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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2012

by **Peter D. Biggers** BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16 July 2012

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**Appeal Ref: APP/N1350/D/12/2175800**

**98 Stooperdale Avenue, Darlington, Durham DL3 0UD**

- 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 Mrs Tracey Barr against the decision of Darlington Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 12/00060/FUL was refused by notice dated 27 February 2012.
  - The development proposed is first floor bedroom/bathroom to side elevation, ground floor kitchen/dining room to rear elevation and erection of detached garage.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. Subsequent to the submission of the appeal a further application (ref 12/00188/FUL) for the single storey rear extension and detached garage elements of this proposal was granted planning permission. The design of the rear extension and garage in the appeal proposal are the same as those permitted. Furthermore, the Council has raised no concerns about these elements and I have no reason to disagree. Accordingly, the main issue remaining in this case is the effect of the proposed side extension on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on a tree-lined avenue of two storey, semi-detached brick and render houses. The original roof design to the dwellings has a centrally located chimney stack serving both houses in each pair from which the roofs slope down symmetrically on all sides and terminate in a splayed eaves detail. Many of the houses, including No 98, still have original features such as the catslide roof over the single storey side section of the properties and therefore the original character of the avenue is well preserved.
4. The proposed first floor side extension would adopt the same front building line and same ridge height as the host dwelling. As such, the extension would not be subordinate to the main house and there would be no clear distinction between the original and extended dwelling. This would be contrary to advice in the Council's *Planning Guidance Note 7 – Alterations and Extensions to Dwellings*. This states that "a useful device is to set back a side extension from the existing front wall to reduce the contrast between old and new brickwork and reduce the apparent bulk of the extended property". I accept that the neighbouring semi at No 96 has a similar first floor extension to that proposed, which has also been built over the

existing ground floor room and therefore has no set back from the front building line. However, in that case the extension roof has at least been stepped down from the main roof and therefore the extension appears subordinate to the original dwelling to some degree.

5. The roof form of the appeal proposal would lengthen the ridge line of the original house introducing an asymmetrical, unbalanced appearance to the two houses which would be at variance with the characteristic roofscape of the Avenue and detrimental to the street scene. ,
6. I have been referred to a number of examples of side extensions in the Avenue which the appellant considers justify allowing the appeal. I therefore took the opportunity at the site visit to look at the side extensions in the Avenue generally. In the majority of cases where first floor side extensions have been developed, the design of the extension is subordinate to the main house and allows the characteristic roof form of the Avenue to be retained. I only observed three properties, Nos 121/123 and 131, where this was not the case and the extensions were instead similar to the appeal proposal. The extensions at 121 and 123, a semi-detached pair, mirrored each other so at least a symmetrical appearance was retained. The extension at No 131 demonstrates very clearly the visually harmful effect the appeal proposal would have, if allowed. It is not clear what the circumstances were that led to the extension at No 131 but, in any event, I am not persuaded that the appearance in that case, or indeed the others referred to me, are examples of good design which should necessarily be replicated. Accordingly, I have determined the appeal case on its own merits.
7. The construction of the proposed side extension in terms of its layout, height and design would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of Nos 96-98 and of the surrounding area as a result of the significant change it would introduce to the characteristic roof form in Stooperdale Avenue. As such it would conflict with Policy H12 of the *Borough of Darlington Local Plan* (BDLP) which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that alterations and extensions are in keeping with the character, design and external appearance of the property and in keeping with the street scene. The proposal would fail to meet these objectives and those of Planning Guidance Note 7.

#### *Other Matters*

8. I note the appellant's point that permission was granted in 1993 for a similar side extension which was not implemented. The details of that permission are not part of the evidence before me but in any event it predates Policy H12 of the BDLP and the advice of the Planning Guidance Note. It is likely therefore that the previous decision was made when different policies applied and, given that the previous permission has now expired, it does not provide a strong justification for a scheme which would cause the harm identified.

#### **Conclusion**

9. In coming to a conclusion on this proposal I have had regard to the recently published *National Planning Policy Framework*. The relevant development plan policy in the BDLP is not inconsistent with the Framework and accordingly, the Framework has not led me to reach any different overall decision. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

*P. D. Biggers* INSPECTOR