



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2020 by Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu BSc MSc MIEMA
CEnv AssocRTPI

Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H0724/D/19/3241197

1 Bute Avenue, Hartlepool TS25 5LL

- 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 Roy Macgregor against the decision of Hartlepool Borough Council.
 - The application Ref H/2019/0327, dated 17 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension, new level access door to front and raising of roof to accommodate loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. At my site visit it was apparent that the roof pitch of the existing property was not shown accurately on the plans that were submitted with the application. That led to some confusion between the parties as to the precise extent to which the height of the roof would be raised because the Council appear to have calculated the difference between the existing and proposed height based on the existing drawing which incorrectly depicted the property being significantly higher than it actually is on account of the inaccurately drawn roof pitch.
4. As a result of correspondence following the site visit the appellant has submitted an accurate existing plan such that a clear comparison between the existing and proposed dwelling can be understood. I have taken that plan into account in making my recommendation.
5. The Council have found the construction of the single storey rear extension and new level access door to front elements of the scheme to be acceptable, with no adverse visual effects upon the character and appearance of the host property or street scene. I find no reason to disagree with this assessment and have considered whether it would be possible to issue a split decision whereby

planning permission could be granted for the rear extension and not the alterations to the raise the height of the roof and convert the loft.

6. However, that would not be possible in this instance because the lean to roof of the single storey element could not be constructed as shown on the submitted plans without raising the height of the building. In other words, the construction of that element would be dependent on alterations to the dwelling which would not have the benefit of planning permission.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is, therefore, the effect of the proposed raising of the roof to accommodate loft conversion upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

8. No. 1 is a detached bungalow located in a prominent position on a corner plot at the junction of Bute Avenue and Caledonian Road. The surrounding area is residential with a mix of dwelling types predominantly made up of terraced properties and symmetrical, semi-detached, two storey dwellings. The appeal property and the adjacent no.30 Caledonian Road are the only two detached bungalows in the area and are of significantly different designs. Indeed, the appeal property has its own design and form and as such its own character which is not like any other property in the surrounding area. The property is very simple in form and design with a pitched roof with hanging tiles to the front gable and brickwork to the ground floor. The large ground floor windows terminate directly below the projecting eaves and the overall impression is of a modest bungalow, dating from the latter half of the twentieth century, set amongst more traditional dwellings.
9. The increased height of the property would not be unduly harmful in the context of the surrounding area where two storey properties predominate. The building would be higher than the neighbouring bungalow but not so high that it would appear disproportionate. Moreover, that adjacent bungalow is of a distinctly different design and the proposals would not hinder the ability to appreciate the style of that dwelling which would still be seen as an individual property, distinct from others in the street.
10. However, whilst the principle of an upwards extension may be acceptable, the specific design would be less than sympathetic to the character of the existing property. In particular, the proposed method of raising the height is to extend the brickwork above the ground floor windows resulting in a substantially heightened eaves level. Unlike the present design where the projecting eaves terminate directly above the windows, a feature which is consistent with the design of the original dwelling, the proposal would result in an unbroken expanse of brickwork between the ground floor windows and the roof of the property.
11. That blank expanse of brickwork, unbroken by any windows or other features of note, would add a rather bland feature and give the prominent side wall facing Bute Avenue a somewhat 'top heavy' appearance. The unsympathetic effect would be heightened on account of the depth of the fascia board on the side elevation which is shown to be 400mm on the submitted plans. That is uncharacteristically deep in comparison to the normal fascia boards in the

surrounding area and much shallower than the fascias of the existing property which are largely hidden behind the guttering and more slender in appearance.

12. The front elevation facing Caledonian Road and the rear elevation to the garden would have a more balanced appearance on account of the fact that the first floor windows in the gable would provide relief from the expanse of brickwork and give the property the appearance of a two storey dwelling. However, the side elevation to Bute Avenue would be somewhat betwixt and between a two storey dwelling and a chalet bungalow and the design would not reflect that of the surrounding area or the style of the existing property.
13. I have considered whether it would be possible to overcome the harm identified through the imposition of conditions, for example by imposing a condition to require details of the depth of the fascia to be agreed prior to the commencement of work. However, that would be more than a minor alteration and it is not the purpose of the appeal system to evolve the design of the scheme. An appeal should be determined on the basis of the proposal submitted to and considered by the Council. In any event, I am not satisfied that minor alterations to the fascia board could overcome the harm caused by the unsympathetic design which would result in an unattractive dwelling, particularly when viewed from Bute Avenue.
14. For those reasons, I find that proposal would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding area contrary to the aims of policies QP4 and HSG11 of the Hartlepool Local Plan (2018) which seek amongst other things to ensure that new developments are of high quality design and would not adversely affect the character of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

15. I am mindful of the personal circumstances of the appellant's wife and understand the desire to extend the property to cater for her needs. However, personal circumstances will seldom outweigh more general planning matters and I also consider it likely that similar ends could be achieved through a design solution that would be more sympathetic to the character of the property and surrounding area. Consequently, the weight I attach to those matters is limited.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. For the reasons given above the harm to the character and appearance of the area is not outweighed by other matters and having had regard to evidence before me, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ifeanyi Chukwujekwu

APPEALS PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and on that basis, I agree that the appeal should be dismissed.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR