



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2022

by J Symmons, BSc (Hons) CEng MICE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H0724/D/21/3286210

Cherry Tree Cottage, Brierton Lane, Billingham, Hartlepool, TS22 5PP

- 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 Nicola Duffy against the decision of Hartlepool Borough Council.
 - The application Ref H/2021/0185, dated 22 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a 2 No ground floor infill rear extensions to the existing bungalow, small 2 No storey front extension to part with new first floor level addition with a pitched tiled roof over the full extended ground floor footprint.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in an open and rural area with a mix of agricultural, commercial and residential properties scattered across the landscape. It is located off Brierton Lane, a narrow country lane with typically high hedges and hedgerow trees. There is a significant variation in building size, shape and form and this adds interest to the rural setting. Most residential properties are bungalows but there are some examples of properties with rooms in the roof and a very limited number of larger two-storey houses. The design of these properties is generally simple with both brick and rendered buildings.
4. The appeal property is a relatively large bungalow with garage, parking area and some small outbuildings. It has a pitched roof, three full height bay windows to the front and rendered external walls. It is set away from Brierton Lane on a raised part of the land. Access is via an access track. There are gardens, a mix of timber fencing, relatively mature trees, and hedging to the boundaries. Situated approximately 69m away the nearest property is large with a pitched roof, rendered walls, dormer windows, and a conservatory.
5. The proposal would extend the existing bungalow to the front and rear and add a first floor. It would be finished with grey slate effect pitched roofs, smooth rendered walls with stone detailing, and uPVC windows. The frontage would include an approximately 3m wide two-storey glazed unit to the entrance hall area. A Juliet balcony would be located on the western first floor side elevation.

6. Notwithstanding that the proposal would be located predominantly on the footprint of the existing bungalow, the extensions and first floor addition would significantly increase the size and height of the building, making it much larger than many of the properties in the area. Although it would be in an open rural setting, its height and overall massing would be rather dominant. Its elevated position within the landscape exacerbates this. Even with the retention of mature trees and hedge boundaries, the proposed development would be overly prominent and dominate the area.
7. Changes to the existing bungalow would be significant and the proposal would not simply extend or add to it but largely overshadow and engulf it resulting in the essence of it in terms of character, form and layout being lost. The resulting building would not reflect the existing bungalow in any substantial way and would not represent a sympathetic addition to the existing bungalow, instead being more akin to a new build replacement.
8. Notwithstanding the consideration given to the design of the proposed development, many of the proposed finishes and architectural features, such as the stone detailing and large glazing unit, are not in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the proposed development would not take design cues from the residential properties seen in the surrounding landscape. Irrespective of the separation between properties and the mix of buildings in the area, the proposed development would create a house more suited to a suburban setting. It would therefore not reflect the surrounding built environment or be sympathetic to the rural character of the area.
9. While the appellant considers that the proposed development would enhance the quality and character of the appeal property and would provide functional space for its occupiers, this would not outweigh the harm I have identified. Furthermore, it is not unusual for the planning officer's report and decision to differ from the views of one or more consultees. It will be seen from my decision that I agree with the Council's decision.
10. In conclusion the proposal would conflict with Policy QP4, HSG11, and Criteria 6 and 9 of Policy RUR1 of the Hartlepool Local Plan (2018), and Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework). These policies, amongst other matters, seek high quality development which is well-designed, positively enhances the location and setting, and is sympathetic to the existing dwelling and in keeping with other buildings in the area, and would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework and all other relevant considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Symmons

INSPECTOR