
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V0728/W/25/3370459

Old Vicarage, Saltburn Road, Upleatham, Redcar and Cleveland TS11 8AG

- 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 Mr I Cowie against the decision of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is R/2025/0060/CA.
 - The development proposed is described as: "PROPOSED DWELLING C3".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site is within the Upleatham Conservation Area (the CA). Accordingly, I have had regard to the statutory duty under Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed development would be suitably located, having regard to the spatial strategy of the development plan; and
 - whether it would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area, including whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA.

Reasons

Whether suitably located

4. The appeal site is a parcel of paddock land to the south of the village of Upleatham containing some low-height sheds and stable structures. It is bound by the B1268 to the south and a lane linking the village to the B1268 to the west, from which access would be taken. To the east lies open paddock land, and to the north the grounds of the dwelling of the Old Vicarage.
5. The site lies outside of the defined development limits of Upleatham. Policy SD4 of the Redcar & Cleveland Local Plan, Adopted May 2018 (the LP) requires development to meet the requirements of the 'Locational Policy'. In this respect, LP Policy SD3 restricts development beyond defined development limits, except in

specific circumstances. One such exception, at SD3.f, allows isolated single dwellings that are of exceptional quality and incorporate innovative design features, reflecting the highest standards in architecture and sustainability.

6. This aligns broadly with paragraph 84.e) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to avoid isolated homes in the countryside unless the design is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, raising design standards generally in rural areas, significantly enhancing its immediate setting, and being sensitive to local character.
7. The appellant contends that the proposal meets these criteria, citing a barn-inspired design with cedar cladding, zinc roofing, and stone detailing, alongside sustainability measures such as solar panels, air-source heat pumps, high-grade insulation, and water-saving technologies. The dwelling would provide a retirement home within the family's landholding and is said to reflect high standards of architecture and sustainability. Some supporting comments describe the design as attractive and sympathetic, adding variety to the village and improving on a previously proposed scheme.
8. However, Policy SD3.f. and Paragraph 84.e) set a very high bar for such exceptions. Although the design is distinctive, contemporary, and incorporates sustainable features, I am not persuaded that it demonstrates such a degree of innovation or exceptional design quality typically associated with truly outstanding dwellings, nor that it would enhance its immediate setting to any meaningful extent. As noted in a previous appeal decision at this site, being different or contemporary is not enough to meet the exceptional quality threshold, and I see no reason to reach a different conclusion in this case.
9. The dwelling would remain outside development limits, and while the proposed sustainability measures are commendable, they are increasingly standard in new residential development and do not, in themselves, elevate the scheme to the level required by local and national policy. Overall, the design does not fulfil the necessary criteria for exceptional quality or innovative design to justify an exception under local or national planning policy.
10. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not be suitably located having regard to the spatial strategy of the development plan, and it would not meet the exception criteria to justify a departure from this. It would therefore conflict with Policies SD3 and SD4 of the LP, and the relevant provisions of the Framework, the aims of which have previously been set out.

Character and appearance

11. The CA is characterised by a predominantly linear "two-row" pattern of development along the village road, framed by historic buildings, gardens, and boundary walls. Its elevated position affords long-ranging views across the surrounding countryside, including towards Skelton to the southeast. The CA extends beyond the village core to include areas of open countryside to the south, encompassing the appeal site and the neighbouring Old Vicarage.
12. The significance of the CA lies in the visual harmony between its historic built form and the surrounding landscape. The open pastoral foreground, particularly at the southern approach, is integral to maintaining its coherence and heritage value. The appeal site also falls within a Sensitive Landscape Area (SLA) under LP

Policy N1, which seeks to retain key landscape elements and ensure development is carefully designed and integrated.

13. The proposed dwelling would represent a visual intrusion to both the CA and the SLA. Although some screening exists from the B1268, the site becomes increasingly visible moving east along this road. From these vantage points, the development would appear as a visually assertive modernist structure, with its glazed gable and zinc roof dominating views and diminishing the prominence of the Old Vicarage. While tree and hedgerow planting is proposed along the east and west boundaries, details are limited, and such planting would take time to establish. Given the scale, layout, and appearance of the dwelling, its presence would erode the pastoral foreground and conflict with the established settlement and landscape pattern, creating an incongruous feature at the village entrance.
14. The appellant argues that the design draws inspiration from agricultural buildings and would be largely hidden from external views. However, my site observations and the available evidence do not support this claim, particularly in relation to views from the B1268 and across the valley. Although reference is made to the varied architectural styles and materials found within Upleatham, many of the more modern developments cited lie outside of the CA boundary. By contrast, the appeal site forms an integral part of the CA. Although efforts to integrate the proposal into its surroundings are acknowledged, the proposed materials and detailing as a whole would not respect the significance of the CA and would fail to preserve or enhance its character or appearance.
15. Paragraph 212 of the Framework emphasises that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 213 adds that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should have a clear and convincing justification. Although the harm I have identified is less than substantial, it is nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
16. Under paragraph 215 of the Framework, any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. The appellant identifies benefits including the delivery of a new dwelling contributing to local housing supply, economic benefits through the use of local trades and suppliers, and environmental gains from sustainable design measures. The scheme would also offer measurable biodiversity net gain and is said to represent an innovative design intended to raise rural design standards.
17. While these matters carry some weight, their significance is limited by my earlier finding that the proposal does not meet the thresholds of exceptional quality or innovation required by policy. The economic benefits are modest given the scale of the development, and many of the other cited benefits, such as facilitating multi-generational living and providing a bespoke retirement home, would primarily be private rather than public benefits.
18. These benefits must be weighed against the harm identified to the character and appearance of the CA, which the Framework requires to be given great weight. In this case, even when the benefits are considered collectively, that harm is decisive.
19. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA, resulting in harm to its significance that would

not be outweighed by public benefits. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies HE1, SD4 and N1 of the LP, which collectively seek to protect conservation areas and sensitive landscapes. It would also conflict with the relevant provisions of the Framework, which have previously been set out.

Other Matters

20. The appellant refers to the presumption in favour of sustainable development under paragraph 11.d) of the Framework. However, even if that presumption were engaged, paragraph 11.d) i. makes clear that permission should not be granted where the application of relevant policies in the Framework provides a strong reason for refusal. This includes policies relating to designated heritage assets. Given the harm I have identified to the CA, which must be afforded great weight, I find this harm provides a sufficiently strong reason for refusal. Accordingly, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P Storey

INSPECTOR