



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2019

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for

Decision date: 23 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C3430/W/19/3237420

2 Poplars Farm Way, Coven, South Staffordshire WS9 5EQ

- 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 F Berta against the decision of South Staffordshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00296/FUL, dated 1 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a 2-bed dormer bungalow on land adjacent to No 2 Poplars Farm Way, Coven, South Staffs
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a detached bungalow located within the village of Coven. The bungalow has a simple form constructed from facing brick with a gable roof design. A detached garage is located to the side of the property and the garden area extends to the side and rear.
4. Although the property is located on Poplars Farm Way its appearance is similar to dwellings in Willow Close comprising bungalows and two storey dwellings. The area has developed over time and is not homogenous in terms of its character and appearance with properties varying in terms of size, age, design and plot sizes although most properties have distinguishable gaps between them giving the area a sense of spaciousness.
5. The proposed dwelling would result in an uncharacteristic concentration of built form in the side and rear garden of the host property and would reduce the sense of openness that currently exists to the side of it. Its taller appearance and position deeper in the plot would be overly dominant and would have an awkward spatial relationship with No 2 Poplars Farm Way and would fail to integrate with existing development in the area.
6. The appellant has undertaken a spatial analysis of average plot sizes in the area, including the appeal site, that breaks the area into 12 sub areas. In respect of the appeal site the analysis suggests that the existing plot at No 2

Poplars Farm Way is larger than the average plot sizes across most of the sub areas.

7. However, the resultant plot sizes for the proposed development and for the existing dwelling would be less than the average size for all but 3 of the 12 sub areas and considerably less than those in Willows Close (sub area 9) which the host property is more closely related to in terms of its position and appearance. Taking the above into account I find that the resultant plot sizes would not be in keeping with plots sizes in the area, which are more generous in size, or the prevailing sense of spaciousness.
8. As such the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policy EQ11 of the South Staffordshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012). The policy, amongst other things, seeks proposals that respect local character and distinctiveness including that of surrounding development and that contribute positively to the street scene and surrounding buildings in terms of scale, volume and massing.

Other Matters

9. There is a degree of existing mutual overlooking to the rear of the host property and nearby properties. I acknowledge that the proposal would be close to the rear boundary, however, as there would not be any direct overlooking between dwellings or the areas closest to the houses, which tend to be used more frequently. The Council has not raised any concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring residents. I find no reason to disagree.
10. I acknowledge that the proposal stems from a desire to provide suitable accommodation for the appellant's mother. Whilst I have given this matter careful consideration, I am mindful of the advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance that in general, planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. It is probable that the proposal would remain long after the current personal circumstances cease to be material. For these reasons, I find that this factor is not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified in relation to the character and appearance of the area.
11. I note the representations made in respect of the impact of the proposed development upon a nearby trees, wildlife, flood risk and the safe operation of the highway network. There is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that the development would be harmful in respect of these matters, particularly as the Council, the Council's Arboricultural Officer and the County Highways Officer raised no objections to the planning application or the appeal. However, these matters do not justify allowing the appeal given the harm that I have identified in relation to the character and appearance of the area.
12. I acknowledge that the site is located within the 8-15km zone of influence of the Cannock Chase SAC, however, as I am dismissing the appeal on other substantive grounds it has not been necessary for me to consider this matter further.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above the appeal is dismissed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR