



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 September 2008

by **Graham Garnham BA BPhil MRTPI**

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

The Planning Inspectorate
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Decision date:
1 October 2008

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/A/08/2077242
Longfield Service Station, Darlington Back Lane, Stockton-on-Tees,
TS21 1BE

- 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 David Sunley against the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- The application (Ref 07/0488/REV), dated 16 January 2007, was refused by notice dated 8 January 2008.
- The development proposed is 'demolition of existing bungalow and garage and erection of new bungalow'.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Procedural matter

2. The appellant submitted an amended drawing before the Council made its decision. However, I understand that this was not accepted for formal consideration. I shall consider the proposal on the same basis as the Council, using the drawing submitted when the planning application was made.

Main issue

3. I consider that this is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the countryside, having regard to established planning policy to exercise strict control over new development in the countryside while supporting sustainable development in rural areas.

Reasons

4. The existing bungalow is a modest building. It is a relatively unobtrusive component of the site as a whole compared to the adjoining petrol filling station canopy and larger workshop buildings at the west end of the site. Its proposed replacement would have 2 storey accommodation across the full width of the footprint, facing towards the road, and be significantly higher. The eastern elevation would have the appearance of a large house. This side could also be seen from the road and in more distant views across the fields from Yarm Back Lane. I consider that what in reality would be a very substantial dwelling would have an urbanising effect on the character of the site and be out of keeping with the surrounding open countryside.
 5. The appellant says that a replacement dwelling is needed to ensure adequate supervision of an isolated site and support the viability of a rural business. I accept in principle that this argument may justify erecting a replacement
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dwelling. However, I have not seen a substantive justification for the very much larger dwelling that is proposed. A 2 bedroom dormer bungalow would be replaced with a building that has 6 habitable rooms at first floor level plus 4 bath/shower rooms. On the ground floor there would be 2 halls with staircases, but the latter would not interconnect at first floor level. I estimate that the new dwelling would have around twice the floorspace of the existing. I am not at all persuaded that the business requires a dwelling of this size and nature to ensure its viability.

6. The appellant has referred to several examples of dwellings in the countryside. I viewed as many as I was able to identify from the limited information provided. They included some large dwellings. However, I am not aware of the full circumstances of any of these cases, so cannot compare them directly to the appeal proposal. In any event, I do not consider that the existence of these new developments would justify what is proposed on the appeal site.
7. I conclude that, by virtue of its scale and prominence, the proposed replacement dwelling would harm the open character and appearance of the surrounding countryside. This would be contrary to established planning policy to exercise strict control over new development in the countryside. A building of this size has not been shown to be necessary order to sustain a business that is said to support the rural economy. The proposal conflicts with saved policies GP1 & EN13 in the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan (1997) and with national planning policy in PPS7, *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas*.
8. I have considered all other matters raised but they do not alter my decision.

G Garnham

INSPECTOR