
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2017

by I Jenkins BSc CEng MICE MCIWEM

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

Decision date: 26 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/16/3166965

303 Sycamore Street (289-324), Ashington, NE63 0QD

- 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 Michael Coulson against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02535/FUL, dated 19 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a 2-storey bedroom extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider that the main issues in this case are the effect of the proposal on: the character of the street scene; and, the living conditions of residents of No. 301 Sycamore Street, with particular reference to light.

Reasons

Street scene

3. No. 303 is a mid-terrace property. In common with the other buildings in this terrace, it comprises a 2-storey house, with a single-storey annexe to the rear of the same width as the main house, and a walled rear yard. The main building has a dual-pitch roof and the annexe has a mono-pitch roof, which slopes down towards the back of the annexe. The continuity of these rooflines gives the rear of the terrace a simple, uniform appearance, which can be appreciated from either end of the row as well as from the rear lane to an extent. Although solar panels have been added to a number of the roof slopes, they are low profile and their visual impact is small. I consider that the simple, uniform appearance of the roof lines to the rear of the terrace, which is not unique hereabouts, contributes positively to the character of the street scene.
 4. The proposal involves the addition of a first floor extension, with a hipped roof, above the existing single-storey annexe of No. 303. It would be possible to ensure, through the imposition of a condition, that the materials used in the external surfaces of the proposed extension would match those of the existing building. Nonetheless, the proposal, which would extend across the full width of the annexe, would have a ridge level only slightly lower than the main roof of the dwelling. This would be contrary to the guidance set out in the Council's
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Supplementary Planning Document-Residential Extension Design Guidance (SPD), which indicates that there should be a difference in height of at least 0.5 metres. Rather than appearing subordinate, it would dominate the rear elevation of the house. Furthermore, the proposed extension would have the appearance of an isolated, awkward and obtrusive addition, which would interrupt the simple, uniform appearance of the rear of the terrace and detract from the character of the street scene. This type of impact can be seen elsewhere in the local area, where first floor extensions have been added above single-storey rear annexes of terraced houses or a single flat roofed dormer has been added to the rear roof slope of a terrace. However, each case must be considered primarily on its own merits and, in my judgement, the existence of those extensions elsewhere does not justify harmful development of the appeal site.

5. I conclude that the proposal would cause significant harm to the character of the street scene, contrary to the aims of Policies H8 and GP30 of the *Wansbeck District Local Plan, 2007* (LP) as well as Policies 1 and 2 of the *Northumberland Local Plan-Core Strategy Pre-submission Draft-Proposed Modifications, June 2016* (CSe). Insofar as they seek to ensure that regard is had to the character and/or quality of the built environment, they are consistent with the aims of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework).

Living conditions

6. The proposed extension would not project beyond the existing rear building line of the single-storey annexe of No. 301. Therefore, it would not interrupt any sight line from windows contained within the rear elevation of that neighbouring annexe nor would it reduce the light they receive. I conclude that the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of residents of No. 301, with particular reference to light, would be acceptable. In relation to this matter, it would not conflict with the guidance set out in the SPD nor would it conflict with the aims of LP Policy H8, CSe Policy 2 or the Framework, insofar as they seek to ensure a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of buildings.

Other matters

7. I understand that in this case no correspondence has been received from neighbouring residents in response to the publication of the planning application and appeal. However, in my view, a lack of objections cannot be automatically interpreted as a sign of support, not least as the propensity of neighbours to object can be influenced by a number of factors. I give this matter little weight.
8. The proposal would add a third bedroom to the property. Whilst the appellant has suggested that there is a local need for 3-bedroom dwellings in the area, I give this assertion little weight in the absence of any supporting evidence.

Conclusions

9. Notwithstanding my finding that the effect on the living conditions of the residents of No. 301 would be acceptable, in my judgement, neither this nor any other matters raised is sufficient to outweigh the harm that the scheme would cause to the character of the street scene. I conclude on balance that the scheme would not amount to sustainable development under the terms of

the Framework and that it would conflict with the Development Plan taken as a whole. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

I Jenkins

INSPECTOR