



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2021

by Katherine Robbie BA (Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W0734/D/21/3283289

11 Seathwaite, Middlesbrough TS5 8TX

- 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 Michael Donnelly against the decision of Middlesbrough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0316/FUL, dated 21 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 29 June 2021.
 - The development proposed was described as a *'double storey extension to side of property. Single storey across rear to meet new extension'*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council altered the description of the proposal to 'two storey extension to front, side and rear plus single storey extension to rear'. This more accurately describes the proposal than the description given on the application form and I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The decision notice refers only to the character of the immediate area; however, the officer report also addresses matters relating to the appearance of the appeal property. The appellant has also addressed this issue in their statement and therefore I have dealt with the appeal on this basis, and no one would be prejudiced by me taking this matter into consideration.
4. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached house at the end of a short cul-de-sac. Beyond the end of the cul-de-sac is an area of open space with a pedestrian walkway running through it. The area is predominantly residential, characterised by cul-de-sacs served from a loop road. Within Seathwaite, the houses on one side of the street are two-storey with single storey projecting garages and porches. On the opposite side are semi-detached Dutch style bungalows, all with open frontages. The layout of the street and the design of the houses and their relationship with one another gives it a sense of uniformity. The set-back position of the dwellings, the surrounding open space and tree-line road create a pleasant, open, suburban character.

6. The two-storey element of the proposal would increase the width of the property by approximately 3 metres, would project forward of the main elevation of the house by approximately 2.5 metres; and would project beyond the rear elevation by 3 metres. Additionally, there would be a first-floor element above the existing garage, and the existing single-storey rear extension would be replaced by one which extends to the full width of the house.
7. The cumulative effect of the extension, which would wrap around three sides of the house, would be visually dominant, not subservient to the appeal property and would largely subsume the existing house. In particular, the front element of the extension would appear unduly prominent and bulky, at odds with the consistent appearance of the other houses in the street.
8. The appellant argues that the front extension would provide a visual conclusion to the street, which is currently lacks. However, I do not consider that it is something that the street needs. As I have identified above, the uniformity of the dwellings on the street makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The introduction of the front gable feature would appear incongruous and unnecessarily disrupt the rhythm of the existing street scene.
9. Furthermore, the largely unbroken expanse of brickwork would unduly detract from the openness of the area, particularly when viewed from the adjacent footpath, where it would appear as an incongruous and, dominant feature. I note that there would be a window in the side elevation and therefore the elevation would not be entirely unbroken. Nevertheless, the window would only cover a very small portion of the elevation and therefore would not materially break up the elevation with any meaningful effect. Whilst the 2m high fence would screen much of the ground floor of the extension, the first-floor element would significantly rise above it. Therefore, I do not consider that the fence would adequately mitigate the dominance of the side elevation.
10. Although the extension would be constructed in matching materials, this would not mitigate the incongruous and inappropriate scale of the extension or overcome the harm that I have identified.
11. For the reasons set out the proposed extension would be of an incongruously excessive scale and would adversely affect the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DC1 of the Middlesbrough Core Strategy 2008 (Core Strategy), which specifically refers to the visual appearance of development and its relationship with the surrounding area in terms of scale, design and materials. The proposal would be also be contrary to the advice provided at paragraph 5.4 c) of 'Middlesbrough's Urban Design' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2013 which indicates that extensions should be subservient. paragraph 5.4 i) which advises that front extensions are generally unacceptable in principle due to their conspicuous appearance.

Other Matters

12. I have noted the appellant's desire to increase the living space for his growing family and his wish to remain in the area, but this does not justify the harm I have found in this case.

13. The appellant has drawn to my attention a number of examples of other properties in the locality that have been extended to the side. All but one of these extensions reflect the size and form their host dwelling and are not of a similar scale or design to that proposed, albeit they are two-storey side extensions. Therefore, I draw no direct comparison between them and the proposal before me that would weigh in favour of the appeal. My attention has also been drawn to a property on Gayton Sands which shares some similarities, in terms of scale and design, with the proposal before me. From my observations of that property and the effect that the extension has on the character and appearance of the area, this merely serves to re-affirm my conclusion in respect of the harm the proposal would have. In any event, I have determined the appeal on its merits and the evidence before me.
14. I note that no objections were received from local residents. However, a lack of objection does not equate with a lack of harm.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and having considered the development plan as a whole and all relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Katherine Robbie

INSPECTOR