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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2011

by **Susan Heywood BSc(Hons) MCD MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 22 February 2011

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**Appeal Ref: APP/N1350/A/10/2141154**

**58 Beaumont Hill, Darlington, County Durham DL1 3NG**

- 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 Hutchinson against the decision of Darlington Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 10/00509/FUL, dated 14 July 2010, was refused by notice dated 29 September 2010.
  - The development proposed is to demolish existing bungalow and build new 4 bedroom house.
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### Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

### Procedural Matter

2. It was not possible for me to access the property or its grounds on my site visit. The Council and appellant's agent were in agreement that I was able to see all I needed to from public land. Accordingly, I carried out the site visit on an unaccompanied basis and viewed it from Beaumont Hill.

### Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
4. The existing dwellings along the eastern side of Beaumont Hill are predominantly bungalows. As the proposed dwelling would be two storey its frontage, gable ends and roof would be much taller than either of the neighbouring properties and the proposed dwelling would appear to tower above them. The proposal would also be significantly deeper than the dwellings on either side and this would be evident from the road. Due to its height, depth and overall bulk in relation to its neighbours, the proposed dwelling would appear overly dominant, obtrusive and incongruous in the street scene.
5. The appellant points to the dwelling at No. 52 in support of the appeal proposal. However, this is a dormer bungalow rather than a two storey house. Its eaves are at a similar level to the adjoining properties and it is less bulky than the proposed dwelling as its first floor is within the roof space. I have also noted other properties further north along Beaumont Hill and Durham Road. None of these are directly comparable to the appeal proposal and I am not aware of the planning background to those properties. In any case, the existence of development elsewhere does not justify a development which I

have found to be harmful. Policy H11 of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan amongst other things, requires that development respects the character of the area. For the above reasons, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surroundings and would fail to comply with this policy.

6. I share the Council's concerns in relation to the detailed design of the dwelling; the shallow pitched roof and insubstantial pillars of the portico would give it a weak and unsatisfactory appearance; the elongated width of the windows and their setting towards the outer edges of the front elevation would emphasise the width of the dwelling; finally, the central window would be unduly small in comparison with the other windows and would be at odds with the prominence of the projecting gable in the overall design. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Distinctly Darlington' gives guidance on detailed design in order to raise the quality of design in new development. For the above reasons, the detailed design of the dwelling would be unsatisfactory and the development would conflict with this guidance.
7. I give little weight to the Council's argument that the proposal would create a precedent for other similar development, as it is a well-established planning principle that each development should be treated on its own merits. Nevertheless, this does not overcome my concerns in relation to the harmful impact of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
8. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Susan Heywood*

INSPECTOR