The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2018

by Alison Partington BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd March 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/D/17/3191143
88 Thames Drive, Biddulph ST8 7JF

- 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 Rowley and Mr and Mrs Foxall against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- The application Ref SMD/2017/0487, dated 18 July 2017, was refused by notice dated 17 November 2017.
- The development proposed is alterations to existing bungalow to reconfigure existing rooms and reconstruct original extensions including loft bedrooms.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for alterations to existing bungalow to reconfigure existing rooms and reconstruct original extensions including loft conversion at 88 Thames Drive, Biddulph ST8 7JF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref SMD/2017/0487, dated 18 July 2017, 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 the following approved plans: Site Location Plan Drawing No 17-043_AS(0)01; Site Block Plan As Existing Drawing No 17-043_AS(0)02; Existing Plan Drawing No 17-043_AS(0)03; Existing Elevations 1 Drawing No 17-043_AS(0)04; Proposed Ground Floor Plan Drawing No 17-043_AS(0)05; First Floor Plan Drawing No 17-043_AS(0)06; and Proposed Elevations 1 Drawing No 17-043_AS(0)08;

    3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

    4) None of the extensions hereby permitted shall be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as 88 Thames Drive, Biddulph. The internal layout of the extension on the western elevation shall remain integrated with the layout of the existing dwelling for the lifetime of the development.

Procedural Matters

2. I note the very detailed description of development on the application form. The more succinct description used in the banner heading and the formal

decision is that given on the appeal form, although I have removed the reference to the site address as this does not refer to an act of development.

3. The plans were amended during the application process to include two windows on the front elevation. The appellants have indicated that this followed comments from the Council regarding the need to break up the amount of brick work on this elevation. However, the proposed fenestration formed part of the reason for the refusal, and the appellants have indicated that they prefer the original plan, and so have asked that I consider that plan as part of the appeal. I am normally required to deal with an appeal on the basis of the same plans that informed the Council's decision. Nonetheless, as this plan formed part of the original application documentation on which local residents would have been consulted, I consider that no party would be prejudiced by my consideration of this plan as part of the appeal.

4. Following the site visit I had concerns regarding the relative height of the appeal property and the adjacent bungalow as shown on the plans, and therefore questioned this with the main parties. The appellant clarified that the eave and ridge height of the dwelling, following the proposed alterations would be the same as the adjacent property, and this was not disputed by the Council. Therefore, I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

6. The appeal property forms the last in a row of 7 identical bungalows that are stepped down a short hill. Apart from the two located at the top of the hill, each house is set down and set back in relation to its neighbour. Beyond the site lies a small wooded area. The surrounding area is largely residential with bungalows of various designs being the predominant form of dwelling. The property currently has a high coniferous hedge around the front garden which limits views of it from the road.

7. The host property currently has single storey flat roof extensions to both sides of the dwelling and to the rear. It is proposed to replace all of these with slightly larger extensions in similar positions, and to incorporate a pitch roof on the extension on the western side. The Council has not raised any objection to this element of the appeal scheme. From what I observed on site I see no reason to come to a different conclusion with regard to these elements.

8. It is also proposed to raise both the eaves and ridge height of the main bungalow by approximately 1.5m. Whilst this would make the bungalow taller than the others within the row, the difference in ground levels with the adjacent property, means it would appear the same height as No 90. As such, the two bungalows would appear similar to the two at the top of the slope that are the same height, particularly as the tall hedge that exists around the front boundary of the property means that the lower part of the property is not seen from the road. This means that the overall height of the dwelling would not be readily noticeable, and would not make the dwelling appear out of keeping with the predominantly single storey character of the area.

9. The difference in height would be most noticeable when approaching the site from the West, but the curvature of the road and the woodland area adjacent to the site limits such views to the short range. As such, the appeal property is not a prominent dwelling in the street scene, and the increase in the height of the dwelling would not be an unduly noticeable feature. As a result, I consider it would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. To this end, I observed that an increase in the ridge height of No 59 has been undertaken without causing harm to the character and appearance of the area, despite this property being visible in longer range views.

10. The front elevation would incorporate the stepped design that is a characteristic feature of this row of bungalows. The amount of brickwork above the ground floor windows would be greater than on the other bungalows but given the limited views of the property, I am satisfied that this would not have a detrimental visual impact on the host property, or the wider area, especially as the appellants have indicated they propose to allow the existing climbing vegetation on the front elevation to continue to grow to mask the new brickwork.

11. Consequently, I consider that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the host property or the surrounding area. Therefore, there would be no conflict with Policy DC1 of the *Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2014)* which seeks to ensure that developments are well designed and respect the site and its surroundings.

Conclusion and Conditions

12. For the reasons set out above, I conclude the appeal should be allowed.

13. In addition to the standard implementation condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant plans, as this provides certainty. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to control the external appearance of the extension. As part of the proposal would create a self-contained unit of accommodation, a condition is required to ensure this remains ancillary to the main house, although I have slightly altered the wording of this suggested condition to make it more concise. As windows are no longer proposed on the front elevation, I consider the other condition suggested by the Council is not necessary.

Alison Partington

INSPECTOR