



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 October 2024

by N Duff BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/W/24/3346870

Rosehill, Nabb Lane, Alton, ST10 4AY

- 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. P. Bain against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref is SMD/2024/0108.
 - The development proposed is Erection of 2no. Holiday Lodges
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has referred to the effect of the proposal on heritage indicating some harm, due to this, together with my statutory duty under S66(1) and S72(1) of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990) (as amended) (the Act) I have included these matters in my assessment of the first main issue.

Main Issues

3. The main issues of the appeal are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including the significance of the Alton and Farley Conservation Area (CA) and whether the proposed development would preserve the setting of the Grade II Listed buildings known as Nabb Cottage and Paradise Farm.
 - The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular regard to noise and disturbance.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a detached property, historic in character set in substantial grounds with a reasonably sized gravelled parking and turning area, some outbuildings and two dedicated accesses, a vehicular access and a pedestrian access. The developed part of the site is a relatively self-contained area and well screened from Nabb Lane, however there are gaps through vegetation and between buildings allowing views into the site. The wider grounds especially those to the northeast are less well screened and more open in character.

5. The appeal site is located off Nabb Lane, a rural lane on the southern edge of Alton. The immediate area is characterised by low density development of large single historic properties constructed from traditional materials such as brick and stone, on generous plots interspersed within farmland. With higher density regular development located in Alton to the north. The area possesses a quiet rural character.
6. The proposed development would see the introduction of two timber clad holiday lodges with attached terrace areas. These would be located alongside an existing brick detached garage which benefits from planning consent for a holiday lodge. The appeal scheme, along with the previous consent would result in a total of four units of accommodation at the site and based on the information provided in the appellant's evidence would be located outside of the former orchard.
7. The proposed lodges would be located behind the dwelling when viewed from Nabb Lane and would be faced in timber. The use of timber cladding, whilst helping the buildings appear incidental and less permanent in nature, would not match that of the host dwelling nor of surrounding development and would appear incongruous in this setting. It is noted that reasonable screening exists to certain areas of the site through planting and more substantial boundary treatments. However, screening can be patchy or seasonal in nature and more robust screening could appear contrived in this rural setting. The development could be seen from neighbouring fields to the east and glimpsed from the north beyond the perimeter of the appeal site, and from Nabb Lane when the entrance gates are open which could increase in frequency given the more intense use of the site. The lodges when viewed together with the existing lodges part of the previous approval at the site would result in a tightly packed row of buildings. This uniform pattern of high-density development together with the substantial size and proposed material palette of the new lodges would be discordant with its immediate surroundings and at odds with the character of the area.
8. The site is located to the south of the CA by a significant distance. The CA covers a very large area encompassing a portion of the Churnet Valley and two main settlements, Alton and Farley. The Alton and Farley Conservation Area Appraisal recognises that the southern part of the CA which includes part of Alton, derives its significance from historic buildings from 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, characterised by piecemeal construction in a variety of materials including sandstone and brick.
9. Given the distance of the appeal site from the CA, the intervening landscaping and modern housing to the south of Alton separating the appeal site from the CA, I do not consider that the proposal would harm the significance of the CA through development affecting its setting.
10. A Grade II Listed Building, Paradise Farm is located to the south of the site and is at an angle to Nabb Lane. The statutory list description identifies the building as a farmhouse and stable from mid-18th century with 19th century extension constructed from red brick, its significance is derived from its age, external detailing, particularly window detailing. Due to the proposed position of the lodges on the site behind Rosehill, intervening mature hedgerows, the lane, and distance from the proposed development, I am satisfied that the

proposal would preserve the significance of the heritage asset, in so far as it derives from its setting.

11. A second Grade II Listed Building, Nabb Cottage, is located to the north of the site beyond the immediate neighbouring property to the north on the corner of Nabb Lane and Denstone Lane. The statutory list description identifies the building as a house and pair of attached cottages, early 18th century with late 18th century addition and later alterations. Its significance is derived from its age and brick detailing, and internal and external features including an early 18th century staircase. This building is located a significant distance to the north on a main thoroughfare, and due to the vehicular traffic, intervening property, gardens and boundary treatments, I am satisfied that the proposal would preserve the significance of this heritage asset and the contribution it makes to the building's setting.
12. Given the above, the proposal would preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the nearby CA. This would satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 205 of the Framework and policy DC2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) (SMLP) which seeks to conserve heritage assets.
13. However, although I do not find harm in these respects, I nevertheless find that the proposed development would cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. It would therefore conflict with Policies SS8, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC3 of the SMLP which between them require developments to protect and enhance the historic character of villages, landscape and quality of the countryside and require developments to be of high quality with detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Further, they seek to resist development that would have an adverse impact on the character or setting of a settlement.

Living conditions

14. The appeal site has a neighbouring dwelling immediately adjacent along the northern boundary, along which the pedestrian access to the site runs. The pedestrian access provides a safer connection to the village for pedestrians as it has better visibility than the vehicular access further down Nabb Lane which is a single-track road. Therefore, the pedestrian access, which is existing, is likely to see frequent use with holiday makers using the site travelling into the village for services and facilities. In addition, the site has very large outdoor spaces including proposed terraces on the lodges. The proposed intensification of the site with an additional two holiday lodges totalling four could see numerous guests using the facilities at the same time, either in large groups or four separate groups, and using the outdoor spaces for prolonged periods of time for leisure purposes which would naturally generate noise.
15. The potential for noise and disturbance from those using the pedestrian access, outdoor spaces, parking area and terraces could therefore have an unacceptably detrimental effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. This would affect the enjoyment of the neighbouring garden and would be particularly harmful by way of noise and disturbance.
16. The appellant has suggested imposing conditions that control noise, such as banning amplified music and fireworks. Whilst this would control noise to some degree, this would not overcome the harm to living conditions identified and

further restrictions to reduce noise could prove difficult to enforce and be unreasonable given the proposed use.

17. For the reasons mentioned the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to noise and disturbance and would be contrary to policy DC1 of the SMLP which seeks to ensure that new development protects residential amenity including harm from noise.
18. Local Plan Policies SS8 and SS10 set out what forms of development are acceptable in the larger villages and other rural areas of the Local Authority area and do not directly link to the harm identified in this issue and therefore I find no specific conflict with policies SS8 and SS10 when reaching my conclusion on this main issue.

Other Matters

19. The development would give rise to some economic and social benefits including contributions to visitor accommodation, which are identified as in need in the Tourism Strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands 2022-2027. This aims to expand, improve and encourage the development of accommodation to attract overnight visitors. The proposed accommodation units on the edge of Alton would encourage visitors to stay in the area for prolonged periods, increasing visitor spending in local shops and services which are located in close proximity, and therefore partly comply with policy E4 of the SMDP in this regard. However, fails to fully comply with the policy due to the harm identified in the main issues. Due to the modest scale of the scheme, the benefits outlined above would only attract limited weight and would not outweigh the harm identified in the main issues.

Conclusion

20. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

N Duff

INSPECTOR