



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2025

by **A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B3410/D/25/3361056

Polly Rose Cottage, Back Lane, Yoxall, Staffordshire DE13 8PF

- 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 Mr and Mrs French against the decision of East Staffordshire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is P/2024/01224.
 - The application is for erection of two storey and part single storey rear extensions including juliette balcony, raising of roof height and roof alterations, open porch to the front elevation and formation of driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area with particular reference to the effect of the proposal upon the vernacular character of the existing house within its particular context.

Procedural Matter

3. The description of development used in the heading above differs from that used by the Appellant in their original application form and is the description used by the Council in their decision notice. Although similar I consider that this description better reflects the nature of the development proposed.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached cottage that fronts onto a very attractive country lane that is Back Lane near Yoxall. Back Lane runs south from the village of Hadley End and contains several houses of a vernacular nature, often set up close to the road frontage making them very visible within the streetscene to each other.
5. Polly Rose Cottage is a four bay house of two storeys that appears originally to have been of three symmetrical bays with a central doorway and gable end chimneys, with central stair. The two storey end bay appears, through its change in window openings and eaves detail, as a later extension which seemingly made the building longer.
6. The house is of an obvious vernacular character that is reflected in the proportions of the building itself, its plan form, fenestration patterns, low eaves line and the brick dentilled eaves which I suspect could provide good evidence to confirm the

- precise date of this building. To the rear there is a long catslide roof that extends to a single storey rear wing with a slender chimney.
7. A rear flat roof two storey extension and a small porch conservatory represent the latest additions to the property and these largely fail to take the necessary cues from the main ranges to be successful. In this respect they do somewhat detract from the character of the building as a whole.
 8. Notwithstanding these later changes however, the cottage does reflect the evolution of a typical vernacular building, and in this respect, it has group value with those similar buildings along Back Lane, several of which are visible within views of or near to the appeal site. As such, I consider that the building as it currently stands contributes in a positive manner to the character and appearance of the streetscene and that it has obvious historical connections to the evolution of the area as a whole.
 9. The proposal before me seeks permission to quite radically alter this cottage through removing much of the original fabric of the building. This would firstly include raising the existing eaves line across the whole of the building's frontage, the creation of an open plan living area within along with a new staircase. It would also create two prominent gable extensions to the rear and large amounts of glazed bifold doors. The chimneys would also be removed and new ones rebuilt to the respective gable ends.
 10. In assessing this appeal, I am aware of the emphasis placed upon good design through Local Plan Policies SP24, DP1 and DP3 as well as the importance that the local community place upon protecting and enhancing the historic rural character of Yoxall within the Yoxall Neighbourhood Plan, all of which require such proposals to represent good design that protects and manages the historic character of the area. These policies reflect the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) also in its approach to the same.
 11. The Appellant's have not provided me with much evidence of the historic evolution of this property that could help justify or explain their plans. Instead, they have relied upon the flat roof extension to the rear and the render finish to help support this scheme stating their opinion that this is not a good example of a traditional workers cottage. Although it may be true that the rear flat roof extension is unsightly and would be improved through such a scheme, this does not, diminish the local importance of this building to the area.
 12. Ultimately, this existing property appears to have a significant history that is reflected in its varying phases of development as well as its vernacular proportions, details and finishes as well as its contribution to the local character of Back Lane. The scheme before me would remove nearly all of this and, although the building's footprint would remain very similar, its elevational detail and any hints of the building's clear historical evolution would be erased both in plan form and in elevation. The front elevation would therefore lose the historic dentilled eaves, window proportions and original plan form that can still be read, and the end and rear elevation would lose the catslide roof which itself is of some character.
 13. Although there are clear opportunities to develop and extend this property and remedy the poor flat roof extension of the past, perhaps through new ranges that maintain and evolve the existing historic house to the rear, the proposals before me

would lose any remaining character that is present here. In turn, they would not only subsume this vernacular building, but would also erode the historic relationship and the character of Back Lane which is currently so charismatic through the presence of these modest cottages along its length.

14. Although the Appellant has provided evidence of other properties nearby that have been either modified or demolished and rebuilt, I have very little evidence as to the precise reasons behind these decisions to allow me to give them any significant weight.
15. Ultimately, the proposal before me would not contribute in a positive manner to the character and appearance of the area and it would dominate and remove the attractive vernacular qualities that this building currently exhibits. These are not outweighed by the changes proposed. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policies SP1, SP8, SP24 and DP1 and DP3 of the East Staffordshire Local Plan as well as Policies D1 and D2 of the Yoxall Neighbourhood Plan and the aspirations for good design as reflected in the East Staffordshire Design Guide and the Framework itself.

Conclusion

16. As such, for the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR