



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2019

by F Cullen BA(Hons) MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/19/3226303

**Woodhouse Farm, U7007, High Ridley Link Road, Coanwood,
Northumberland NE49 0NX**

- 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 J and S Wigham against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 18/03943/FUL, dated 7 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is part demolition of existing single storey rear extension, construction of first floor extension, internal alterations and formation of new parking area.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal site is named as Woodhouse Farm on the application form and Woodhouse Cottage on the planning appeal form. I have taken the address to be that stated on the application form.
3. The appellants have confirmed that a revised application has been submitted to the Council. This includes alterations to the design of the proposed development in an attempt to address some of the issues raised by the Council. A copy of the application and amended plans have been submitted by the appellants with their full grounds of appeal. Notwithstanding this, I have to determine the appeal on the basis of the plans before the Council at the time the application was determined. Therefore, I have not taken these plans into consideration in my determination of the appeal.
4. The appellants have made a separate appeal¹ against the Council's refusal to grant outline planning permission for the construction of two semi-detached one and a half storey houses at Woodhouse Farm, U7007, High Ridley Link Road, Coanwood, Northumberland NE49 0NX. I am the appointed Inspector in the other case, but for the avoidance of doubt, will determine each appeal strictly with regard only to the evidence that is relevant to each appeal.
5. The Council has highlighted that a prior notification application was submitted for the change of use of agricultural buildings into two dwellings at Woodhouse

¹ APP/P2935/W/19/3227953

Farm² which confirmed prior approval was not required. Given the close proximity of these buildings to the appeal site, I have taken this into account in my determination of this appeal.

6. The appellants make reference to the Tynedale Local Development Framework Core Strategy (CS) (2007) and Tynedale District Local Plan (LP) (2000, policies saved 2007) policies being out-of-date and should carry limited or no weight. As stated in paragraph 213 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. I consider that the relevant policies referred to are consistent with the provisions of the Framework, particularly Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places, and so give them substantial weight.
7. The revised version of the Framework was published on 19 February 2019. The parties have had an opportunity to comment upon the revised Framework as part of the appeal and I have therefore determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

8. The main issues are:

- The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding site; and
- The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of future occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling, with particular regard to outlook and privacy.

Reasons

9. The Council has raised no issues regarding the removal of part of the boundary wall to the front of the building and formation of a new parking area for two cars and, subject to conditions, consider it to be acceptable in terms of the character and appearance of the site and highway safety. I have no reason to disagree. I shall therefore limit my considerations of the proposed development to the part demolition of the existing single storey extension and the construction of a first floor extension to the rear.

Character and appearance

10. The appeal site is situated within a small group of residential and agricultural buildings located near to the village of Coanwood and set within the open countryside. Although it is set well back from the main road, being accessed via a narrow road, the building and frontage are clearly visible within the group and on the landscape when viewed from the main highway when travelling west.
11. The building is a traditional, modest, two storey farmhouse constructed of stone, with render to the front elevation, and with a natural slate roof. To the rear it has a single storey addition with a catslide roof which is typical to the wider Northumberland area, and a small single storey, flat-roof, rendered extension. The site is enclosed to the front and rear by stone boundary walls. Even though the building has been altered in the past, it still largely retains its

² 16/01955/AGTRES

original simplistic form, design and integrity. These elements contribute to its traditional rural character and humble appearance and allow it to sit comfortably within the building group and the landscape.

12. I acknowledge that the proposed extension would include the removal of the existing poor quality flat roof extension, be of a smaller footprint and be constructed of complementary traditional materials. Also, there would be benefits arising from the refurbishment and reuse of the existing building. However, I consider that the combined height, scale and massing of the proposed development would cause it to be an uncomfortably large addition that would dominate the rear elevation and significantly and detrimentally alter the traditional and modest form of the existing building.
13. In addition, the projecting gable with an asymmetrical dual pitch roof design, which would extend over onto the elevation of the adjoining building, would not be sympathetic to the character of the existing property. This would cause it to jar with the adjacent buildings in the group. The result would be a discordant addition to the building which would have a harmful effect on its essential character and appearance and that of the buildings within the surrounding site.
14. The location of the extension to the rear of the building, the siting of the building within the group and the topography of the surrounding land which slopes away from the site to the south west, would mean that it would not be readily visible from public routes around the site. However, it is apparent that it would be unduly conspicuous and detract from the existing building and adjacent buildings when viewed from the private road to the north and the surrounding land to the side and rear of the site.
15. Therefore, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding site. This would be contrary to Policies BE1 and GD1 of the CS which, amongst other things, ensure that development is of high quality design that will maintain and enhance the distinctive local character of the town, village or countryside. It would also conflict with Policies GD2, H20 and H33 of the LP which, amongst other things, state that the design of development should be appropriate to and respect the character of the existing building and site in terms of scale, proportions, massing, positioning and appearance. It would also fail to accord with the Framework, Section 12 -Achieving well-designed places. The Council also cites Policy NE1 of the CS in its reasons for refusal. However, as this policy relates to the protection of the natural environment, I do not consider this policy relevant to this appeal.

Living conditions of future occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling

16. The proposed extension would extend over the rear elevation of the adjoining building which is proposed to be converted into a dwelling³. I therefore consider it appropriate to assess the potential effect of the appeal proposal on any future occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling.
17. The extension would not extend as far as the existing flat roof extension and there would be no openings in the south west elevation. However, it would be higher than the existing addition, with the top part of the elevation and the pitch of the roof being in very close proximity to a large bedroom window in the

³ 16/01955/AGTRES

adjoining building. In these respects, I consider that it would be very dominant when viewed from the bedroom window and thus have an overbearing impact and reduce the outlook of any future occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling.

18. Although not included in its reasons for refusal, in its delegated report the Council consider that the proposed development would result in a loss of privacy for future occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling. Given the location and angle of the rooflights on the south west pitch of the roof in relation to the bedroom window of the adjoining building, I consider that the extension would not impact on the privacy of any future occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling to a harmful degree.
19. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of future occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling, with particular regard to outlook. This would be contrary to Policy BE1 of the CS which, amongst other things, ensures that development is of high quality design and Policies GD2 and H33 of the LP which, amongst other things, state that the design of development should be appropriate to and respect the character of the existing building and site and respect the amenities of nearby residents. It would also fail to accord with the Framework, Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places.

Other Matters

20. I have considered other extensions with both pitched and flat roofs to properties in the surrounding area. I acknowledge that there are extensions to some houses in the locality that are large and of varying design quality. However, I am not aware of the detailed circumstances of these developments. In any event, I have determined the appeal before me on its own merits with regard to the specific context of the appeal building and its location.
21. I acknowledge the appellants' comments regarding the submissions from Coanwood Parish Council in support of the proposed development. However, it is noted that the Parish Council's comments were received a day after the date of the report and on the day of the application's determination. I have had regard to the Parish Council's support for the proposed development. However, I consider that it does not outweigh the harm that I have found
22. I note the appellants contend that, because the Council does not have a formal Scheme of Delegation, the application was not determined in the correct procedural manner which is not in line with principles set out in the Framework. I note from the evidence submitted that the Council did not appear to have a formal Scheme of Delegation in September 2017 and the Council has not confirmed if this situation has changed. However, it is not within the remit of the appeals process to comment on the internal procedures of the Council and so I do not consider it to be determinative in the appeal.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

F Cullen

INSPECTOR