



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 August 2022

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/22/3303528

25 Fontside, Mitford, Northumberland NE61 3PS

- 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 Mrs Elaine Scott against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01503/FUL, dated 27 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is an upwards extension of existing first floor bedroom, with removal of low level tiled pitched roof and replaced with proposed high level tiled pitched roof, including proposed Juliet balcony to west elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to a two storey semi-detached residential property located in a residential area containing dwellings of a similar style, design and finish. The proposal would result in an extension to the existing dwelling, not an additional dwelling.
4. The proposed first floor extension would sit above an existing single storey extension. It would form a visually indivisible single dwelling as the windows and design of the first floor would respond to the existing dwelling. Added to this, the entrance door next to the garage door on the ground floor would reflect the arrangement in the existing single storey side extension. Hence, the proposed extension would, in this regard, be well related and would accord with Policy Set2 of The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan 2011 – 2031 (MNP).
5. However, Policy HOU 9 of the Northumberland Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Local Plan) also requires proposals to be subordinate in size and massing to the existing dwelling. Although the appellant refers to the cubic content increase that would ensue, size is not, in my opinion, just about the volume added by an extension, it is also about its external dimensions, and how, in this case, that relates to its host. Also, the term 'subordinate' as set out in the policy is different to the term 'disproportionate' as put forward by the appellant. In applying the former, given that the proposed extension would replicate the host dwelling's eaves and ridge lines and its depth, it would not be subordinate in its size and massing to the existing dwelling.

6. Therefore, despite the proposed use of materials, the proposed extension would not respect or complement the style and character of the existing dwelling. It would also harm the character of the surrounding area which is mainly influenced by two storey dwellings with subordinate single storey elements to the side with space between each semi-detached pairing.
7. I recognise that the proposal would create additional living space for the occupants of the dwelling, and this would be of a benefit to them, but great importance is attached to achieving high quality design. Despite my finding about the scheme against MNP Policy Set2, I conclude, when the scheme is considered in overall terms, that the proposed first floor extension would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would not accord with Local Plan Policies HOU 9 and QOP 1 and MNP Policy Des1. These policies jointly seek residential developments to be of a high quality of design, and well related and subordinate in size and massing to the existing dwelling and the prevailing built form so they respect or enhance the character of the site and its surroundings and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Other Matters

8. I understand that the appellant submitted revised plans to the Council with a view to overcoming its concerns and that the Council had reservations about the design of those revisions, but my assessment has been made on the original scheme that the appellant asked the Council to base its decision on. I note the appellant's points about the design of an extension if the ridge line were reduced, but it remains open to the appellant to find a suitable design solution and submit this for the Council's consideration in the first instance.
9. The rear garden of 23 Fontside would be partially overlooked as a result of the proposed Juliet balcony, but due to the orientation of the properties and the topography of the land, this would not be harmful. There would also be no adverse effects on neighbouring occupants' living conditions from any other aspects of the proposal and satisfactory levels of amenity space and parking provision would remain. However, these matters do not alter or outweigh my finding on the main issue.

Conclusion

10. The appeal scheme would not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that I should take a different decision other than in accordance with this.
11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR