



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2010

by **Graham Edward Snowdon BA BPhil**
Dip Mgmt MRTPI

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

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Decision date:
24 June 2010

Appeal Ref: APP/N1350/D/10/2128653

**Neasham Abbey Farm Cottage, Neasham Road, Hurworth Moor,
Darlington, DL2 1QN**

- 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 R Ward against the decision of Darlington Borough Council.
- The application Ref 10/00053/FUL, dated 29 January 2010, was refused by notice dated 16 April 2010.
- The development proposed is the construction of entrance porch and first floor extension providing additional bedrooms to existing dwelling.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the wider area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is essentially a rebuilding of a former single storey cottage with two storey barn attached. Whilst the rebuilding has been carried out sensitively, in stone, with traditional details, such as timber sliding sash windows in recessed openings, it is clearly of modern construction. Nevertheless, it maintains a traditional appearance and arrangement with the former barn now constituting the main visual element, with a symmetrical three bay façade facing the road. The appearance is one of traditional farmhouse with subordinate farm buildings attached.
4. The building complex is located in attractive open countryside north of the village of Neasham within an area defined in the Borough of Darlington Local Plan (Local Plan) as an Area of High Landscape Value. Within such area, Policy E8 requires development to be of "a high standard of design reflecting the scale and character of buildings in the area". Policy H12, requires alterations and extensions to all existing dwellings to be "in keeping with the character, design and external appearance of the property" whilst Policy H7 states that extensions to an existing residential building in the countryside outside development limits, should be carried out "without materially detracting from its character or that of its setting".
5. The proposed extensions would lead to a situation where the existing rear buildings attached to the main front element, start to visually dominate the

latter through their extent and bulk and give the whole complex a much more prominent presence in the local landscape. I consider this to be undesirable in design terms and not in keeping with the traditional arrangements prevailing in the local area. I appreciate that the proposed roof ridge and eaves have been kept lower to retain a level of subordination. However, the sheer bulk of the proposed extension would become the dominant built element on the site. The lowered ridge and eaves also dictate the "half" dormers proposed to light the upper floors. Whilst these are generally of traditional proportions, they would be slightly suburban in appearance and would, in my view, detract from the simple and uncluttered roof forms existing at present.

6. I consider, therefore, that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the wider area and would conflict with the requirements of Local Plan Policies H7, H12 and E8.
7. The appellant points out that the floorspace increase would only be 42% and that the text supporting Local Plan Policy H7 refers to large extensions "for example by 50% or more of the floorspace of the original dwelling" as often having "an unacceptable impact on the landscape". I do not accept that this implies that smaller extensions are necessarily acceptable. Each case has to be considered on its merits and having regard to its context.
8. I have also taken into account the fact that a June 2007 permission for a less extensive proposal remains extant. The full circumstances surrounding this permission are not before me and I have considered the present proposal as it stands. The previous permission should not, in my view, provide justification for accepting the current more extensive proposals.
9. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graham E Snowdon

INSPECTOR