



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 February 2020

by Rachel Walmsley BSc MSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C3430/D/20/3245279

124, Enville Road, Kinver, South Staffs DY7 6BN

- 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 C Yarnold against the decision of South Staffordshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00720/FUL dated 2 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is ground and first floor side and rear extension and alterations to existing residential property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The residential area within which the appeal site sits is characterised by frontage properties that vary in age, scale and architectural expression. Many properties have been altered which adds to the variety of style and size of house.
4. Amongst this, there is some unity in the design and scale of houses local to the appeal property. The appeal property, a semi-detached bungalow, shares a form and scale with its adjoining neighbour. A short row of semi-detached bungalows follows on from the appeal site and on the same side the street. Whilst there is not a strong form or architectural expression across these properties, their scale contrasts noticeably with the two storey houses around and so they stand apart in the street scene.
5. The appeal property also shares some characteristics with houses in Cedar Gardens which is dominated by single storey semi-detached bungalows. Two storey properties punctuate the street scene, contributing to the varied character of the area. However, being on a corner plot, the appeal property visually connects the houses on Enville Road with those on the same side of the street as the appeal property and in Cedar Gardens. Furthermore, the site's prominent position means that the existing house plays a key role in defining the character of the area. The front, side and rear elevations of the existing

house on the site are exposed to public views from surrounding streets and so impact noticeably on local character.

6. The bungalows on Enville Road and Cedar Gardens are set comfortably within their plots. Their set back from the street and in from the side boundaries creates a sense of openness. This set back is also evident on the opposite corner of Cedar Gardens to the appeal site, creating an open character at the road junction.
7. Despite the ridge line of the proposed roof complementing that of the neighbouring property, the development would increase the scale and mass of the existing house considerably. This would disrupt the symmetry with the adjoining property and harm the integrity of the existing property as a semi-detached house. In turn, the development would appear incongruous alongside the frontage bungalows to Enville Road.
8. The development would extend across much of the width of the plot, forward of the building lines to Enville Road and Cedar Gardens and run close to the side boundary of the plot. As such, the development would appear unduly large for its plot and overly dominant, harmful to the sense of openness that the corner plot currently provides.
9. The development would be modern and comparatively innovative in design. Advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) promotes such design. Indeed, efforts by the appellant to improve the quality of the built environment is welcomed. However, the Framework also encourages design that respects local context. In this case, the development would contrast starkly with the more modest architectural expressions in the area. The large areas of glazing on the front facing gable and side extension would appear incongruous, making little reference to the style or positioning of windows in surrounding buildings.
10. The appellant draws my attention to a number of houses within the wider area that exhibit poor design or have extensions that have created an imbalance in design. There are no examples before me that have the same context and form of development as that proposed for me to make fair or reasonable comparisons between the two. Nonetheless, each case must be decided on its own merits, according to the facts and circumstances pertaining to that case, and it is on this basis that I have found harm.
11. I note the support from third parties for the development proposed, and the agreement in principle given by the Council. However, I have found that the development would cause harm which would not be outweighed by the lack of objection.
12. I recognise that the existing building does not meet occupier's space requirements and so the development would create a more functional and spacious family home. However, there is nothing before me to suggest that the design and layout proposed is the only way to address occupier's needs. Notwithstanding this, in any development, there is always a balance to be achieved between form and function. In this case, for the reasons given, the development would be incongruous and unduly dominant within its surrounding which, in turn, would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

This would be contrary to policy EQ11 of the Local Plan¹ and the Framework which seek high quality development that contributes positively to the street scene.

Other matter

13. I have had regard to the appellant's grievances concerning the decision-making process and the Council's apparent reluctance to work in a proactive way. It is, however, not within the remit of this appeal to comment on the process leading to the Council's decision.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the development would be contrary to the Development Plan and the Framework and therefore the appeal is dismissed.

R Walmsley

INSPECTOR

¹ A Local Plan for South Staffordshire, Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Adopted 11 December 2012, South Staffordshire Council.