

Comment: Over-development, footprint and massing — Plot 23

I object to the proposed amendments to Plot 23 on the basis that they would result in over-development of the plot, both in terms of footprint and overall massing.

The applicant presents the proposal as a relatively limited alteration to provide a larger attached garage. However, the submitted material confirms that the existing permission was for a detached dwelling with a single garage, whereas the current proposal is to provide a double garage on the side of the dwelling. This is therefore not simply a minor design change. It materially increases the built form, lateral spread and visual weight of the dwelling.

The footprint analysis reinforces the over-development concern. Using the total plot area as 100%, the dwellinghouse and garage footprint occupies approximately 28.3% of Plot 23. When the total area of construction and built intervention is considered — including the dwelling, garage, hardstanding, terrace, retaining structures and associated built form — this rises to approximately 41.9% of the plot.

These figures are not advanced as a rigid mathematical test. They are evidence of the intensity of development on this constrained plot. Plot 23 is not being developed as a dwelling sitting comfortably within a spacious plot. It is being filled by a large multi-level dwelling, an enlarged double garage, extensive hardstanding, raised terrace structures, retaining works and an additional lower-level garden room/storey.

Over-development is not assessed by footprint alone. The number of levels and the resulting massing are also material. The applicant's supporting statement refers to the new dwellings as being "two storey to the front and three to the back," relying on the hillside setting to justify the scale of development. That does not properly address the current proposal. The application appears to introduce a further lower-level garden room beneath the raised terrace, creating a four-level form in rear elevation terms. That additional level increases the apparent scale, bulk and intensity of the development.

The applicant also seeks to rely on the mixed character of Lingards Road and the existence of larger hillside dwellings elsewhere. That misses the point. The issue is not whether larger or three-storey dwellings exist elsewhere in Slaithwaite. The issue is whether this particular plot can reasonably accommodate the cumulative built form now proposed without appearing cramped, dominant and over-intensive.

The applicant's own statement records previous concern that the double garage would be an "overly large, dominant addition" and would harm the "space about dwellings" secured at the original application stage. Those concerns remain valid. The proposed double garage increases the lateral spread of the dwelling and further erodes the space around Plot 23. When combined with the raised terrace, retaining structures, hardstanding and lower-level accommodation, the result is an over-developed plot.

The over-development concern is also linked to the visual relationship with neighbouring dwellings. The double garage is not a neutral addition hidden within the approved building envelope. Its west elevation forms part of the outward-facing built form of Plot 23 and, when projected, intersects with the dwellinghouse at No. 94. This demonstrates that the garage has a direct spatial and visual relationship with dwellings opposite Lingards Road. It should therefore be assessed as part of the cumulative massing and amenity impact of the development, not dismissed as a minor garage alteration.

The applicant's supporting statement attempts to answer concerns by referring to a mixed streetscene, existing hillside development and examples of three-storey buildings elsewhere in the valley. That does not answer the site-specific issue. Plot 23 is a constrained edge plot, and the proposal now involves a double garage, a large multi-level dwelling, extensive construction across the plot, raised terrace works and an additional lower-level garden room/storey. The cumulative effect is materially different from a conventional dwelling with a single garage.

For these reasons, the proposal should not be assessed as a simple garage enlargement. It should be assessed cumulatively, having regard to footprint, massing, number of levels, engineered structures, loss of spacing and relationship with neighbouring dwellings. On that basis, the proposal represents an over-intensive development of Plot 23 and should be refused.