

PLANNING / HERITAGE STATEMENT

PROPOSAL : Erection of single storey side extension

ADDRESS : Spite Hall, Lakeside Road, Rudyard, ST13 8RP

APPLICANT : Mr and Mrs K Goodwin

DATE : February 2017

JOB No. : 2016 - 2200

Introduction

The application proposes the erection of a modest single storey side extension on the south west facing elevation of a sizeable detached Victorian dwelling that was erected c.1865. The extension would be located within the garden of Spite Hall that is adjacent to the Rudyard Vale Caravan Park to the south. There is a public footpath (Horton 56) that is located to the north of the site that extends in a north easterly and south westerly direction. Where the footpath takes a more southerly direction it continues around the caravan park, between St Elmo and Foxholes. The design and layout of the proposal was guided by the character of the existing dwelling and features present within it, such as fenestration details, chimney design, materials and overall proportions including roof pitch.

Context

The site is located in the recently designated Rudyard Conservation Area, where the property has had an Article 4 Direction applied to it and other properties in the area. The Article 4 Direction has been applied to remove the ability to undertake works through the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, where express planning consent is not required. Permitted development rights did exist for a large number of developments that, although ephemeral, can have a significant impact on the character of the area. The Article 4 Direction enables the Council to require owners and/or occupiers of specific properties to apply for planning permission for certain alterations, which normally wouldn't require planning permission and thus maintain the character of the conservation area, which is considered to be under threat.

In the Rudyard Conservation Area Appraisal, July 2016, it states:

Spite Hall is also built in pink gritstone with a pitched roof and was allegedly named by locals because it "spited" the views from the adjacent Rudyard Villa (according to the Staffordshire Advertiser of 1865).

The Hall is actually a large cottage, adapted as a game keeper's dwelling, located near to Horton

Lodge on the west side of Rudyard Lake. When it was built c1865, the house was known as Keeper's Cottage. The house was built by an unknown gentleman only a few yards from Rudyard Villa, reputedly with the apparent aim of destroying Matthew Gaunt's view of the lake after a dispute because the magistrate felled a tree on the neighbour's land which spoiled his view. Grotesque gargoyles pulling their tongues towards the Villa were used to decorate the exterior of 'Spite Hall', some of which are now in the garden's rockery. The cottage was enlarged and used as a tea-room between 1873 and about 1890, after which time it served for some years as a guest-house. (P.20)

The property is located within Character Area 3 – Villas and Rudyard Vale, which states:

To the east of Camrose Hill, where the ground begins to plateau, are the large houses of Horton Lodge and Fairview, which sit in extensive grounds, each emphasised at the road by a well-preserved gatelodge; that to Fairview is an Arts and Crafts inspired building, with half-timbered gables, whilst that to Horton Lodge is characterised by spiky gables, chimney stacks and finials. Further along the road is an attractive detached cottage, also with half-timbering, called Wits End. The land to the north of Fairview was still moorland by 1879, edged by woods to the east and the mature landscaped gardens of Fairview. A narrow lane descends the hill to Rudyard Vale and is framed by an avenue of lime trees with occasional distant views across the fields as far as The Morridge.

Below these houses lies Rudyard Vale, which was quite literally once a rural idyll, on a south-east facing slope, and the main open area of fields to the west of the lake; it has slowly over time become surrounded by trees and cluttered with ad-hoc mobile homes, caravans and static chalets, some now permanent dwellings. The muddle of structures and lack of well defined space appears to have led to some tensions between the Hoseasons holiday lodge chalets and Rudyard Vale Caravan Park.

The sheltered position may have influenced the early construction of cottages along these slopes illustrated on the 1816 Horton Manor map, although there is little surviving physical evidence. Close to the lane are the two Gothic style houses known as The Villa and Spite Hall, each with a vantage point over the Vale. The Villa was originally named Rudyard Vale and gave its name to the little valley; built for Matthew Gaunt, a wealthy Leek solicitor, it was designed by William Sugden.

13 There are still a few pockets of open space on the lower slopes, fragments of much larger pastoral fields, which provide opportunities for unfettered views. Scattered within the Vale are some interesting historic buildings, such as Geelonga, a remnant of the timber boarded buildings with wooden verandahs erected by the North Staffordshire Railway, and the former tearoom at Spite Hall. A public footpath skirts the caravan site and provides glimpses of small paddocks, an intimate rural environment. (P.38)

Whilst the property is not Listed it is a property that has been identified and recommended for inclusion within a non-exclusive Local Heritage List with 12 other buildings.

Planning Policy

The Development Plan for the area consists of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Adopted March 2014. The application site is located outside any development boundary and as such is located in the open countryside, which is designated in the Development Plan as Green Belt

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

SS1 - Development Principles

SS1a - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS6c – Other Rural Areas Area Strategy

DC1 – Design Considerations

DC2 – The Historic Environment

R2 – Rural Housing

The National Planning Policy Framework

The thrust of the NPPF is to support sustainable development. The following chapters are therefore considered appropriate:

7. Requiring good design

9. Protecting Green Belt land

12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (para 57). It further advises that when determining planning applications, the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact on the proposal on their significance (para 128).

Conclusion

The significance of this part of the Conservation Area is the wooded bank that rises from Dingle Lane to the application site. Previous discussions with the Council during the assessment of the application for the new dwelling and at pre-application stages confirmed this as the provision of a vehicular access through this bank was discouraged. This application proposes no changes to the status of the bank. It is considered that the layout and design of the property will have no greater impact on the neighbouring Conservation Area with the proposal due to its overall modest size and enclosed location. Furthermore, the retention of the bank and its trees will ensure that the character of the Conservation Area is not harmed.

The application site represents a relatively discrete location within the Rudyard Conservation Area that is not easily visible from the nearby public footpath. The existing dwelling has been identified as a property that should be included in a Local Heritage list due to its character and appearance and the positive contribution that it makes to the Conservation Area. The property has previously benefitted from planning permission through the approval of SMD/2010/0136. However, this application was never implemented and it was approved before the site was included in the Rudyard Conservation Area.

The application site for the single storey side extension is to be sited upon part of the garden of Spite Hall and due to the mature vegetation on the boundaries, which effectively encloses the site the extension cannot be easily seen from anywhere in the Conservation Area. The scale and massing of the proposed extension is proportional to the main dwelling and thus creating no adverse implications in terms of Green Belt policy. The proposal represents a subordinate structure to the host dwelling that has incorporated design features in its appearance that are present in Spite Hall itself. Therefore, the contribution to the historic assets has been preserved. The proposal is considered to have been favourably assessed and is therefore acceptable from a planning and historic viewpoint as no harm will occur to the property or the Conservation Area that it is sited within.