



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 April 2025

by **P Storey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W0734/D/24/3355229

133 Low Gill View, Middlesbrough TS7 8AX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Ashleigh Beckley against the decision of Middlesbrough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/0275/FUL.
 - The development proposed is two storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which came into force on 12 December 2024, introduces no changes that would materially affect the outcome of this appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the proposal would safeguard the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property at No 135 Low Gill View, with specific regard to the effects of light and overbearing.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises a detached house situated on a modern residential estate. The property has an L-shaped footprint with a projecting 2-storey gable on the front elevation, positioned towards the left-hand side when viewed from the street. To the right of this gable, the remainder of the front elevation is slightly recessed and spans most of the dwelling's width, featuring a side gable roof. The surrounding area includes a variety of dwelling types that, whilst differing in individual design, share a broadly consistent architectural style.
5. The appeal property has a driveway running along its side, creating a generous gap between its side elevation and the adjacent detached property at No 135 Low Gill View. This driveway leads to a detached garage with a dual-pitched roof and side-facing gables, situated fully beyond the rear elevation of the house.

6. The proposed two-storey extension would be built on the existing driveway, extending marginally beyond the rear elevation of the house to adjoin the garage. It would be positioned very close to the property's side boundary, significantly narrowing the gap between the appeal property and No 135.
7. In support of the proposal, the appellant refers to other properties in the estate with similarly narrow gaps between buildings. However, those examples typically involve simple designs and were originally built on narrower plots with parking to the front of the dwellings. In contrast, the appeal property is a reasonably wide dwelling occupying a generously sized plot, with its driveway contributing positively to the spaciousness and visual separation between dwellings.
8. The appeal property's offset front gable is a common feature of nearby dwellings, many of which feature similarly staggered front elevations. Whilst the estate exhibits some variation in roof forms, including hips and gables, roofs are typically of simple design, with uniform ridgelines and consistent roof slopes.
9. In contrast, the proposed extension would create a dwelling of considerable overall width, repositioning the offset gable more centrally in an arrangement that is not typical of the surrounding context. Despite revisions made during the Council's consideration of the application, the resulting scheme lacks cohesion in its building lines, roof pitches and ridge heights. Combined with the scale of the extension, this leads to a cluttered and visually unbalanced appearance that is at odds with the area's characteristic modesty and simplicity in built form.
10. When viewed from the rear, the extension would incorporate a rear-facing gable, directly adjoining the existing detached garage. The garage's dual-pitched roof, which runs perpendicular to the extension's gable roof, would form a valley between the two structures. Additionally, the proposed first-floor window on the extension would face the front slope of the garage roof at close range. The overall effect, with the mix of roof forms and the positioning of openings, would be visually awkward. Whilst not visible from the street frontage, this element would be clearly seen from the rear of neighbouring properties, and from the street to the southeast through gaps between homes, where it would appear out of keeping with the area's established character.
11. The Council refers to Middlesbrough's Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document, adopted January 2013 (the UDSPD), which provides detailed guidance on residential extensions and alterations. The UDSPD is a material consideration insofar as it provides specific guidance for householder development to support the policies of the development plan.
12. Given the variation of dwellings and plots in the area, it is appropriate to take a flexible approach to the UDSPD guidance. However, certain key UDSPD objectives, such as maintaining consistent roof forms and ensuring extensions retain a reasonable degree of subservience, remain relevant to all proposals. Whilst the proposal does align with some of the UDSPD's design guidance, this does not automatically render it acceptable. In this case, my concerns previously set out regarding the proposal's scale, design and appearance continue to apply.
13. Many homes in the area, including No 135, have parking areas to the front of the building. The appeal property has a reasonably sized front garden that could accommodate additional parking without a significant loss of green space. As

such, I find no specific harm in this regard. However, the absence of harm on this particular issue is a neutral factor that does not weigh in favour of the proposal.

14. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development, by virtue of its scale, design and appearance, would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies DC1 and CS5 of the Middlesbrough Local Development Framework Core Strategy, Adopted February 2008 (the CS), which together seek to ensure development secures a high standard of design, integrates with the immediate and wider context, and has a positive relationship with the surrounding area. It would also conflict with the relevant provisions of the Framework, which have similar aims, and those of the UDSPD, which have previously been set out.

Living conditions

15. The adjacent dwelling of No 135 is positioned close to the shared side boundary, with only a narrow pathway separating it from the appeal site. This provides access to No 135's rear garden. The proposed extension would bring the appeal building closer to this boundary, further enclosing the pathway. However, No 135 has no side-facing windows, the access would remain unobstructed, and similar layouts are not unusual in the surrounding area. I am therefore not convinced that the proposal would result in any harm concerning the side access to No 135.
16. The appeal site's existing garage currently projects beyond the rear elevation of No 135. Whilst No 135 has a ground floor rear projection on the eastern part of its rear elevation, the western portion, closest to the garage, is recessed and contains no ground floor windows. This recessed section is flanked by both the garage and No 135's rear projection, which together create a significant sense of enclosure. During my visit in mid-afternoon, this area of the garden was largely in shadow due to the existing structures.
17. The proposed extension would introduce additional massing near the boundary with No 135. However, considering the current level of enclosure and the extent to which light is already limited by the surrounding built form, I am not convinced that the proposed extension would significantly exacerbate these conditions. Additionally, since the extension would only project marginally beyond No 135's rear elevation, I am not persuaded that it would have any meaningful effect on the rear windows of this property.
18. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not result in a harmful overbearing effect, nor would it unacceptably reduce the light afforded to the occupiers of No 135 Low Gill View. Therefore, it would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and would accord with Policy DC1 of the CS, which seeks to ensure that development safeguards the surrounding environment and amenities of nearby properties.

Other Matters

19. The proposed development would make efficient use of the land, allowing the appellant to expand and enhance their living environment. It would contribute a larger dwelling to the local choice of housing and would generate employment opportunities during the construction phase, supporting local trades. These factors offer some weight in favour of the proposal. However, given the limited scale of benefits associated with the extension of a single home, these considerations are

not sufficient to outweigh the previously identified harm resulting from conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

20. Although I have identified no harm in respect of the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with the plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P Storey

INSPECTOR