Date: 19th January 2020

Site Address: Smart Door Solutions Ltd, Smart Innovation Centre, Church Street, Darfield, Barnsley, S73 9LG

Application Description: First floor extension to existing office.

Dear Sir/ Madam

Please find attached an application form and plans for the above planning proposal. A statement to explain the submission is set out below.

Introduction

The existing application site is a single storey, flat roof office block with associated parking and outdoor areas. It was formerly an NHS medical centre but was converted to an office following the grant of planning consent under reference 2018/0275.

The proposal is to extend the building by creating a first floor and adding a pitch roof. The reason for the extension is to adapt the internal space and make it more flexible for the needs of the company, as well as allowing the company to grow.

Background to Business and Reason for Application

The applicants are a Barnsley born business known as Smart Door Solutions Ltd. They are a reputable and specialist business focusing on automatic, commercial and industrial doors. They install, maintain and repair doors, shop fronts and shutters for commercial businesses. This site is used for their office and ancillary storage.

No manufacturing takes place on site, only very minor repairs. The business keeps small stock on their premises to facilitate with their repairs service such as lats and fittings. All larger items are ordered online and delivered direct to site by the manufacturer. Further information about the business can be found on their website at https://www.smartdoorsolutions.co.uk/.

The owners were formerly based in the town centre but moved to this new site, in response to a growth in their company. They took over the building and made it work but always knew that the building would need modernising and adapting to suit their long-term needs. The owners would like to be able to have a modern and open plan office, better staff welfare facilities and more space to better organise their storage.

Some of the problems with the current office including a leaking roof and small rooms. Furthermore, their store is too small and disorganised, resulting in damage to parts. The owners would like to stress that this extension is driven by a desire to improve their workspace, rather than being an expansion in their business. However, the larger internal area will allow the company to take on perhaps 1 or 2 extra office staff in the future.

The current staff members are 14 full time employees. The employees are a mix of engineers, fitters and office staff. There are 4 staff in the office at most times. The remaining employees are on site and only call in to collect small parts/ paperwork or take a break. Most engineers and fitters use the company transit vans, which they normally take home at night, so they are rarely at the site nor do they need to use the onsite parking facilities.

The parking available on site is 11 spaces and a further space for a transit van to park. This is sufficient to accommodate the business needs, given that only 4 staff are in the office on a full time basis. Parking is very rarely at full capacity. Therefore, any slight growth in staff numbers and parking demand (as a result of this development) can be easily accommodated on site.

The opening times of the office is officially 8am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, although sometimes staff arrive early or stay later, depending on their workloads.

Site and Surroundings

The building subject of this application is a flat roof, former medical centre on Church Street. It has an external tarmac area and is bounded at the front by steel gates. The building is set back from the street.

The building is within the Darfield Conservation Area. The special character of the Conservation Area derives from the Grade I All Saints Church and late C18 buildings stretching along the north of Church Street. Across the road from the application site is Thornhill House, a stone built, Grade II listed building and Darfield Council Offices, also a Grade II listed building. Stone walls, gardens and trees are prevalent along the frontage of Church Street. Many buildings within the Conservation Area are C20, resulting in a mixed local vernacular overall. A map from 1888-1913 is below:



The application site is a flat roof building, which has no historic or architectural merit and offers no positive contribution to the Conservation Area. It sits between a two storey, brick built house and a small area of public open space.

The proposal is to add a pitch roof onto the building with gable frontage, resulting in an overall height increase of 4.5m. The eaves of the building will remain the same. The pitched roof will make the building higher and therefore more visible on Church Street, but the design has been kept to a simplistic form so not to draw attention to it. When walking east along Church Street (and if this development is built) then the view would be the sides of two pitched roofs belonging to the site and the house next door. A photo to help explain this view is added below:



The applicant has been advised to keep the design as simple as possible and good quality materials have been recommended to be used. The front gable would have matching materials. The applicant is open to considering a range of roofing materials to suit the Conservation Area, as well as conservation style roof lights. When considering the setting of the property, the overall height increase and form, plus a flexibility with materials, the proposal is considered to have a neutral or perhaps even a slight enhancement to the Conservation Area and the building itself. The effect upon the setting of nearby listed buildings is deemed neutral.

Effect upon Surrounding Land

The property is set within an area that has a mix of residential and commercial uses. Given the proposal will not materially increase staff or visitors to the site then comings and goings is not relevant.

The pitched roof will slope away from the neighbours house thus preventing any overshadowing impact.

The design incorporates a first-floor terrace. This terrace will be used infrequently as it will only be used during working hours, on summer days and when staff are on breaks.

In conclusion, the neighbours are not deemed to affected by the proposal.

Policy Context

Paragraphs 80-82 of the NPPF focuses on growing our economy. The NPPF states great weight should be given to the need to support economic development and decisions “should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest and expand”. This is a proposal that clearly conforms to these aims.

The proposal will result in an neutral or slightly positive enhancement to the Conservation Area, therefore, in compliance with paragraphs 184-192 which advise, in principle that proposals should sustain or enhance the relevant heritage asset, in this case, the Darfield Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings.

The effect to the highway and residential amenity is deemed to be neutral.

I trust this provides you with some background to the application and the design thought to the extension. If you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Maw BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI
Planning Consultant
On behalf of Precision Plan Drawing