
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2016

by W G Fabian BA Hons Dip Arch RIBA IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 14 June 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A4520/D/16/3150339
20 Woodlands Drive, Cleadon, Sunderland SR6 7TR

- 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 Ms Gemma Trainor against the decision of South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref ST/1147/15/HFUL, dated 6 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 22 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is construction of front porch and two storey side extension to provide store, shower room, utility, kitchen/family room and bedroom to replace existing attached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of front porch and two storey side extension to provide store, shower room, utility, kitchen/family room and bedroom to replace existing attached garage at 20 Woodlands Drive, Cleadon, Sunderland SR6 7TR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref ST/1147/15/HFUL, dated 6 December 2015, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drg No 1 and Drg No 0779/3154/618.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached brick house on a short cul-de-sac of similar properties. Like many neighbouring properties, it has two storey front bay windows, a side gabled pitched roof and a side-attached flat roofed single garage. The proposed extension would be built of matching materials in a similar style with detailing designed to match the existing house. It would replace the existing side attached flat roofed garage at No 20; the existing garage door would be repositioned in line with a new front porch beneath a

lean-to roof but would open to a shallow store in front of the proposed ground floor side extension. Above this the first floor side extension would be set back 1m from the existing front wall of the house, with a lower ridgeline. The upper extension would extend directly above the side of the former garage at ground floor.

4. A number of similar two storey side extensions have been built onto the neighbouring dwellings; several have forward projecting single storey porches with upper accommodation set back above them. Most are also set in from the side at the upper floor, but specific site circumstances vary. At least one, at No 11 provides a two storey extension with no side set-in at the upper level – here, as at the appeal property, the ground floor garage accommodation does not sit directly on the party boundary.
5. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document 9: Householder Developments, 2010, (SPD9) seeks to discourage side extensions that create a visual 'terracing effect' in the street scene, which occurs where extensions are set too close together so that the visual sense of a gap is lost. Specific guidelines require a minimum one metre gap between the extension and the side boundary of the site and a minimum one metre set-back at the upper storey from the main front wall and a significantly lower ridgeline.
6. In this case, while the second two provisions would be met, there would only be a 0.8m gap from the side extension to the boundary. However, the National Planning Policy Framework seeks flexibility in planning decisions, and the Council acknowledges that its guidance should be interpreted for the specific conditions at individual sites. A similar corresponding extension has already been built at the neighbouring property and is set directly onto the party boundary at ground level, but this retains a substantial set-in gap at first floor. As such, in this particular context, it seems to me that given the existing gap to the appeal site boundary (which is only some 0.2m less than that suggested) combined with the gap maintained by the adjacent extension at upper level, sufficient space would remain at the upper level between the two adjacent dwellings to prevent a 'terracing' effect and retain a sense of separate buildings at this point.
7. In reaching this decision, I have taken into account the guidance in SPD9 that where existing conditions result in a gap of less than 1m, the upper part of an extension should be set back by a third of the depth of the building. However for the reasons set out above, in my assessment sufficient gap would be maintained; the spirit of the Council's guidance would be met, having had regard to the site specific conditions of the appeal site and the neighbouring property, such that future application of the SPD would not be undermined by this decision.
8. Overall, taking all other considerations raised into account, I conclude that the proposed side extension would not harm the character and appearance of the dwelling or the surrounding area. It would comply with policy DM(1) of the South Tyneside Local Development Framework Development Management Policies, which seeks to ensure that extensions are designed to convey sensitive consideration of its surroundings.

Wenda Fabian Inspector