



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 September 2020 by Hilary Senior BA (Hons) MCD MRTPI

by K Taylor BSC (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/D/20/3257268

The Croft, Church Lane, Gayton, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0HL

- 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 & Mrs Mark Stevens against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/31977/HOU, dated 14 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is alterations and extensions to a single storey dwelling to form a two storey dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of The Croft and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The Croft is a single storey, predominantly red brick built, bungalow set back from the road, in extensive grounds which includes other single storey outbuildings. It is within the village of Gayton, which is a sporadic and dispersed settlement.
5. The proposed development would include side and rear extensions to the host property as well as creating an additional storey. It would be finished with white render and a tiled roof with red facing brickwork to the chimneys.
6. Policy C5 of The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (2014) supports proposals for replacement dwellings, and extensions and alterations to existing buildings in areas outside settlements subject to certain criteria. For extensions this states that they should not result in additions of more than 70% to the dwelling as originally built unless the design and appearance of the proposed extension is proportionate to the type and character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. The proposed development would fail to comply with the 70% figure so consideration must be had as to whether the resulting building would be proportionate to the existing dwelling and surroundings.
7. The proposed increase in both the length and the height of the existing dwelling would be such that its original form would be subsumed. When considered in isolation, the extensions would result in disproportionate additions to the existing dwelling.

8. Whilst the current bungalow does not contribute positively to the character of the area, it is of modest form and massing and it is not a prominent feature. The proposed extensions would give the dwelling the appearance of a large dormer bungalow. This design, along with the extensive use of white render finish would not reflect the simple form and historic character of the surrounding buildings.
9. Whilst the dwelling does lie within a large expansive plot, which purely in terms of space would comfortably accommodate a dwelling of the size proposed, the proposal would result in a dwelling with a larger footprint and massing than the original bungalow. Although the dwelling is set back from Church Lane, the additional bulk and massing would be intrusive in the street scene. This would also be exacerbated by the uncharacteristic use of render on such a large scale.
10. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with sub section(ii) of Part C of Policy C5 as it would not be proportionate to the type and character of the existing dwelling and surrounding area. The design approach would result in the dwelling (once extended) appearing fundamentally different to the existing bungalow. Even if I considered that this approach was a sufficient reason to set aside the requirement that extensions be proportionate to the existing dwelling, my concern that the resulting development would not be proportionate or in keeping with the surrounding area would remain. Thus, I would still find conflict with this part of Policy C5.
11. For the above reasons I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area and would be contrary to Policies C5, N1 and N8 of The Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (2014) which together seek to ensure that development takes account of, and respects local character.
12. My attention has been drawn to examples of dwellings in the vicinity of the proposal which are two storey and are of a similar length to the proposal. I am unconvinced that these developments are directly comparable to the proposal before me given the different character of the properties and their immediate context. The three modern detached dwellings referred to are of modest proportions and built of traditional materials. In any event, I have considered this appeal on its own merits based on the site-specific circumstances of the case.
13. I note that there was support for the proposal from the Ward Member and that there were no objections from either the Parish Council or neighbouring occupiers. However, a lack of opposition from third parties is not a ground for granting planning permission and does not overcome the issues identified. In reaching my decision I have also had regard to the personal circumstances of the appellant and the need for a larger family home. However, whilst I am sympathetic to the need, I do not consider that it outweighs the harm I have identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

Hilary Senior

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K Taylor

INSPECTOR