

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2023

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/D/22/3312200

Earls Rock, Red Road, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4BU

- 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 Prime Oak against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref SMD/2022/0486, dated 31 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of three bay oak framed garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appellant draws my attention to contradictions in the Council's officer's report. Whilst the appellant questions "the validity of the application process as a whole," there is nothing before me that leads me to conclude that the application process was not valid.
3. The appellant does not feel that the Council has worked proactively in respect of this case. This is a matter between the appellant and the Council.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property comprises an isolated, extended detached dwelling in private grounds accessed via a long track and located alongside a public right of way. There is a long driveway from the entrance to the property to the dwelling house.
 6. The property is located in the Dimmingsdale Valley, an area of countryside containing public rights of way, ancient woodland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located close to the appeal site.
 7. During my site visit, I observed the surrounding area to be notably green and rural in appearance. The grounds of the appeal property contain water features
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and are generally green, partly open, spacious and appear in keeping with their rural surroundings.

8. The proposed development would comprise a large and tall garage structure. It would be located towards the entrance to the appeal property, adjacent to a wall. The presence of the existing wall would not serve to obscure the proposal to any meaningful extent, as much of its considerable built form would be clearly visible from various locations.
9. The proposal would introduce a large form of development in an area where no such development currently exists and in so doing, I find that it would appear in stark contrast to the more open and spacious qualities of this rural area.
10. The scale of the proposal, combined with its brick and timber-cladding materials and hipped roof form, would result in the proposal drawing attention to itself as a large, visually intrusive addition of domestic appearance, out of keeping with its rural surroundings.
11. The proposal would appear as an incongruous feature from a wide range of locations, most notably from the public right of way which runs close by. The harm arising from this would be exacerbated as a result of the proposed siting of the structure – a long distance away from and set forward of, the host dwelling.
12. Consequently, the proposal would fail to relate well to the host dwelling and this would emphasise its incongruous appearance and would result in a development that would compete visually with the host property.
13. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework; to Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) Policies SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3; to the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: The Design Principles for Development; and to the Council's Supplementary Planning Document: Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide (2018), which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR