



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2025

By G Powys Jones FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/D/25/3367621

Rowan House, Watery Lane, Haughton, Stafford, ST18 9EH

- 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 Mrs Angela Hopper against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/40212/HOU
 - The development proposed is the erection of a carport.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the erection of a carport at Rowan House, Watery Lane, Haughton, Stafford, ST18 9EH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/40212/HOU, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, a detached dwelling, stands in countryside on the eastern frontage of Watery Lane, being slightly elevated above it. Next to the house on its northern side is a domestic garage. Beyond that are surfaced parking spaces, which were occupied by several cars and a motorhome when I visited.
4. The proposed car port would be erected on part of the surfaced parking area and would be larger than most I have seen, since it is meant to accommodate a motorhome. It would be comprised of an open metal structure with a polycarbonate roof and a facility to attach a wraparound fascia in anthracite grey. The appellant says that the wraparound feature is an option and temporary. However, for the purposes of my assessment I have assumed that it would be on more than off.
5. Watery Lane has a narrow carriageway and serves but a few dwellings. It is lined with luxuriant hedges, trees and other vegetation. The proposed carport's siting is such that it would be effectively screened when approaching along the lane from the south by the bulk of the host property and hedges. Approaching from the north, hedges would also act as an effective screen. The car port could only be seen from Watery Lane in the narrow gap forming the access to the site. Although slightly elevated, I very much doubt that it would catch the eye any more than the motorhome it's intended to house. To my mind, in view of the effectiveness of the

largely natural surrounding screening, it would have a very limited and not unacceptable effect on Watery Lane's visual qualities. It would be sited away from the host property and would have no greater impact on its character and appearance than the extant garage, and they would sit together acceptably.

6. The Parish Council says that the structure could be seen from the A518 to the north and would prove obtrusive. The length of the A518 between its junctions with Watery Lane and Bradley Lane has no footway, albeit a narrow green verge is evident on its southern frontage. Apart from a dwelling and an entrance to a field, this frontage is hedged, which effectively obscures views of the appeal site. Thus, from the public realm, the only sight of the proposal obtainable from the A518 would be through the field entrance. Given the absence of a footway and the busyness of the highway, I doubt whether many pedestrians pass this way, and motorists' eyes are unlikely to be attracted to this narrow gap. Even if they fleetingly glimpsed the structure, it would be at a distance across the width of a large field. Views towards the appeal site from Bradley Lane are also curtailed by hedges.
7. I conclude that while the structure is of a utilitarian appearance¹ it would be effectively screened from most public vantage points having minimal visual impact, having no harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider landscape. Accordingly, no conflict arises with those relevant provisions of policies N1 and N8 of The Plan for Stafford Borough requiring designs to have regard to local context and to conserve the landscape.

Conditions

8. In the interests of certainty, it is important that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, and a condition to this effect is imposed.

Other matters

9. In the appellant's grounds of appeal several points are raised which are of little or no relevance to my consideration of the planning merits. Accordingly, I shall not comment on them further.
10. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered, including the Council's references to its Supplementary Planning Document on Design and the views of the Parish Council, but none is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations leading to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

¹ In this part of the countryside far larger buildings of a utilitarian appearance are evident, being associated with rural enterprises.

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and document: The OS location plan; the OS proposed site plan and the unreferenced drawings on Sheet Nos 1-4 (inclusive) showing 3D visual, elevations and plan form; the specification table providing dimensions, materials and colours.