



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 August 2022

by Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B3410/W/22/3297111

3 Fauld Lane, Coton-in-the-Clay DE6 5GY

- 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 Tim Adams against the decision of East Staffordshire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/2021/01381, dated 24 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is to lay a 5m x 6m concrete base a minimum of 100mm thickness (TBC against building regs) and to construct a two car garage/workshop with flat roof, no higher than 2500mm, roller shutter door and pedestrian door to be located facing the house for added security. Located at the front of the property, behind existing hedges that currently stand at a 2500mm
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within a rural setting amongst a short group of semi-detached dwellings. Whilst not uniform in appearance, the dwellings are set back from the road by a deep verge and front gardens which result in a fairly regular pattern along the street scene. Other than some limited extensions to the front of properties, I did not note any development forward of the building line. The appeal site and a number of the neighbouring properties share a mature hedgerow along the front and shared boundaries.
4. The proposal would introduce a new building against the front boundary within the otherwise open space to the front of the dwelling. Moreover, the proposed garage would be of a significant size in comparison to the front garden area, infilling a large portion of it. As a result of its size and location, it would be a prominent feature within public views. Therefore, I find that that the proposed garage would erode the openness and regular pattern of development characteristic to the front of the dwellings, to the detriment of the street scene and therefore surrounding area.
5. Whilst, at their current height the mature hedgerows to the front and sides of the garden may go some way to screen the proposal, they could easily die, be removed or cut back, negating any screening benefit. As such, I afford this

screening very little weight. Although the design and materials of the proposed garage would not harm the rural character of the area, they are not so innovative or high-quality as to be a benefit in themselves. As such, this lack of harm does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area as identified above.

6. Moreover, although the appellant has made reference to the provision of a bin store and a gate, I have not been provided with any details of these. Although a suitably worded condition could ensure their provision, in the event the appeal was allowed, it is unlikely that they would be sufficient to screen or mitigate the harm outlined above and so would not make the scheme acceptable.
7. At the time of my visit, I noted a large storage container within the front garden. Whilst substantial in size, the container is clearly temporary and significantly smaller than the proposal before me. Consequently, this feature does not justify the proposed building.
8. In light of the above, the siting of the proposal would unacceptably affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to Policies SP1, SP8, SP24, DP1 and DP3 of the Local Plan (the LP, October 2015). These policies require, amongst other matters, that developments integrate, and are compatible with the character of the surrounding area, respect the local pattern of development and help create a sense of place. The proposal would also conflict with the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, including Paragraph 130, which are similar to those of the development plan set out above.

Other Matters

9. I am mindful of the appellant's desire to store and protect their classic car. Whilst I have no doubt that the garage would be beneficial to the appellant, the building is likely to be permanent and outlast the appellant's personal circumstances. I therefore give this matter limited weight.
10. The appellant has submitted that the proposed garage would be built with environmentally friendly materials and would not result in any harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. While this may be the case, I find this to be a lack of harm rather than benefits resulting from the scheme. As such I attach these matters neutral weight.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR