



# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 February 2023

**by R Hitchcock BSc (Hons) DipCD MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 13 April 2023**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P3420/W/22/3305762**

**57/59 Stafford Crescent, Clayton, Newcastle Under Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 3DZ**

- 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 Edgeley Builders against the decision of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 22/00350/FUL, dated 20 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2022.
  - The development proposed is demolition of no 57/59 Stafford Crescent and building 4 2 bed terraced houses.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matters

2. The description appearing in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. During the Council's consideration of the planning application, the design of the scheme was amended, including an altered roof form. The description was subsequently also amended to 'Demolition of no 57/59 Stafford Crescent and building of 4 town houses'.
3. As the Council made its decision having regard to the amended scheme, so shall I. For the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the following plans: AP/57/59/2022/1A (hip design), AP/57/59/2022/2A and AP/57/59/2022/3.

## Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the locality.

## Reasons

5. The site lies within a residential area consisting of semi-detached and terraced houses. The predominantly 2-storey units are grouped in different phases of development along Stafford Crescent. The central section of the road in which the plot is located consists of semi-pairs set behind front gardens and roadside verges. Despite some individual alterations and various colour finishes, the buildings have a strong group character. This derives from their consistent scale, simple form, design and external materials. Notably, the shallow roofs and upper elevations are mainly clad in corrugated sheeting with metal flue chimneys extending above the roof line.

6. The scheme would see the demolition of the semi pair and replacement with a 2-storey central block incorporating ground and first-floor flats bookended by narrow 2-storey units. The building would have short projecting front gables, a deep profile and a hipped roof form to the sides and rear. It would be constructed with brick walls and a concrete tiled roof.
7. As one of the pairs set within the characteristic group, the introduction of a contrasting replacement building would stand out within it. Although the design takes some cues from development elsewhere on the road and would respect the regular spacing between the consecutive buildings, it would undermine the value of the consistent character of development straddling this part of the road.
8. Whilst it would not be necessary to faithfully replicate the existing dwellings, the design of the scheme would introduce starkly contrasting elements to the group. It would have little of the simplicity of the form of the existing building or the split finishes to the elevations.
9. It would introduce a deep building profile that would be clearly observable due to the staggered height of buildings along the incline of the road. This and the contrasting roof form would appear highly conspicuous. The excessively deep flank elevations and uncharacteristically small principal window openings would contrast with both the existing building and other house types elsewhere along Stafford Crescent. Together, those contrasting design elements would jar with the consistent appearance of the neighbouring buildings and the wider value of the group character on this section of the road.
10. Furthermore, the extent of forecourt parking would dominate the frontage. Although there are examples of paved frontages, the majority retain meaningful areas of landscaping that contribute positively to the streetscene. The requirement to accommodate additional parking as a consequence of introducing 2 additional units of accommodation would not be a positive contribution to the Stafford Crescent streetscene.
11. The appellant contends that the existing buildings are in a poor state of repair, in part, due to their steel sections. However, this is not a strong argument to justify a departure from adopted policies seeking the design of new development to respond to its context.
12. For the above reasons, I find the scheme would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the locality. It would conflict with Policy CSP1 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026, the guidance set out in the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework as they seek a high quality of design which respects the character, identity and context of their locations.

### **Other Matters**

13. I note other concerns raised by third parties, including those in relation to parking and highway safety. However, pursuant to my finding on the main issue, my decision does not turn on those matters.
14. I acknowledge that the Council's Planning Committee came to a different view to that of its professional officer/s. However, this is not a matter in favour of the proposed development.

## **Conclusion**

15. 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, I conclude that the appeal should not be allowed.

*R Hitchcock*

INSPECTOR