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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 July 2025 by R Dickson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

**Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 16 September 2025**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/D/25/3367611**

**3 Garden Close, Exeter, Devon EX2 5PA**

- 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 Ms Emily Webb against the decision of Exeter City Council.
  - The application Ref is 25/0376/FUL.
  - The development proposed is a first floor extension to side elevation of dwelling house.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area.

### Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is one of a pair of semi-detached dwellings set within the residential road of Garden Close. The dwellings on Garden Close are highly uniform, owing to their broadly similar scale and massing, together with their limited cohesive material palette. When entering Garden Close, the front elevations of the dwellings on the left are stepped behind one another. They have a single storey garage attached to the main bulk of the house, which is set slightly forward of the front elevation and is connected to the garage of the neighbouring property. Owing to the hillside location, views between each pair of semi-detached dwellings, across the top of the garages, form an important part of the character and appearance of the area giving Garden Close a sense of place.
5. The dwellings further up the hill on Garden Close, within the cul-de-sac, have more variation in their garage placement, however, have retained their broadly uniform appearance. Although it appears that some dwellings have been subject to small alterations over time, only one, No 5, has been extended to the side above the garage, changing the width of the building.
6. The appeal site, No 3, forms a semi-detached dwelling with No 1. To the other side, the garage of the appeal site is attached to the garage and extension of No 5. Owing to the existing extension at No 5, the important gap above the garages

between the appeal site and No 5 has been decreased in size, but the gap still exists.

7. The proposed extension would be above the garage, in line with the existing front elevation. Although the ridge height would be lower than that of the main dwelling, the eaves would be at the same height, and the front elevation of the extension would be level with the existing front elevation. Brick detailing would split the main dwelling from the extension. Although the proposal would not be a subservient addition, the additional width would be differentiated from the main bulk of the dwelling.
8. The additional width would be at odds with the other highly uniform dwellings in terms of their scale and massing. Despite the existing extension to the neighbouring dwelling which is an exception within Garden Close, side extensions do not form part of the prevailing pattern of development within the cul-de-sac. As such, the proposal would be an incongruous addition within the street scene.
9. I acknowledge that the proposal would largely mirror the neighbouring extension which was granted permission in 2007. When entering the road, part of the extension at No 5 is hidden behind the appeal site owing to the taller ridge height, and position of the appeal site in front of the building line of No 5 and 7. Given that the dwellings are stepped back along this side of Garden Close, and that the appeal site is sited at the entrance of the road, any alterations to the host would be highly visible within the street scene. In this regard, the proposed extension and existing extension at No 5 are not comparable.
10. The first-floor level gaps between dwellings on Garden Close are a key part of the character of the area, and as identified above, the resulting views give the area a sense of place. The existing extension at No 5 retained a gap, albeit narrower than the gaps between other dwellings, above the garage of the appeal site. Conversely, the proposal before me would occupy the remaining gap between Nos 3 and 5, resulting in the loss of the gap, eroding the sense of place of Garden Close. The stepped nature of the front elevations would reduce the resulting terracing effect, however the total loss of the gap between Nos 3 and 5 would harmfully alter the current uniformity of built development within Garden Close.
11. Accordingly the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area, contrary to saved policy DG1 (b), (f), (g) and (h) of the Exeter Local Plan First Review, and policy CP17 of the Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2012), which collectively seek to ensure that development complements or enhances Exeter's character and local identity through ensuring that the pattern of development is retained and the height and massing relates to the surrounding area.

### **Other Matters**

12. The Appellant has provided examples of similar developments within the vicinity of the appeal site. 15 and 17 Plumtree Drive both have extensions which have closed the gap between the buildings and are similar in that there is a level difference between the buildings. However, they differ from the appeal site in so far as the dwellings are higher than the road, and do not have long views beyond the gaps. In this sense, the gaps between the buildings on the examples given do not contribute to a sense of place in the same way that they do on Garden Close. In addition, the dwellings on Plumtree Drive are less uniform than those on Garden Close,

therefore the extensions do not have the same disruptive effect on the pattern of development of Plumtree Drive. Accordingly, 15 and 17 Plumtree Drive have a different context to the appeal site, and I give them limited weight.

13. Dwellings on Quarry Park Road are put forward as another example, including No 30 which has been the subject of another appeal<sup>1</sup>. Despite the Inspectors conclusion, Garden Close differs from Quarry Park Road in that the connected garages on Garden Close form an important design feature that contributes to the character and appearance of the area. Conversely, the Inspector for the appeal at 30 Quarry Park Road concluded that the connected garages on Quarry Park Road were a poor design feature which have an adverse effect on the quality of the street scene. Given the difference between the contribution of the garages to the character and appearance of the area between the two roads, the examples on Quarry Park Road are not directly comparable to the appeal site and I therefore give them limited weight.
14. Other extensions to that proposed on Quarry Lane have been presented by the Appellant. Three dwellings, Nos 72, 74 and 76 have had side extensions above their garages, resulting in a terracing effect. The dwellings on Quarry Lane appear to have been altered, such that the original uniformity of the dwellings has been lost. This is in contrast to the street scene of Garden Close, which has retained a high level of uniformity, a feature that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area. As such, the examples at Quarry Lane are different to the appeal site in so far as they have a different context and I also give these limited weight.
15. Accordingly, the examples provided are different to the appeal site, and do not share the same context. Although they were likely determined against the same policies as the appeal before me, I must determine the appeal before me based on its individual circumstances and planning merits.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

16. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

*R Dickson*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

*A M Nilsson*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> Ref APP/Y1110/D/22/3301881