

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2017

by K E Down MA (Oxon) MSc MRTPI MRSB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 29 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B3410/D/17/3168294

26 Barton Gate, Barton Under Needwood, DE13 8AG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Paul Mtharu-Bailey against the decision of East Staffordshire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2016/01382, dated 18 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey side and front and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a two storey side and front and single storey rear extension at 26 Barton Gate, Barton Under Needwood, DE13 8AG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/2016/01382, dated 18 September 2016, subject to the following 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 the following approved plans: RA-1 Rev A, PB-2 Rev C and PB-3.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) All new windows shall be set back from the outer face of the wall into which they are installed by a minimum of 50mm.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed two storey front and side extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, its semi-detached pair and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a small, semi-detached cottage set in a long row of dwellings of mixed age, layout, size and design, a short distance outside Barton
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Under Needwood, a settlement of some size that provides a full range of amenities including shops, schools and pubs. There is a footway linking Barton Gate with Barton Under Needworth.

4. There is no regular building line in Barton Gate with some dwellings situated hard against the highway boundary and others set well back. The appeal dwelling and its semi-detached pair are set back considerably further than their immediate neighbours. The semi-detached pair, No 24, has a noticeably wider plot than the appeal dwelling and has recently been substantially extended to the side at two storeys and to the rear at single storey. It also has a front porch with front facing gable and a detached double garage building in the front garden.
5. The appeal dwelling is essentially an unimproved two up two down cottage with a bathroom on the first floor and single storey rear porch. It requires improvement to bring it up to modern standards. The proposed extensions would provide three bedrooms, including one in the roof space, and a small study upstairs and a kitchen/family room and lounge downstairs, making the dwelling suitable for a family.
6. The two storey extension would be to the side and front of the dwelling. A significant gap would remain between the appeal dwelling and its detached neighbour, a sizeable, modern house. The appeal dwelling would also remain set well back from the front of this dwelling. The proposed two storey extension would thus provide a stagger in the building line which would be sympathetic to the layout of buildings in the street.
7. The proposed extension would introduce a forward facing gable with a ridge height set down from the main ridge of the existing dwelling. The roof of the rearward section of extension would tie in with the existing main ridge, providing a seamless link when viewed from the street. Although the extension would be large in proportion to the original dwelling and would alter its appearance, the design would be sympathetic to its character and would reintroduce or echo original details such as window treatments and corbel and brick details. The front extension would be distinct from the original cottage and the set down ridge of the front gable would ensure that the forward projection remained subordinate to the original dwelling, notwithstanding that it would be clearly visible from and closer to the street. Although front facing gables are not characteristic of the original dwelling, they are characteristic of the street scene, including at the adjacent detached dwelling and in the porch at No 24. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed gable would not create an incongruous or unsympathetic addition in this location.
8. The Council suggests that the proposed front extension would unbalance the semi-detached pair but the existing wide side extensions at No 24 already create a significant and clearly noticeable imbalance between the two dwellings, notwithstanding that the ridge is set down and there is a small setback from the main façade. The proposed extensions at the appeal property although different would not worsen this imbalance and in my view would improve the situation by increasing the size and width of the appeal dwelling though a well designed addition.
9. The Council cites Policy DP3 of the East Staffordshire Local Plan (LP), adopted in 2015, which relates to extensions to existing dwellings outside settlement boundaries and suggests that the proposed extensions would not be modest in

relation to the original dwelling or retain its identity. However, larger extensions are compliant with the policy where they are necessary to improve a smaller or substandard dwelling to modern standards and the design criteria in Supplementary Planning Guidance is followed.

10. The Council relies in particular on two paragraphs in the East Staffordshire Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2008. However, the proposed extension complies with paragraph 1.3.78 because it does not step forward of an established building line in the street. In terms of paragraph 1.2.76, I consider that the proposed two storey extension would be sensitive to and harmonious with the original building and whilst it would alter its appearance, its character as a smaller, traditional dwelling of relatively simple design would be retained. The proposed extension would not therefore materially compromise the visual integrity of the original building or conflict with the SPD and would thus comply with Policy DP3.
11. The Council raises no objection to the proposed single storey rear extension which would be of a similar size to that at No 24 and I agree it would be acceptable, harmonising with the existing dwelling and its semi-detached pair.
12. It is concluded on the main issue that the proposed two storey front and side extension would have no materially detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the host dwelling, its semi-detached pair or the surrounding area. In consequence it would comply with LP Policies SP1, SP8, SP24, DP1 and DP3 which, taken together, expect extensions to dwellings in the countryside to be compatible with the character of buildings in the surrounding area and contribute positively to the area by responding positively to the local context, reinforcing character and identity through local distinctiveness and exhibiting high quality of design.
13. It would also comply with the National Planning Policy Framework which expects new development to meet sustainable development objectives in terms of, amongst other things, achieving positive improvements in the quality of the built environment and improving the conditions in which people live so as to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the necessary supply of housing, including in rural areas, and protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.
14. The Council suggests three conditions in addition to the statutory commencement condition. I agree that the development should be carried out in accordance with the approved plans to provide certainty. In addition, materials used in external surfaces should match those used in the existing building and new windows should be set back from the outer face of the wall by a minimum of 50mm in order to protect the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area.
15. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the lack of any third party objection, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR