Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 April 2009

by A J Wilson BA MA DipLA MRTPI

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

The Planning Inspectorate
4/11 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

☎ 0117 372 6372
email:enquiries@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Decision date:
14 May 2009

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/A/09/2094964
45 Henshaw Drive, Ingleby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 0PN

- 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 Miss Karen Gilmore against the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- The application Ref: 08/1347/FUL, dated 20 May 2008, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2008.
- The development proposed is described as 'a garage conversion and attached garage'.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issue

2. I consider that the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site forms part of an area of relatively modern housing within the large residential suburb of Ingleby Barwick. The groups of detached and semi-detached house are closely arranged about a series of short estate roads and culs-de-sac and are built to similar designs with a complementary palette of materials, creating an attractive residential environment. Amongst other things, saved Policy GP1 of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan seeks ensure that development proposals take place without any unduly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area. Policy HO12 also records that extensions to dwellings should be in keeping with the property and the street scene.

4. No 45 Henshaw Drive is part of a pair of semi-detached houses and it occupies a prominent corner plot where a small cul-de-sac leaves the main estate road, on the outside of a gentle curve in the highway. In contrast to the close arrangement of the buildings along the remainder of Henshaw Drive, the two pairs of houses to either side of the junction are set further back from the road, behind slightly more extensive areas of unenclosed private garden. Although these areas may be relatively small, in my opinion, they are an important component of the original design and layout of this part of the development. I also consider that they provide openness in a key position on the bend in the road and that they contribute positively to the character and appearance of the street scene.

5. The proposed garage would project out from flank wall of the property, extending built development towards Henshaw Drive and into one of these undeveloped spaces. I consider that this would create an intrusive feature, standing well forward of the existing wall fronting on to Henshaw Drive, and that it would be out of keeping with the layout and arrangement of the immediately surrounding buildings. The extension would also have the effect of seriously diminishing openness, a characteristic which I have identified as an important element in the street scene. Given the prominence of the appeal site, this harmful impact would be clearly visible in the public views along the street scene in both directions and would be readily apparent from within the cul-de-sac. Moreover, I do not consider that this harmful impact would be mitigated by the use of matching materials for the extension, or by the planting of trees and shrubs around the new garage.

6. The Council also argues that adding the extra garage to the host dwelling would unbalance the appearance of this pair of houses. In this respect, I recognise that the other house does not currently have a garage; and that the main elevation of the building already has an asymmetrical appearance. However, the proposed garage would extend the width of the single-storey component at one side of the building, to the extent that it would be greater than the main two-storey element of the host dwelling. I agree with the Council that this would be a disproportionate addition to the individual dwelling and that it would fail to follow the principles of subservience set out in the supplementary planning guidance, which has been prepared by the Council to provide advice on such matters. This merely adds to my concern that the development would be unacceptable and I conclude, therefore, that the proposal would seriously harm the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings, in conflict with Local Plan Policies GP1 and HO12.

7. I have taken into account the fact that other semi-detached houses in the area benefit from attached double garages, as shown on the photographs submitted with the appeal. However, I do not consider that these examples are directly comparable with the current proposal, either in terms of their location or their impact on their surroundings. Whilst I recognise that there may be some similarities with the extension recently approved at 29 Holystone Drive, the presence of this two-storey extension does not alter the harm which I consider would arise from the proposed development on the appeal site. I have therefore proceeded to determine the appeal on its merits in relation to the terms of the development plan.

8. I have had regard to the appellant's need for improved kitchen and dining accommodation and the fact that this cannot be provided in the alternative locations being suggested by the Council. I have also taken account of the letters from neighbouring residents indicating their support for the proposed extension. However, none of these considerations, or any of the other matters raised, diverts me from my conclusion that the appeal should not succeed.

Anthony J Wilson

INSPECTOR