



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 November 2022

by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/D/22/3303971

34 Brentwood Drive, Werrington ST9 0DW

- 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 A Hewitt against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref SMD/2021/0832, dated 17 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2022.
 - The development proposed was originally described as 'proposed front and rear extensions and proposed double detached garage.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The double garage originally sought was omitted from the scheme during the course of the application and replaced with a proposed area of hardstanding. This was the scheme ultimately determined by the Council, and I have considered the appeal on the same basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Brentwood Drive is a residential cul-de-sac, with dwellings laid out to one side of a curved road. The layout of the dwellings follows this curve, creating a staggered front building line. This stagger is more pronounced for Nos 16 to 22 at the entrance to the cul-de-sac, which stand at slight angles to the road. Beyond No 22, the road turns and straightens, with a less pronounced, but still slightly curved building line to Nos 24 to 32.
5. No 34, the appeal dwelling, and No 36 stand at the end of the cul-de-sac beyond the turning head with more pronounced steps forward in their front building lines. In views both ways along the cul-de-sac, the staggered building line and overall curved pattern of the built form is clearly visible and forms a characteristic feature of the street scene. No 34, like others in the street, has a shallow front extension at ground floor level.
6. The proposed two storey front extension would extend some 3 metres from the front of the dwelling at ground floor, and some 5.2 metres at first floor level, in effect creating a broad front wing. This would be uncharacteristic of the immediate street scene, as other dwellings do not have such deep or wide

forward projections. The appellant makes reference to additions at Nos 16, 18 and 22. These other dwellings are narrower in width and have a slightly different design to the front elevations. Where they have extended to the front, this appears to have been done through shallow first floor additions above existing ground floor projections. The result, which I observed on site, is that these other dwellings have maintained their forward building lines for the most part, and by extension maintained the consistent stagger to the building line, thus preserving the overall pattern of development.

7. Conversely, the proposed extension would fail to respect the existing pattern, as it would extend out to align with the front elevation of No 36, thereby eroding the consistent step in the building line between Nos 32, 34 and 36. Instead, No 34 would become visually dominant at the end of the cul-de-sac through the substantial height and depth of massing the front that would significantly exceed anything visible to neighbouring dwellings. The resulting size of the dwelling would upset the consistent scale of the surrounding built form and would fail to reflect the prevailing pattern and form of front extensions within the street. This would be further indicated by additional elements not seen to the same extent on neighbouring dwellings, including three rooflights across the pitched roof of the single storey part of the extension and a prominent set of steps with railings to access the front door, which would add to the conspicuous and dissonant appearance of the enlarged dwelling in the street scene.
8. The Council's other concern relates to the loss of an area of soft landscaping to provide off-street parking that would be displaced by the proposed extension. The hardstanding would be located opposite the dwelling in the area where the garage was originally proposed. I note that this area forms part of the original landscaping of the development and is presently laid to grass. Whilst the hardstanding could be designed to integrate with the existing turning head, it would be emblematic of the oversized scale of the proposal in that it would displace parking to the opposite side of the cul-de-sac, adding to the incongruous effect of the development and detracting from the overall quality of the street scene by eroding an established area of soft landscaping.
9. The appellant refers to the availability of permitted development rights¹ forming a fall-back position in this respect. I have no evidence, such as a lawful development certificate, which confirms such a fall-back position. Nonetheless, as the impetus for the hardstanding appears to be primarily to compensate for loss of existing parking space in front of the dwelling, I am not persuaded that the appellant is likely to pursue such a fall-back scheme should permission for the front extension not be forthcoming. Therefore, I afford limited weight to the argued fall-back position.
10. The Council did not oppose a proposed rear extension. I have no substantive evidence before me to reach a different view. However, the absence of harm in respect of this element of the proposal would not justify the other elements which I have found would be harmful.
11. For these reasons, therefore, I conclude that the proposed front extension and hardstanding would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict with Policy DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local

¹ Schedule 2, Part 1, Class F of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended) - hard surfaces incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse

Plan (September 2020), which requires all development to be well-designed and to reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area, including by respecting the site and its surroundings through its scale, height, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Other Matters

12. I have noted the comments of a neighbour with respect to loss of light and overshadowing from the proposed rear extension. However, the Council did not refuse the application in respect of the effects on neighbours' living conditions. Given my findings on the main issue point to the dismissal of the appeal, it is not necessary to consider this matter further, as it would not alter the outcome of the appeal.
13. Notwithstanding the concerns above regarding the hardstanding, no objection was raised to the provision of parking spaces from a highway safety perspective, and I have no reasons to find otherwise in this respect.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, taken as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that planning permission should be forthcoming in spite of this conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

K Savage

INSPECTOR