

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 27th September 2017

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	17/00604/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	25th August 2017
WARD/PARISH:	College Ward
LOCATION:	50 Abbey Road, Darlington.
DESCRIPTION:	Demolition of single bungalow and erection of replacement dwelling.
APPLICANT:	Mr and Mrs Lyle.

This application was deferred at the 23rd August Planning Committee to enable Members to conduct a site visit.

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

50 Abbey Road lies within a 0.1 hectare site on the corner of Abbey Road and Elton Road on the west side of Darlington. It is a residential area consisting of a variety of house types, including bungalows, dormer bungalows, detached and semi-detached houses, built in a variety of materials and set within mature gardens, some, such as the application site, set in large gardens.

The existing dwelling is a “chalet bungalow” design with two rooms set within its roof. It has quite a large footprint and is about 6 metres to the ridge. It is not particularly interesting in terms of architectural merit.

It is proposed to demolish this building and replace it with a totally modern/contemporary design of dwelling consisting of two separate full floors rather than the first floor set within a roof. To keep the height down, flat roofs are proposed. The height of the dwelling will be similar to the existing building at some 6 metres. The first floor will be set at an angle to create a cruciform shape and will slightly overhang the ground floor.

The external materials will be timber cladding, stone cladding and render.

SITE HISTORY

A number of extensions to the dwelling approved between 1978 and 2003.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The following policies of the development plan are relevant:

Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997:

- E2 – Development Limits
- E14 – Landscaping of Development

Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

- CS2 – Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design
- CS14 – Promoting Local Character and Distinctiveness

Other Documents

- Design of new development SPD.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Letters were sent to occupiers of neighbouring properties advising of the proposal and seven letters of objection have been received together with one letter of support. Issues raised by the objectors include:

- Loss of privacy from overlooking windows into garden areas and living rooms.
- Overbearing impact from new dwelling
- Design totally out of keeping with surrounding properties
- Design will harm the character of the locality
- Siting too far forward and out of building line.
- Loss of natural light
- Roofline should be no higher than the existing
- New property should be a bungalow

Comments in support include:

- Proposal introduces some visual interest to an otherwise characterless plot.
- Nothing wrong with modern design in a traditional environment
- Height would be similar to the existing bungalow.

Consultees comments are summarised as follows:

CPRE – Object as the proposal is out of context with surrounding properties.

Highways Engineer – No objections

Northumbrian Water – No objections

Northern Gas – No objections

Urban Design Manager – Comments are noted below in full:

1. *Overall I welcome the proposals that represent an expression of contemporary design.*
2. *The site, in common with many properties on the north side of Abbey Road, is secluded from the road by a hedge and planting that obscures the proposed dwelling. This is a prominent location and a key cross-roads and the hedges and planting provide a key element of the character and appearance of the area. The existing dwelling, as asserted by the applicant, has no outstanding features, historic significance or distinctive character and I agree with this. Many examples of this house type appear throughout the country and as such it's loss is not intrinsically harmful to the character and appearance of the area.*
3. *The layout of the proposed dwelling, subject to the usual considerations regarding residential amenity, positively addresses the corner plot that it will sit in. I note that the upper storey elements are pushed forward to address the corner and also have the result of reducing the impact on the neighbouring properties.*
4. *In common with many of the houses in the area the proposed dwelling will be two storeys in height, without the attendant ridge height of a pitched roof building and as such will have no impact on the skyline that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. I accept that some immediately adjoining properties may be bungalows,*
5. *The materials palette chosen is a departure from many of those found in the area. The use of stone in the form of cladding is a debatable treatment that would require justification in this context, although I accept that this material is used occasionally as a boundary treatment. I would suggest that brick might be a better fit and this is supported by the adopted Design SPD. The use of timber cladding is in itself not problematic and this material is permitted in the adopted Design SPD, however this should not be coloured or painted.*
6. *The elevational treatment of the proposed dwellings are a clear expression of the materials and the need for views and light. The use of glass is not excessive and reflects the freedom offered by the means of construction.*
7. *The use of a flat roof in this location is an appropriate response in this location, notwithstanding the predominance of pitched roofs in the area.*

In summary:

- *The layout of the site is appropriate and takes advantage of the site location on the corner of Abbey Road and Elton Road;*
- *The scale, massing and height of the building is not harmful to the character and appearance of the area.*
- *The style of the architecture, itself not material to my deliberations, is appropriate for the location will have a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.*

Subject to my observations regarding the materials being addressed I have no objections to this proposal.

PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of development

This application proposes to replace an existing dwelling, set in a substantial suburban garden, with a single replacement dwelling of modern contemporary design. In principle, such a proposal is acceptable subject to the usual material planning considerations such as residential amenity and impact on the character of the locality.

Impact on the amenity of local residents.

Many of the objections raised by local residents relate to increased overlooking/loss of privacy to their gardens and properties.

In assessing these issues, consideration of the adopted standards relating to proximity distances and angles of view, contained within the Council's adopted SPD Design of New Development.

For objectors properties on Neville Road, the separation distances and angles of view are exceeded in terms of their relationship with the application proposal. In addition there are substantial intervening buildings and planting which dilute the impact of the new dwelling. Officers would find it difficult to refuse planning permission based on detrimental impacts to these properties.

Elton Road properties are similarly impacted in that there is substantial intervening planting and the proposed building is set back from the rear boundary gardens. This reduces the detrimental impacts to such an extent that Officers would find it difficult to refuse planning permission based on detrimental impacts to these properties.

The impact on the adjacent property on Abbey Road will be restricted by the lack of habitable room windows facing the ground floor elevation of the proposed dwelling. The juxtaposition of these two properties will be such that detrimental impacts on the existing property will be limited and be similar to numerous other housing layouts to be seen around Darlington.

In general, louvered windows have been used within the design of the proposed dwelling to further reduce the propensity for overlooking.

Overall therefor it is considered that the impacts on the amenities of local residents is restricted to such an extent that Officers consider the impact is acceptable.

Impact on character of the locality

The proposed dwelling is clearly of an individual design which many local residents consider to be "out of character" with the existing dwelling designs in the locality.

The applicant has submitted responses to this aspect of the objector's concerns and some of these are reproduced below :

Whilst people have different tastes and everyone has the right to express their own view on the appearance of the new dwelling it is our view that the new dwelling is an excellent expression of modern design, will be attractive, 'honest to its time', and will fit in well with its surroundings. It is an evolution in domestic house design.

*We have been encouraged in this by guidance in the Council's Design of New Development SPD which states: **Buildings using contemporary architecture should connect to the established pattern of streets, especially for infill development, reflecting the character of its setting. Innovative ways of interpreting character will be encouraged..... The replication of***

past architectural forms is not always appropriate; design should reflect the locality but be honest to its time and be for a specific function.

Officers are in broad agreement with the comments provided by the Urban Design Manager.

The existing dwellings in this locality – as already noted above – are a mixture of bungalows – both with hipped and gabled roofs (and flat roofed extensions such as the existing 50 Abbey Road) detached and semi-detached houses, again with hipped and gabled roofs (and again with some flat roofed extensions) . From an aerial view of the locality it is clear that there are very few properties that could be said to be of a similar design; the overriding theme is one of a variety of different designs and plot sizes.

CONCLUSION

Whilst normally a replacement dwelling would not result in many objections from local residents, the unusual design of this proposed dwelling has caused concerns to be raised in terms of how the resultant building will appear in the context of the existing mix of dwelling designs in this locality. The applicant has supplied photo montages of how the new dwelling will appear, within the context of the area and Members must make a decision as to whether the impacts on the locality are such as to warrant refusing planning permission. Officers consider that this is not the case in this instance for the reasons set out in the report. Further consideration is required however regarding the use of external materials. (Condition No. 3 refers).

The impacts on local residents' amenity are easier to assess as there are standards against which these impacts can be measured within our adopted guidance. Officers are content that the impacts on residents' amenities are not such as to warrant refusing planning permission in this instance.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PLANNING CONDITIONS:

1. A3 – Implementation Time
2. The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the plans noted below.

17-03 P201
17-03 P202
17-03 P203
17-03 P205

Any material change to the approved plans will require a formal planning application to vary this condition and any non-material change to the plans will require the submission of details and the agreement in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to any non-material change being made.

REASON :

In order to ensure that the development is carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and any material and non-material alterations to the scheme are properly considered.

3. B4 Materials.