



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2024 by T Morris BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by Chris Forreth BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/D/24/3348989

Stone Cottage, Doley Road, Bishops Offley, Stafford, Staffordshire ST21 6ET

- 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 & Mrs Richard & Rowan Green & Joachim against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/38534/HOU.
 - The development proposed is part demolition / 2 storey extension and alterations.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for part demolition / 2 storey extension and alterations at Stone Cottage, Doley Road, Bishops Offley, Stafford, Staffordshire ST21 6ET, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/38534/HOU, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos 03 (Proposed Floor Plans), 04 (Proposed Elevations - with the exception of the details of the materials shown under the materials key) and 05 Rev A (Block Plan and Site Location Plan).
 - 3) Notwithstanding the details of the materials shown under the materials key on drawing no 4 (Proposed Elevations), no development above ground level shall take place until the details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) No site clearance, preparatory work or development shall take place until the tree protection measures identified in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement (including the BS5837:2012 Assessment) have been implemented in full on site. The tree protection measures shall not be altered or removed until the completion of the development.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. Stone Cottage is a detached dwelling situated within a rural area. The site is surrounded by open countryside as well as other buildings along Doley Road towards Offleybrook Lane, some of which are of a substantial size. The dwelling sits close to Doley Road and is within a generous plot with a large rear garden. The main part of Stone Cottage is two-storey in scale and features stone elevations, a gable roof with inset dormer windows and an orderly window layout. These features give the cottage a pleasing rustic appearance which makes a positive contribution to the street scene along Doley Road. However, when viewed from the rear garden, the cottage has a more fragmented appearance due to its side and rear extensions which feature mono-pitched and flat roof forms as well as red brick elevations.
5. The site is located outside of a settlement as identified in the Council's spatial principle 3 (SP3) of The Plan for Stafford Borough (2014) (TPSB). Policy C5 of the TPSB sets out that in areas outside settlements, extension or alteration of an existing building should not result in additions of more than 70% to the dwelling as originally built, unless the design and appearance of the proposed extension is proportionate to the type and character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. Whilst there is disagreement between the main parties regarding the actual percentage increase, it is common ground that whichever figure is used it would be above the 70% threshold. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with Policy C5 unless it meets one of the exceptions set out in the policy.
6. In that regard, the Council consider that whilst the extension would be large, it would still be proportionate and would read as a subordinate addition to the dwellinghouse. Quite simply, I agree with that assessment as the scale of the extension is such that, even with the existing extensions, the dwelling would still be of an appropriate size in this context given its generous plot much of which would remain undeveloped. I am also conscious of the considerable size of some of the buildings in the surrounding area.
7. Turning to the detail of the extension, it would incorporate modern style glazing and different fenestration to the rear aspect. However, this would appear as a limited deviation from the overall traditional character of Stone Cottage. Furthermore, given that the modern style alterations would be contained to the rear of the dwelling, it would not interfere with the more traditional front elevation of the building which is the main element that would be viewed by passersby either from the public highway or from users of the public right of way. Therefore, whilst the modern style additions would be different, given their relatively limited scope and their restricted position to the rear of the dwelling, they would not unacceptably detract from the traditional character of Stone Cottage or key views across the countryside.
8. In respect of the proposed materials, I share the Council's concerns regarding the use of facing brickwork. This is particularly the case in respect of the front elevation to ensure that when viewed from the Doley Road the extension would maintain the rustic appearance of the dwelling. It is also important that on other elevations the proposal successfully integrates with the original building as a whole. The Appellant

has confirmed that they would be willing to use stone to match the main part of the dwelling and I am therefore satisfied that this could be secured by planning condition.

9. In summary, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area and would accord with Policies C5 and N1 of the TSPB which, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that extensions are proportionate to the type and character of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area and are of a high design standard which takes account of local character and context including the use of locally distinctive materials. It would also accord with the overarching design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Stafford Borough Council Design Supplementary Planning Document (2018), which advises that all extensions and alterations, particularly those incorporating modern design approaches, should be considered holistically with the original/main building to avoid an awkward jarring of materials and form.

Conditions

10. Other than the standard time limit condition, it is necessary to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the reason of certainty. As detailed above, a condition relating to external materials is also necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the area.
11. The council have also suggested a condition relating to the submission and provision of tree protection details. The submitted plans with the construction exclusion zone (CEZ) for these trees is not to scale, the identified radii for such exclusion zones for the most important trees (T22, T24 and T25) are set out in the BS5837:2012 Assessment. In respect of tree group 1/tree T23, the width of this group and CEZ corresponds on the currently submitted plan. Whilst a condition to ensure the protection of the retained trees is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the area, I have therefore amended the requirements of the councils suggested condition accordingly.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed since it would comply with the development plan.

T Morris

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence, and my representative's report, and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

Chris Forrett

INSPECTOR