

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2024

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/D/24/3345517

The Green, Church Lane, Aston by Stone, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 0BJ

- 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 Mr Stephen Mitchell against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/38551/HOU.
 - The development proposed is extensions to front, rear and sides of dwelling, with side extension to detached garage and games room above.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached dormer bungalow of brick and tile construction, surrounded by a large garden. There is a large detached garage/outbuilding separated from the house by its driveway.
 4. The appeal dwelling is set back from Church Lane, behind a hedge and front garden and is well-separated from its nearest neighbour, with garden areas and trees between the two dwellings.
 5. The appeal property is situated within the open countryside. Whilst there are a very small number of buildings, including the visually attractive St Saviour's Church, scattered around, the area is notably rural in character.
 6. The appeal property is located along a narrow country lane and the area is surrounded by farmland. The presence of trees, hedgerows and fields, along with the relatively flat nature of the surroundings, provides for a notable sense of greenery, openness and spaciousness.
 7. The appeal dwelling is wide and whilst a dormer bungalow, with rooms across the majority of its first floor, it appears relatively tall. Combined, the house and large garage appear as two substantial buildings within rural surroundings.
-

8. The Plan for Stafford Borough Policy C5 limits the scale of alterations to dwellings in the countryside to additions of no more than 70% of the dwelling as originally built. This is intended to protect the character of individual properties and their surroundings.
9. The proposed development would result in substantial alterations to the appeal property. The appellant and the Council agree that the changes would exceed the 70% limit referred to above.
10. The proposed re-modelling of the dwelling would result in extensive changes, including the creation of a large and prominent full-height gable front extension, providing a main entrance to the dwelling and a prominent full-height gable-fronted side extension.
11. Together, these two elements would serve to transform what already appears as a wide and substantial dwelling into what would appear as an even wider and much bulkier dwelling. Further, I find that these considerable changes, due to their scale and form, would appear as incongruous features that would overwhelm and dominate the original appearance of the dwelling.
12. The harm arising from this would be exacerbated by the use of large areas of glazing and the addition of a single storey flat roof extension to the main entrance at the front of the house. These features would add to the visual prominence of the proposed development and the overall impact would be the creation of what would appear as a large and bulky dwelling that would draw undue attention to itself, to the detriment of the area's green, open and spacious attributes.
13. Further to the above, I agree with the Council's consideration that the increase in the visual bulk of the dwelling that would arise from the proposal and which would be unsympathetic to the rural character of the area, would be compounded by the proposed extension of the large detached garage.
14. Taking all of this into account, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework; to Plan for Stafford Borough (2014) Policies N1 and C5; and to the Council's Design Supplementary Planning Document (2018), which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Other Matters

15. In support of his case, the appellant refers to other developments within the wider vicinity. However, none of these comprise developments and circumstances so similar to the proposal before me as to provide for direct comparison and in any case, I have found that the proposal would result in significant harm and this is not something that is mitigated by the presence of other developments elsewhere.

Conclusion

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

N McGurk

INSPECTOR