
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2011

by **Graham M Garnham BA BPhil MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 10 June 2011

Appeal Ref: APP/N1350/D/11/2151634

7 Garthlands, Heighington Village, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6RE

- 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 Adam Hall against the decision of Darlington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 11/00080/FUL, dated 9 February 2011, was refused by notice dated 11 April 2011.
 - The development proposed is redevelopment of existing bungalow to enlarge living space incorporating rear ground floor extension, increased height and pitch of roof with 3 no. dormers to accommodate additional bedrooms and erection of replacement garage with office in roof space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.
2. I have taken account of the views of other interested parties in reaching this decision.

Main Issues

3. I consider that these are the effects of the proposal on firstly, the character and appearance of the area; and secondly, the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjoining residential property at no.8 Garthlands.

Reasons

First main issue – effect on character and appearance

4. The proposal represents a major enlargement of a modest single storey dwelling. I agree with the appellant's description that the changes would be tantamount to the erection of a new dormer bungalow. This would have 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms at first floor level, and an office above the enlarged garage. I consider that the design in itself would be acceptable, but that it needs to be seen in its context.
 5. Garthlands is a cul-de-sac of bungalows of similar design and modest scale. The main roofs have low pitches and typically form less than half the height of the building. Garages are sited forward of the front elevation. Some of these have since been enlarged and had a pitched roof added, as at the
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appeal site. Other changes include an infill development at no.1 Walworth Road. This is a larger bungalow, but its added height is accommodated in the slope of the land, and its roof pitch is in keeping with the estate.

6. In contrast, the proposal would create a deep floorplan with a very large roof that would make up about 2/3rd the height of the building. The widened garage would also have a steeper pitch. It would be lower than the main building, but considerably taller than most buildings on the estate, including no.8 adjoining. I consider that this transformation of scale and proportions would look entirely out of place within the context of the estate. It would have little in common with the distinctive, low key but quite pleasing form of most of the dwellings there. The much enlarged building would be a prominent and discordant feature in the street scene, clearly visible when moving down the slope towards the head of the cul-de-sac. The building would be prominent on the skyline when seen from outside the village on Walworth Road and across the fields from Coatsay Moor Lane. From these directions I consider that it would also appear to be out of scale with its neighbours, including no.1 Walworth Road.
7. I find that the proposal would not respect the predominant character of the surrounding area and would materially detract from the local street scene. It would not be in keeping with the character, design and external appearance of the present property, which sits comfortably in its surroundings. I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to saved policy H12 in the Borough of Darlington Local Plan (2001). It would also be contrary to one of the purposes of the Council's Planning Guidance Note 7 *Alterations and Extensions to Dwellings* [PGN7], which is to maintain the character of the locality.

Second main issue – effect on living conditions

8. The part of the proposal nearest to no.8 next door would be the replacement garage. Neither the amount of forward projection nor the closeness of the existing garage to no.8 would be changed. However, according to the appellant, the eaves line would be raised by 0.65 metres and the ridge by 2.95 metres. I consider that this is a significant increase in height close to the common boundary and the nearest window at no.8. There would be an overbearing effect from this window, which the new garage would loom above. There would be some loss of light, though little of sunlight as the garage is northwest of the window. I consider that the effect on light would be of limited consequence given that the present use of the nearest room appears to be as a bedroom.
9. I conclude that the proposal would detract from the living conditions of the occupiers of the adjoining residential property at no.8 Garthlands. There would be conflict with saved policy H12 and with the purpose of PGN7 to protect the amenities of neighbours.

Overall conclusion

10. I have found harm with respect to both the main issues. That relating to living conditions is less severe, but considerable harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.

11. Planning permission should therefore be withheld and the appeal dismissed.

G Garnham

INSPECTOR

