



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2024

by Mrs Chris Pipe BA(Hons), DipTP, MTP, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26TH June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/W/23/3335985

Land at Puddle Hill, Hixon, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0NG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Miss Buckley & Mr Marshall against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 21/34598/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Retrospective application for change of use - Extension of residential curtilage into agricultural land. Erection of steel framed building onto existing concrete slab..
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. At the time of my site visit, I observed that the appeal site had the appearance of being incorporated into the boundary of Wassand, the Appellants property. The application has been submitted part retrospectively, with the change of use having been implemented; I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area in general.

Reasons

4. The Council confirm that the appeal site is outside of the lawful domestic curtilage of Wassand and within countryside, comprising agricultural land.
5. Policy E2 of the Local Plan confirms that rural development will only be permitted when criteria outlined in the policy is satisfied. I have not been provided with substantive evidence to confirm compliance with the criteria detailed in Policy E2.
6. The hardcore surface associated with the retrospective change of use is harsh in the context of both the adjacent domestic property and the agricultural land. The fencing in situ separating the remaining agricultural land with the appeal site comprises concrete posts with either timber fence or mesh material, this along with the hardcore, machinery and associated structures including floodlights which I understand is not part of the proposal before me give the appeal site a commercial aesthetic. Notwithstanding this I am conscious that

the proposal is for use of the land as residential in association with the Appellants property Wassand.

7. Mature landscaping does exist along the southern boundary of the appeal site which does screen the site to a degree from Puddle Hill. Nevertheless, the proposed development would be visible to surrounding properties and public vantage points, for instance, in Swanmoor Drive.
8. The Appellant has drawn my attention to a previous building on the site and the historic use of the appeal site in association with the adjacent property. I have not been provided with substantive evidence to demonstrate that the previous use of the site was residential, nor that it was lawful and note that the previous building has now been demolished.
9. Whilst the removal of the building, which was in a poor condition visually has benefitted the area this along with the retention of a concrete base is not substantive reasons to allow the erection of another building, and change of use of the land.
10. The proposed building would not complement the materials or design of the adjacent property, or the surrounding area.
11. The intrusion of urban features including the proposed building into the agricultural land would be out of keeping with the setting of the appeal site. The appeal proposal before me fails to have regard to the local context and existing settlement and has introduced a stark urbanising form of development into the countryside.
12. I find that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area in general.
13. There is conflict with Policies EN2, N1 and N8 of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (2014) (the Local Plan) which seek amongst other things for developments to be of high design standards, respecting the character of the settlement, its landscape setting and protecting rural areas.

Conclusion

14. For the above reasons I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

C Pipe

INSPECTOR