major development and as such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation.