



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2022

by C Dillon BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/21/3288176

23 The Beeches, Ponteland NE20 9SZ

- 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 I Ellis against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02734/FUL, dated 6 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing attached garage and erection of two storey side extension on the same footprint in a style to match the existing, with single storey flat roof extension to the rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to scale and massing.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a 2 storey semi-detached dwelling set back within a generous sized plot on a main route through Ponteland. The prevailing character of this part of Ponteland is one of a mature and leafy residential area on the outer limits of the settlement's built up framework.
4. The appeal dwelling is read immediately with its semi-detached partner and another pair of semi-detached dwellings of the same design. Due to its orientation, it is particularly visible from a distance upon approach into Ponteland from the surrounding open countryside context. The existing generous spacing between the appeal property and neighbouring No 25 The Beeches is appreciated against a mature wooded backdrop from the countryside approach to this part of Ponteland.
5. What sets these 4 dwellings apart from those in the surrounding area is their more generous set back, spacing and subordinate 2 storey gable ended outer sections. Although each of these 4 dwellings have been previously extended, the positioning, roof design, scale and massing of their additions continues this subordination. This means that the collective original distinctive form and overall symmetry of this particular house type has been retained.
6. The appeal proposal would extend the overall width of the host dwelling to an extent not dissimilar to that of the existing single storey garage. This would represent the substantial elongation of the outer recessed section of the dwelling at a 2 storey scale. The proposed roof would create a hipped end and

the definition of the existing gable end of the main roof would just be discernible from the proposed step in the ridgeline. The width of the proposed 2 storey addition would be greater than that of the existing 2 storey recessed section that it would adjoin. The appeal proposal would also be of a substantially greater height than the existing garage extension. The proposed first floor windows in the front elevation would be shorter in height than those of the existing dwelling. Furthermore, the appeal proposal would significantly close the visual gap with No 25.

7. Collectively, these elements significantly undermine the vertical proportions of the host building. They also dramatically increase the scale and massing of this side section of the appeal dwelling and convey a cramped relationship between dwellings. In addition, the introduction of a hipped end and limited setting down of the proposed ridgeline would frustrate the existing visual appearance of the appeal property.
8. Consequently, the proposed scale and massing of this particular design would not provide an appropriate level of subordination with the host dwelling and surrounding context. This would be highly evident within the street scene, particularly from the countryside approach into this part of Ponteland. For the same reasons, the appeal proposal would unduly disturb the symmetry and visual balance which exists as a strong common characteristic between the appeal dwelling and its immediate neighbours.
9. The fact that the appeal proposal would be constructed from materials to match its host or that it sits within a generous plot which is softened by mature planting to the front and rear does not adequately reduce the harm that I have found.
10. The appellant has argued that side extensions are a popular way of extending in the area. However, the examples provided are insufficiently comparable in design and effect on their host and wider context and attract very limited favourable weight. Moreover, the details of the permitted development rights referred to by the appellant, how these would translate to this particular property and compare with the appeal scheme are not before me. As such, this argument is of neutral consequence to my assessment. Notwithstanding the Council's initial views, they refused planning permission for this scheme because of the harm to character and appearance as set out in their decision notice. In making my own determination, I have concurred with the Council's decision and therefore attribute no weight to this argument.
11. For the reasons given, the appeal proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to scale and massing.
12. Policy QOP 1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan requires that design makes a positive contribution to local character, distinctiveness and the relationship between built and natural features, as well as integrating with its context. Policy QOP 2 of that emerging plan requires that the physical presence and design of the development preserves the character of the area and is not visually obtrusive or overbearing. Developments must also relate positively to their locality having regard to the form, scale and massing prevailing around the site and distinctive local architectural styles. In view of the identified harm, the appeal proposal conflicts with these emerging policies. However, given the status of this emerging plan this conflict attracts limited weight.

13. Crucially, Policy H14 of the adopted Castle Morpeth District Local Plan states that proposals must not have an adverse impact on the appearance of the property or the street scene. Furthermore, Policy PNP 2 of the made Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan states that proposals will be supported where they protect and add to an area's quality, distinctiveness and character and respect the character of the site and its surroundings in terms of proportion, form, massing, height and scale. Given the harm that I have found, the appeal proposal conflicts with both of these development plan policies.

Conclusion

14. I have found harm to the character and appearance of the area. As a consequence, the appeal proposal conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations before me which outweigh this conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Dillon

INSPECTOR