



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2022

by N Teasdale BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N1350/D/22/3306435

21A Merrybent, Darlington DL2 2LB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant full planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Sean Taylor against the decision of Darlington Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00686/FUL, dated 21 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site accommodates a detached two-storey dwelling located within a row of other residential properties that are set back from the street with large garden areas to the front. There are some structures forward of the building line of the dwellings in other parts of Merrybent. However, the street where the appeal site is located comprises large front garden areas that are generally free from any built form which creates a sense of openness within the street scene. There is a clear and consistent pattern of development along this part of Merrybent despite the varying appearance and styles of some of the properties.
4. Due to the site's location adjacent the road and its positioning considerably forward from the host property against the front boundary, the proposed development would be highly visible when viewed from the footpath and main road including views on approaching the site along that road even taking into account the location of the bus shelter, layby and existing landscaping.
5. I appreciate that the external materials would match the existing property and that the hipped roof has been designed to reduce scale. However, the proximity of the proposed development to the front boundary along with the significant height, depth and width results in a bulky building that would extend considerably above the boundary wall. It would therefore be visually prominent within the street scene, appearing as inconsistent with the established pattern of development, eroding the existing open character and spaciousness of the front amenity areas. The introduction of additional planting

as suggested would not sufficiently mitigate against such harm by removing a positive feature of the street scene.

6. My attention has been drawn to a number of previous planning permissions for other garages with full details and plans provided. Whilst I accept that there are other buildings forward of the building line elsewhere in Merrybent, such properties are located on the other side of the road and are read differently when viewed as part of the immediate street scene. Additionally, they are set further back from the boundary and there are material differences between the plans provided and the appeal proposals before me and are therefore not directly comparable.
7. I visited the properties referred to during my site visit and note that the built context and relationship with other properties along the other side of Merrybent does indeed differ to that of the appeal site which as referred to above is generally free from any built form. Such a factor increases its overall effect.
8. For the above reasons, the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policies DC1 of the Darlington Local Plan and Policy LCM8(e) of the Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent Neighbourhood Plan which together, amongst other things, requires development to respond positively to local context, in terms of its scale and form as well as respecting established building lines.

Other Matters

9. The garage has been informed by the Council's parking standards which ensure that the internal dimensions are sufficient to use as a double car parking space and I acknowledge the appellant's comments regarding natural surveillance. However, such matters have not affected my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

10. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan when considered as a whole. There are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweighs the identified harm and associated plan conflict. I conclude that the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

N Teasdale

INSPECTOR