



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2012

by **Bern Hellier BA (Hons) MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 26 January 2012

Appeal Ref: APP/N1350/D/11/2167437

The Arches, Walworth Road, Walworth, Darlington, DL2 2LU

- 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 J Jones against the decision of Darlington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 11/00577/FUL, dated 1 September 2011, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2011.
 - The development proposed is erection of detached garage to rear comprising three parking bays and associated hardstanding (amended description).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. I consider the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area and the setting of the group of listed barns.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is within a recent development involving the conversion of four barns at Castle Farm into five dwellings in rural surroundings near the village of Walworth. The scheme has been substantially completed. The farmhouse and barns are Grade II listed buildings. The listing of the barns reflects principally their group value as a large range of relatively unspoilt early nineteenth century farm buildings. The conversion work has retained the main architectural features. On the appeal property, The Arches, these include tall arched bays and a distinctive cat slide roof.
4. The character of the development has inevitably changed to accommodate its new residential function with an access road, oil tanks, car parking, garden sheds and, very noticeably, the use of high close boarded timber fencing to provide privacy and external security. On the submitted layout the extensive garden area of The Arches extends in an arc for over 100 metres around the development to the south. Currently it is a field. The proposed garage block would be situated within this area projecting to the south and east of the main house.
5. The overall development is open to views from the road approaching from the south and I am not aware of any landscaping proposals which might provide screening or more definition to the building group. Whilst the proposed garage

would be within the curtilage of The Arches, as shown on the layout, it would appear to extend development into open countryside and in this prominent location its domestic style would jar with the agricultural scale and appearance of the adjacent converted barn. As such I consider it would have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area and the setting of the group of listed barns. It would also be contrary to Core Strategy¹ Policy CS14 which seeks to protect and promote distinctiveness and saved Local Plan² Policy E4 which requires new buildings in the countryside to be well related to existing buildings.

6. The harm to the listed buildings, whilst significant, would not be substantial. However national guidance in PPS5³ states that in such a case the harm should be weighed against the public interest of the proposal. In this instance the proposal would potentially lead to a reduction in the visual clutter associated with parked vehicles. Furthermore, the management of the extensive grounds would be likely to require the storage of maintenance equipment. On balance these considerations do not outweigh the visual harm the proposal would cause in this location. Therefore, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Bern Hellier

INSPECTOR

¹ Darlington Local Development Framework *Core Strategy*. Adopted May 2011

² The Borough of Darlington Local Plan. November 2007

³ Planning Policy Statement 5 : Planning for the Historic Environment . Policy HE9.4