The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 November 2019

by R E Walker BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/D/19/3236749
Fir Grove, Fir Bob, Hollington ST10 4HT

- 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 Gareth Burton against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- The application Ref SMD/2019/0186, dated 22 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 June 2019.
- The development proposed is an extension to enlarge bedroom and provide en-suite facilities. Also replace existing flat roof dormers with pitched roofs.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey semidetached house with a single storey flat roof extension on its southern elevation. The property is located within open countryside and is accessed, along with a small number of other properties, from a track off a lane.

4. The appeal property and others have a strong building line along the access track. I agree with the appellant that the building line is an important feature which contributes to the character of the group of properties. However, the gable elevation of the appeal property is also, in my view, an important elevation as it is clearly seen as the main entrance to the property. As such, both the gable elevation and north elevation contribute to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

5. The proposed extension projecting to the east from the proposed southern extension would result in competing gable features on the eastern elevation. I recognise that the proposed southern extension is similar to the extension at the neighbouring property and the use of pebbledash and stonework would be compatible with the host property. However, the proposed eastern extension would fail to harmonise with either the original building or the proposed southern extension. Moreover, it would create an awkward arrangement between the roofs of the existing property, proposed southern extension and

proposed eastern extension. The combination of which, would in my view, fail to respect the character of this dwelling.

6. I recognise that the views of the proposed development would not be prominent in the wider area. A tree at the neighbouring property does restrict some views from the footpath along the lane, however it would not entirely screen the proposed eastern extension. Moreover, it would also be seen in private views from the access track and neighbouring land.

7. The appellant argues that the eastern elevation is not the principal elevation for the purposes of considering the front building line with regards to the Council's Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). However, my concerns relate, not to the principle of an extension on the eastern elevation, but the design of the proposed eastern gable extension projecting off the proposed southern extension. It is this specific arrangement that would result in an unsympathetic addition.

8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it conflicts with the advice in the SPD, Policies SS1 and SS1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) adopted 2014 which set out development principles for the area and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It would also conflict with Policies SS6, SS6c, R2 and DC1 of the CS which, amongst other things, seek to protect the character of the rural area. The proposals would also conflict with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which is concerned with achieving high quality design.

Other Matters

9. I recognise that the proposed development would meet the appellant's need for increased accommodation, would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and would not result in an increased need for parking. Moreover, the proposed pitched roof dormers and removal of part of the flat roof extension would be a benefit to the appearance of the property.

10. However, personal circumstances will seldom outweigh more general planning concerns. The appellant's desire to extend the property, the lack of harm in these respects and benefits from some of the alterations proposed, does not outweigh the significant harm I have identified from the proposed extension to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

11. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Walker

INSPECTOR