The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2022

by Ian McHugh DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date:3RD MARCH 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/D/21/3288633
9 The Square, Carr Bank, Oakamoor, ST10 3AB

- 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 T Loynes against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- The application Ref SMD/2021/0359, dated 31 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 01/10/2021.
- The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, replacing existing utility and enlarging the kitchen.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Oakamoor Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is an end-of-terrace dwelling, which is situated within the CA in the centre of Oakamoor. The front of the dwelling faces a shared parking area, open space and the River Churnet. An alleyway provides pedestrian access at the rear to the appeal dwelling and to others along the terrace.

4. The CA includes most of the built-up area of the village and some countryside around the river and along Church Bank. Consequently, the character and appearance of the CA is varied in terms of its built form and landscape. However, in the vicinity of the appeal site, the small terraced dwellings and the close physical relationship between buildings gives a distinctive character to the area. The buildings along the terrace include single storey projections and rear yards, enclosed by brick walls. These projections are generally small-scale and they reflect the historic built form of the terrace and contribute to the visual interest within the CA.

5. The proposal is to replace the existing lean-to single storey utility room with a longer and taller extension, which would provide an enlarged kitchen with utility area. The highest point of the extension would finish just below the level of the first-floor windows and it would extend across the full width of the dwelling. The rear wall would be blank with three rooflights providing light and ventilation. The extension would abut the rear single-storey projection of the neighbouring property.

6. Policies DC1 and DC2 of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020 (LP) seek (amongst other things) to ensure that new development is of high-quality design and for it to conserve or "possibly enhance" heritage assets. These policies accord with the provisions of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (The Framework).

7. Whilst the existing rear section of the appeal property has some unsympathetic features (including its corrugated roof), it is of a scale and form that fits with its surroundings. The proposed extension would be considerably larger in both its height and length. In that regard, I consider that its overall mass would result in a development that would be visually at odds with the prevailing scale and appearance of development along the terrace and it would fail to reflect the historic form and character of the CA. It would also appear awkward when viewed against the projecting gable of the neighbouring dwelling.

8. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the fact that the increased height of the proposed extension is to minimise the risk of flooding. This is a benefit that weighs in favour of the proposal. I have also given consideration to other alterations and developments that have taken place, including rebuilt sections of properties along Churnet View Road. However, whilst these are now an established part of the CA, they do not all make a positive contribution to the area and I am not persuaded that they should act as a precedent for the appeal proposal.

9. After balancing all of the above, I consider that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the CA and it would conflict with the policies of the LP, as referred to above. Having regard to paragraph 202 of the Framework, I consider that the harm would be less than substantial. However, whilst the proposal would be of benefit to the appellants by way of increased accommodation, this is not, in my opinion, a public benefit. Consequently, the harm that I have identified attracts significant and overriding weight in my decision.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal be dismissed.

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR