



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2022

by Richard Newsome BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/21/3283702

2 The Limes, Morpeth NE61 1EE

- 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 Ms Mary Bell against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01085/FUL, dated 17 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I note that the Council's Officer Report refers to the 2019 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, the decision notice was issued on 20 July 2021, the same day as the publication of the revised 2021 version of the Framework. Whilst it is not clear if the proposal was assessed based on the revised Framework or not, there are no substantive changes in it relevant to the appeal before me. Therefore, I have not reverted to the parties for further comments on the revised Framework, which I take into account where relevant below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a 2-storey stone built mid-terrace dwelling located within a predominantly residential area. It is set back and elevated from the highway behind a low stone wall and high hedgerow on the boundary, and then a long narrow garden. A footpath rises from street level through the front garden to provide access to the dwelling. The boundaries to the gardens of adjacent dwellings are formed of high hedges.
5. There is an existing single storey projection which extends a short but uniform distance from the south-facing front elevation of the appeal property across its entire width. The predominantly timber framed projection has a simple single pitched slate roof and is comprised of a part glazed porch area adjacent to the front door, and a stone and glazed element which provides internal living space to the dwelling.

6. The proposal would involve the removal of the existing front projection of the dwelling and the provision of a new single storey front extension. This would include a covered porch area and a large bay window feature to the remaining frontage. The roof of the proposal would be multi-sloped with an element glazed for roof lights.
7. The proposal would constitute more than a simple replacement of the existing projection. It would extend further from the dwelling into the garden, particularly the bay element which would be a dominant feature departing from the strong linear frontages of the built form of the host dwelling and the current projection. As a result, whilst the proposal would be subordinate to the host dwelling it would be a disproportionate and incongruous addition to its frontage, and to the wider building which includes the two adjacent terraced dwellings which have no projections on their south-facing elevations.
8. The proposal would also be of a significantly more complex design than the existing projection, particularly the bay element and the roof structure. This would be incongruous with the simple current features of the south-facing elevations of the host and adjacent dwellings. It is recognised that certain design elements of the existing projection would be replicated, such as window styles, and that materials would be generally consistent with those of the existing dwelling. However, the overall proposal would be inconsistent with the built form and simple linear style of the host and adjacent dwellings.
9. Consequently, the proposal would result in an incongruous and disproportionate addition to the dwelling due to its form, scale, design, and location to the front of the appeal property. It would therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to there being other examples of buildings in the locality with ground floor features forward of the front elevations and I viewed these on my site visit. However, I note that whilst the examples incorporate such features, they are not similar in scale, design, and context to that which is proposed at the appeal property. Therefore, I attribute them little weight in determining the appeal.
11. I recognise that the frontage of the appeal property is partially screened by tall hedges on its boundaries and those of the adjacent dwellings. However, a number of the hedges are outside the control of the appellant and their future cannot be guaranteed and controlled. Notwithstanding this, the appeal property is in a prominent corner location and elevated above the highway, and I noted that the roof of the current projection is visible from locations in the surrounding area either above the hedge or through gaps in it. As the proposal would be larger and have a more prominent roof design than the present projection, it would also be visible, if not more so.
12. As a result of the above, I find that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. I therefore conclude that the development would be contrary to Policy H14 of the Castle Morpeth District Local Plan (2003) which states that proposals to alter, extend or improve dwellings will be permitted subject to meeting criteria including that there are no adverse impacts on the appearance of the property or the street scene. It would also not accord with Policies Sus1 and Dev1 of the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (2016) which include requirements that proposals respect or enhance the character of sites and surroundings. It would also be

contrary to guidance in the Framework, which amongst other things, requires that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Newsome

INSPECTOR