



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 March 2007

by **Nigel Harrison** BA (Hons) 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
e-mail: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.gsi.gov.uk

Date: 7 March 2007

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2003/A/06/2031723

83 Fairmont Crescent, Scunthorpe, DN16 1EL

- 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 Mr A Mathews against the decision of North Lincolnshire Council.
- The application (Ref: 2006/0873), dated 30 May 2006, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2006.
- The development proposed is a first-floor extension with carport beneath (resubmission of application 2006/0225).

Summary of Decision: The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted subject to conditions set out in the Formal Decision below.

Procedural Matter

1. The description of the development above is taken from the Council's decision notice. Although it differs from the description given on the application form, I consider it more accurately describes the proposal.

Main Issue

2. I consider that the one main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 85 Fairmont Crescent in relation to outlook and daylight.

Planning Policy

3. The development plan includes the North Lincolnshire Local Plan (LP), adopted in 2003. Policy DS1 requires a high standard of design and, amongst other considerations, says that there should be no unacceptable loss of amenity to neighbours from overlooking and overshadowing. Policy DS5 says that extensions will be allowed provided they do not unreasonably reduce levels of sunlight or daylight, or result in overshadowing, loss of privacy, or an overbearing development.
4. I have been referred to supplementary planning guidance relating to house extensions (SPG). In relation to two-storey extensions and potential light loss it recommends a maximum unobstructed 30-degree 'angle of acceptance', measured from the centre point of the nearest neighbouring main ground floor window. Whilst this SPG is not part of the adopted plan it has been adopted by the Council and is nonetheless a material consideration.

Reasons

5. The appeal relates to a semi-detached dwelling in a street of similar and regularly spaced semi-detached properties, conforming to a fairly uniform building line. The proposal is for a two-storey extension comprising a carport with bedroom above. It would extend 2.75m to the side, be 5.4m deep, and align with the front elevation. The height to the ridge would be
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approximately 7.15m. The appellant has attempted to address the Council's objections to a previous scheme by reducing the depth of the extension and by substituting a hipped roof. The solid flank wall of the earlier scheme has been revised so that the carport would be open-sided, with the upper floor supported by corner piers.

6. I have considered the effect on the outlook from No 85 on the basis of any harm that could be caused by an overbearing development rather than a loss of view. The effect of the proposal would only be readily visible from the side-facing dining room window of No 85. The proposed extension would clearly add to the mass of the building, but would only partially obscure the outlook from the window. Its apparent bulk would be reduced by reason of the open carport and the hipped roof design. As a consequence I consider that the amended proposal would not be unacceptably overbearing or have a significantly harmful effect on outlook.
7. I have also considered the effect of the proposal on the natural light reaching the side window of No 85, and I note the neighbour's concerns. Although the Council say that the proposal will infringe the 30-degree rule in the SPG, no calculations of the effect of the proposal have been submitted to substantiate these concerns. SPG should not automatically be applied in a prescriptive manner, and I favour a pragmatic approach in this case. Although there will be some reduction of light falling on the affected window, I am not persuaded that this would be to a significant level, given the reduction in depth, height, and the open-sided form now proposed. Whilst I accept that this window is still the primary source of light for the dining room, it is not the sole source of light as the room also gains some additional light from a kitchen window to the rear.
8. I noted at my site visit several similar side extensions in Fairmont Crescent and nearby streets, where the gaps between dwellings and position in relation to neighbouring side-facing windows appeared to be comparable. The presence of these other examples has added weight to my decision to allow this appeal.
9. Overall I consider that the proposal would not significantly harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 85 Fairmont Crescent in relation to outlook and daylight. I find no significant conflict with LP Policies DS1 and DS5.

Conditions

10. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council in the light of the advice in Circular 11/95. I agree samples of the materials are required in the interests of the appearance of the area.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Formal Decision

12. I allow the appeal and grant planning permission for a first-floor extension with carport beneath (resubmission of application 2006/0225) at 83 Fairmont Crescent, Scunthorpe, DN16 1EL in accordance with the terms of the application (Ref: 2006/0873) dated 30 May 2006, and the plans submitted therewith, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details

Nigel Harrison

INSPECTOR



The Planning Inspectorate

Room: 3/01 Kite
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

Direct Line: 0117-372-8109
Switchboard: 0117-372-8000
Fax No: 0117-372-8443
GTN: 1374-8109

<http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk>

Mrs L Morton
North Lincolnshire Council
Development Control
Planning Dept
Church Square House
P O Box 42
Scunthorpe
DN15 6XQ
N Lincs

Your Ref: PA/2006/0873
Our Ref: APP/Y2003/A/06/2031723/WF
Date: 7 March 2007

Dear Mrs Morton

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Appeal by Andrew James Matthews
Site at 83 Fairmont Crescent, Scunthorpe, DN16 1EL

I enclose a copy of our Inspector's decision on the above appeal.

The attached leaflet explains the right of appeal to the High Court against the decision and how the documents can be inspected.

If you have any queries relating to the decision please send them to:

Quality Assurance Unit
The Planning Inspectorate
4/09 Kite Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

Phone No. 0117 372 8252

Fax No. 0117 372 8139

E-mail: Complaints@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Oliver Blower

COVERDL1

You can now use the Internet to submit and view documents, to see information and to check the progress of this case through the Planning Portal. The address of our search page is - <http://www.pcs.planningportal.gov.uk/pcsportal/casesearch.asp>





The Planning Inspectorate

An Executive Agency in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the National Assembly for Wales

Challenging the Decision in the High Court

Challenging the decision

Appeal decisions are legal documents and, with the exception of very minor slips, we cannot amend or change them once they have been issued. Therefore a decision is final and cannot be reconsidered unless it is successfully challenged in the High Court. If a challenge is successful, we will consider the decision afresh.

Grounds for challenging the decision

A decision cannot be challenged merely because someone disagrees with the Inspector's judgement. For a challenge to be successful you would have to show that the Inspector misinterpreted the law or, for instance, that the inquiry, hearing, site visit or other appeal procedures were not carried out properly, leading to, say, unfair treatment. If a mistake has been made and the Court considers it might have affected the outcome of the appeal it will return the case to us for re-consideration.

Different appeal types

High Court challenges proceed under different legislation depending on the type of appeal and the period allowed for making a challenge varies accordingly. Some important differences are explained below:

Challenges to planning appeal decisions

These are normally applications under Section 288 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to quash decisions into appeals for planning permission (including enforcement appeals allowed under ground (a), deemed application decisions or lawful development certificate appeal decisions and advertisement appeals.). For listed building or conservation area consent appeal decisions, challenges are made under Section 63 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. **Challenges must be received by the Administrative Court within 42 days (6 weeks) of the date of the decision - this period cannot be extended.**

Challenges to enforcement appeal decisions

Enforcement appeal decisions under all grounds [see our booklet 'Making Your Enforcement Appeal'] can be challenged under Section 289 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. Listed building or conservation area enforcement appeal decisions can be challenged under Section 65 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. To challenge an enforcement decision under Section 289 or Section 65 you must first get the permission of the Court. However, if the Court does not consider that there is an arguable case, it can refuse permission. **Applications for permission to make a challenge must be received by the Administrative Court within 28 days of the date of the decision, unless the Court extends this period.**

Important Note - This leaflet is intended for guidance only. Because High Court challenges can involve complicated legal proceedings, you may wish to consider taking legal advice from a qualified person such as a solicitor if you intend to proceed or are unsure about any of the guidance in this leaflet. Further information is available from the Administrative Court (see overleaf).

Frequently asked questions

"Who can make a challenge?" – In planning cases, anyone aggrieved by the decision may do so. This can include third parties as well as appellants and councils. In enforcement cases, a challenge can only be made by the appellant, the council or other people with a legal interest in the land -other aggrieved people must apply promptly for judicial review by the Courts (the Administrative Court can tell you more about how to do this – see Further Information).

"How much is it likely to cost me?" - A relatively small administrative charge is made by the Court for processing your challenge (the Administrative Court should be able to give you advice on current fees – see 'Further information'). The legal costs involved in preparing and presenting your case in Court can be considerable though, and if the challenge fails you will usually have to pay our costs as well as your own. However, if the challenge is successful we will normally meet your reasonable legal costs.

"How long will it take?" - This can vary considerably. Although many challenges are decided within six months, some can take longer.

"Do I need to get legal advice?" - You do not have to be legally represented in Court but it is normal to do so, as you may have to deal with complex points of law made by our own legal representative.

"Will a successful challenge reverse the decision?" - Not necessarily. The Court can only require us to reconsider the case and an Inspector may come to the same decision again but for different or expanded reasons.

"What can I do if my challenge fails?" - The decision is final. Although it may be possible to take the case to the Court of Appeal, a compelling argument would have to be put to the Court for the judge to grant permission for you to do this.

Inspection of appeal documents

We normally keep appeal files for one year after the decision is issued, after which they are destroyed. You can inspect appeal documents at our Bristol offices by contacting us on our General Enquiries number to make an appointment (see 'Contacting us'). We will then ensure that the file is obtained from our storage facility and is ready for you to view. Alternatively, if visiting Bristol would involve a long or difficult journey it may be more convenient to arrange to view your local planning authority's copy of the file, which should be similar to our own.

Further information

Further advice about making a High Court challenge can be obtained from the Administrative Court at the Royal Courts of Justice, Queen's Bench Division, Strand, London WC2 2LL, telephone 0207 9476655; Website: www.courtservice.gov.uk

Council on tribunals

If you have any comments on appeal procedures you can contact the Council on Tribunals, 81 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1BQ. Telephone 020 7855 5200; website: <http://www.council-on-tribunals.gov.uk/>. However, it cannot become involved with the merits of individual appeals or change an appeal decision.

Contacting us

High Court Section
The Planning Inspectorate
4/07 Kite Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

Phone: 0117 372 8962

Website

www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk

General Enquiries

Phone: 0117 372 6372

E-mail: enquiries@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Complaints

Phone: 0117 372 8252

E-mail: complaints@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Cardiff Office

The Planning Inspectorate
Room 1-004
Cathays Park
Cardiff CF1 3NQ
Phone: 0292 082 3866
E-mail: wales@pins.gsi.gov.uk

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

Office of the Parliamentary
Commissioner for Administration
Millbank Tower, Millbank
London, SW1P 4QP

Helpline: 0845 0154033

Website: www.ombudsman.org.uk

E-mail:

phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk



The Planning Inspectorate

An Executive Agency in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the National Assembly for Wales

Our Complaints Procedures

Complaints

We try hard to ensure that everyone who uses the appeal system is satisfied with the service they receive from us. Planning appeals often raise strong feelings and it is inevitable that there will be at least one party who will be disappointed with the outcome of an appeal. This often leads to a complaint, either about the decision itself or the way in which the appeal was handled.

Sometimes complaints arise due to misunderstandings about how the appeal system works. When this happens we will try to explain things as clearly as possible. Sometimes the appellant, the council or a local resident may have difficulty accepting a decision simply because they disagree with it. Although we cannot re-open an appeal to re-consider its merits or add to what the Inspector has said, we will answer any queries about the decision as fully as we can.

Sometimes a complaint is not one we can deal with (for example, complaints about how the council dealt with another similar application), in which case we will explain why and suggest who may be able to deal with the complaint instead.

How we investigate complaints

Inspectors have no further direct involvement in the case once their decision is issued and it is the job of our Quality Assurance Unit to investigate complaints about decisions or an Inspector's conduct. We appreciate that many of our customers will not be experts on the planning system and for some, it will be their one and only experience of it. We also realise that your opinions are important and may be strongly held.

We therefore do our best to ensure that all complaints are investigated quickly, thoroughly and impartially, and that we reply in clear, straightforward language, avoiding jargon and complicated legal terms.

When investigating a complaint we may need to ask the Inspector or other staff for comments. This helps us to gain as full a picture as possible so that we are better able to decide whether an error has been made. If this is likely to delay our full reply we will quickly let you know.

What we will do if we have made a mistake

Although we aim to give the best service possible, we know that there will unfortunately be times when things go wrong. If a mistake has been made we will write to you explaining what has happened and offer our apologies. The Inspector concerned will be told that the complaint has been upheld.

We also look to see if lessons can be learned from the mistake, such as whether our procedures can be improved upon. Training may also be given so that similar errors can be avoided in future. Minor slips and errors may be corrected under the terms of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 but we cannot amend or change in any way the substance of an Inspector's decision.

Who checks our work?

The Government has said that 99% of our decisions should be free from error and has set up an independent body called the Advisory Panel on Standards (APOS) to report on our performance. APOS regularly examines the way we deal with complaints and we must satisfy it that our procedures are fair, thorough and prompt.

Taking it further

If you are not satisfied with the way we have dealt with your complaint you can contact the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (often referred to as The Ombudsman), who can investigate complaints of maladministration against Government Departments or their Executive Agencies. If you decide to go to the Ombudsman you must do so through an MP. Again, the Ombudsman cannot change the decision.

Frequently asked questions

"Can the decision be reviewed if a mistake has happened?" – Although we can rectify minor slips, we cannot reconsider the evidence the Inspector took into account or the reasoning in the decision. This can only be done following a successful High Court challenge. The enclosed High Court leaflet explains more about this.

"If you cannot change a decision, what is the point of complaining?" – We are keen to learn from our mistakes and try to make sure they do not happen again. Complaints are therefore one way of helping us improve the appeals system.

"Why did an appeal succeed when local residents were all against it?" – Local views are important but they are likely to be more persuasive if based on planning reasons, rather than a basic like or dislike of the proposal. Inspectors have to make up their own minds whether these views justify refusing planning permission.

"How can Inspectors know about local feeling or issues if they don't live in the area?" – Using Inspectors who do not live locally ensures that they have no personal interest in any local issues or any ties with the council or its policies. However, Inspectors will be aware of local views from the representations people have submitted.

"I wrote to you with my views, why didn't the Inspector mention this?" – Inspectors must give reasons for their decision and take into account all views submitted but it is not necessary to list every bit of evidence.

"Why did my appeal fail when similar appeals nearby succeeded?" – Although two cases may be similar, there will always be some aspect of a proposal which is unique. Each case must be decided on its own particular merits.

"I've just lost my appeal, is there anything else I can do to get my permission?" – Perhaps you could change some aspect of your proposal to increase its acceptability. For example, if the Inspector thought your extension would look out of place, could it be re-designed to be more in keeping with its surroundings? If so, you can submit a revised application to the council. Talking to its planning officer about this might help you explore your options.

"What can I do if someone is ignoring a planning condition?" – We cannot intervene as it is the council's responsibility to ensure conditions are complied with. It can investigate and has discretionary powers to take action if a condition is being ignored.

Further information

Every year we publish a Business and Corporate Plan which sets out our plans for the following years, how much work we expect to deal with and how we plan to meet the targets which Ministers set for us. At the end of each financial year we publish our Annual Report and Accounts, which reports on our performance against these targets and how we have spent the funds the Government gives us for our work. You can view these and obtain further information by visiting our website (see 'Contacting us'). You can also get booklets which give details about the appeal process by telephoning our enquiries number.

You can find the latest Advisory Panel on Standards report either by visiting our website or on the ODPM website - www.odpm.gov.uk/

Contacting us

Quality Assurance Unit
The Planning Inspectorate
4/09 Kite Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
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Cardiff CF1 3NQ
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Office of the Parliamentary
Commissioner for Administration
Millbank Tower, Millbank
London, SW1P 4QP

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