



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2022

by C Megginson

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/22/3291342

8 Woodlands, Warkworth NE65 0SY

- 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 Barbara Yore against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03892/FUL, dated 1 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 17 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'a rear single storey extension with roof terrace above. Front carport.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Subsequent to the submission of this appeal, the Northumberland Local Plan was adopted in March 2022 and this supersedes the Alnwick Core Strategy (2007). During the appeal process the Council provided a copy of the adopted local plan policies relevant to the appeal and this is considered below. Both parties were given the opportunity to comment further based on this change.
3. I note that the application form description of development includes reference to a front carport. From the evidence before me it is clear that this element no longer forms part of the proposed development and I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issues

4. The effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host property
 - the living conditions of the adjoining property, with particular regard to privacy and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance of the host property

5. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling of a simple, pleasing and straightforward red brick design. The property features a long rear garden running down to the River Coquet with open fields beyond.
6. The proposal comprises a single-storey rear extension covering the full width of the rear of the house and a first-floor roof terrace, which would sit into part of

the lean to roof of the extension, directly adjacent to the boundary with the adjoining semi-detached property at No.9 Woodlands. The proposed balcony would feature metal and opaque glass screening on all sides, which along the length of the boundary with No. 9 would increase to be approximately 1.8m high.

7. The proposed ground floor element and lean to roof of the proposed extension, whilst sizeable, would complement the existing dwelling without appearing overly dominant. However, the high glass and metal screen on the proposed elevated first-floor balcony would stand out as obtrusive and incongruous against the simple, straightforward design of the host property, thus diminishing its overall character. Whilst this is only visible in the immediate locality and not from public views, this does not mitigate the harm identified.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host property. This would be contrary to policy HOU9 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which, in summary, seek to ensure high quality design which respects and complements the host property.

Living conditions of the adjoining property, with particular regard to privacy and outlook

9. The position and height of the first-floor balcony would enable users to see some distance and would closely overlook the lower end of the neighbouring garden of No.9. I appreciate that the high opaque screen would prevent the balcony from looking into the first-floor window of No.9, as well as preventing overlooking of the top half of the neighbouring garden. I also appreciate that the screen around the rest of the balcony will also reduce outward visibility to a degree.
10. I note that the existing first floor window of the appeal property currently overlooks the whole of the neighbouring garden. However, the use of a balcony is different to that of a window, in that users would sit out on a balcony for longer periods of time and therefore the loss of privacy to the lower end of the neighbouring garden would be more intrusive than that from a window where someone may stand for shorter periods. Whilst the bottom of the neighbour's garden may currently be ornamental with no seating area, I consider that this could change at any time and therefore this does not alter my finding of harm.
11. The first-floor window of No.9 is a bay window which would be in very close proximity to the high opaque glass screen proposed along the side of the balcony. I consider that the position, height and depth of the proposed screen would unacceptably harm the outlook from this window.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the living conditions of the adjoining property, with particular regard to privacy and outlook. This would be contrary to policy QOP2 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022) and the Framework which, in summary, require new development to protect the amenity of existing residents.

Other Matters

13. The appeal property is located within the Warkworth Conservation Area (CA). I note that the Council did not express substantive concerns regarding the effect of the proposal on the character of the conservation area. Whilst I have found

harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling, this does not extend to the wider CA due to the limited scale of the proposal and lack of visibility in the wider area. This therefore does not translate to harm to the CA and therefore the character and appearance of the CA would be preserved.

14. My attention has been drawn to other rear extensions with balconies within the nearby village of Alnmouth as well as the wider county. I have limited information on these cases. The circumstances in each proposal are likely to be different, and in any event the fact that apparently similar extensions may have been permitted is not a reason, on its own, to allow unacceptable development. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own merits.
15. The appellant has expressed concerns relating to the existing conservatory at the adjoining property that may not benefit from express planning permission. That is not before me to consider (and is for the council to determine) and in any event the harm that I have identified is not related to the presence of the conservatory.
16. The appellant has expressed concerns regarding a lack of communication with the Council during the application process. Whilst this must have caused the applicant some concern, I find nothing to suggest that a decision was not reached on the basis of the merits of the proposal, as submitted by the applicant.

Conclusion

17. The appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan. There are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

C. Megginson

INSPECTOR