The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 June 2020

by C Dillon BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V0728/D/20/3250129
1, Berwick Walk, Redcar, Redcar and Cleveland TS10 2LD

- 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 N Fee against the decision of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.
- The application Ref R/2019/0654/FF, dated 22 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2019.
- The development proposed is described as a detached garage, side extension and loft conversion.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. Nevertheless, a different wording which reflects that used in the decision notice has been entered on the appeal form. It is evident from the documentation provided by main parties that the appellant amended the planning application prior to the Council's determination by the deletion of the proposed loft conversion. I am satisfied that the Council dealt with the planning application on that basis and in the interests of consistency, for the purposes of this appeal, so shall I.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the appeal proposal on:

   - Character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to size and design; and
   - Living conditions of occupiers of dwellings in Skelton Drive, with particular regard to size and design.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow situated within a residential housing estate of a relatively consistent design in terms of house types. It is situated at one end of Berwick Walk, at the junction with Skelton Drive. The area comprises a mixture of bungalows and two storey dwellings, although the

immediate context of the appeal site is akin to scale of the former. Properties tend to be complemented by front and rear gardens and a series of grassed public open spaces. On the whole, this pattern and scale of development provides a sense of openness and space between buildings. These are all important characteristics of the area.

5. The Council has not specifically cited the proposed side extension in its reasons for refusal in relation to this particular main issue. Furthermore, it has raised no objection to that part of the scheme within the evidence submitted. Given the positioning of the proposed side extension on the building, the level of remaining useable garden area, screening, as well as its form, subordinate scale and proposed external materials, I have no reason to disagree with that stance, nor to the reasons for it.

6. Nonetheless, I find that the appearance of what would amount to a sizeable, detached garage building would be significantly compromised in design terms, given the quest to maximise the use of the area available. The consequence of following the chamfered boundary would be an awkwardly designed corner elevation.

7. Furthermore, the positioning of the proposed replacement garage, although aligned with the host's gable, means that it would be particularly exposed from public vantage points along Skelton Drive and also Warwick Road, across a large area of public open space. The latter is a main route through the estate. The compromised design would draw the eye to and be exacerbated by the level of visual exposure to what, due to its scale and mass, would represent a large, incongruous feature within this predominantly small scale residential context. In turn, this would erode the important characteristics of the area.

8. This impact would not be offset by the fact that the proposed garage would be a replacement of a much smaller existing garage. Berwick Walk is pedestrianised to the front and therefore vehicular access and garages are characteristic of its rear. Although other large scale garages and high boundary walls are evident within this immediate street scene, these do not enjoy such an exposed position and, more significantly, do not present the same compromised design.

9. For these reasons, notwithstanding the absence of harm in respect to the proposed side extension, I find that the proposed garage would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to size and design.

10. Policy SD 4 of the 'Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan (adopted May 2018)' expects development to respect the character of the site and its surroundings in terms of matters including proportions, form, massing, size, scale and detailed design features. Given the harm to the character and appearance of the area which I have identified in respect to the proposed garage, I find that the appeal proposal conflicts with this policy and therefore the development plan.

Living Conditions.

11. The Council has not specifically cited the proposed side extension in the reasons for refusal relating to this main issue. Furthermore, it has raised no objection to that part of the scheme within the evidence submitted. In view of

the orientation, positioning alongside the existing exposed gable, finished roof height, separation distances and existing mature boundary planting, I have no reason to disagree with this stance, nor to the reasons for it.

12. The proposed garage would maintain separation distances with the facing windows serving the bungalows on Skelton Drive and the immediately adjoining property, No 3 Berwick Walk, so as not to adversely impact upon existing levels of privacy, daylight and sunlight. However, the compromised design proposed would be such that, coupled with the increased scale, the proposed replacement garage would represent a much bulkier and incongruous feature within this street scene. This would have a negative impact upon the outlook currently enjoyed by occupants of Nos 2, 4 and 6 Skelton Drive. However, in view of the single storey nature and separation distances that would be maintained, this would not amount to an extent that would be unacceptably overbearing.

13. For these reasons, I find that neither the proposed side extension nor garage would present a level of harm that would be so significant to the future living conditions of those occupants that they would be unacceptable.

14. Policy SD 4 of the Local Plan states that development will be permitted where it will not have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of occupiers of existing buildings. In the absence of such harm, I find that the appeal proposal does not conflict with this policy.

Other Matters

15. Although the appellant has advanced that the proposed garage would provide much needed on-site car parking which would be beneficial in terms of security and alleviating on-street car parking, I do not find that these matters or, the absence of other harm, out-weigh the level of harm which I have identified in respect to the proposed garage and the subsequent conflict with the development plan when read as a whole.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Dillon

PLANNING INSPECTOR