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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2023

**by P Storey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 22 June 2023**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/J4525/D/23/3315805**

**Norwind, North Street, Newbottle, Sunderland, Houghton-le-Spring  
DH4 4EZ**

- 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 Daniel Smith against the decision of Sunderland City Council.
  - The application Ref 22/01565/FUL, dated 5 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 November 2022.
  - The development proposed is addition of 1st floor to existing split level bungalow using new attic truss to roof.
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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 host property and surrounding area, including the Newbottle Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II listed St Matthew's Church.

## Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached house constructed from red brick with terracotta roof tiles and it has a contemporary appearance. Its immediate neighbouring dwelling to the west is similar in appearance, though subtle differences exist in the detailing and materials of each dwelling.
4. The appeal site sits within the Newbottle Conservation Area (the CA) and occupies an elevated position overlooking fields to the north. It is the easternmost dwelling on North Street. The appeal property and the similar neighbouring dwelling to the west sit together, separated from the dwellings further to the west on North Street by a gap in the built frontage. Although some dwellings sit within this gap, they are set back from the main street frontage. The neighbouring buildings further to the west on North Street comprise a mix of terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings with a variety of facing materials including brick, stone and render.
5. St Matthew's Church, which is a Grade II Listed Building (the LB), sits on raised ground to the southeast of the appeal site. The LB's setting is greatly informed by its presence in long-range views, within which the appeal site sits close to the LB. This setting contributes strongly to its significance as the historic and visually prominent parish church serving Newbottle.

6. The significance of the CA derives in part from its role as a traditional hilltop village and the contribution it makes to the surrounding landscape. The appeal site lies in a prominent elevated position close to the edge of the CA. Views of the site and its immediate surroundings, including the LB, are afforded from many public vantage points to the north and northeast. This includes from the adjacent public right of way through the field immediately to the north, and from the rear lane of the nearby dwellings fronting the A182. Furthermore, whilst the finer details of buildings are less clear, the massing of the appeal site and its surroundings, including the LB, are clearly visible from the A183 through Penshaw Village more than 1 mile to the north.
7. Although there are some variations in scale and detailing, the building types and architectural style along this edge of the CA retain a degree of familiarity. The buildings generally feature simple front and rear roof slopes with gable ends to the side and the roofscape is largely uninterrupted by additional features. This simple uniformity contributes to the significance of the CA and respects the prominence of the LB in views towards the CA from the north.
8. The appeal property and its immediate neighbouring dwelling are of limited architectural interest, having been built later than many neighbouring buildings in a contemporary style typical of their time. However, the form and scale of the host property and its immediate neighbour do reflect many characteristics of the wider CA, including the height, gable-end profile and clean, uninterrupted roofscape.
9. The introduction of dormer windows to the prominent front and side elevations of the dwelling would introduce uncharacteristic elements that would not reflect the form or proportions of the surrounding roofscape in this prominent position on the edge of the CA. Whilst the increase in roof height would be insignificant, the cumulative effects of the increased massing, the installation of a large first floor opening to accommodate the Juliet balcony, and the installation of dormer windows to the front and side elevations, would result in a disproportionate and top-heavy structure that would fail to assimilate with the surroundings.
10. I acknowledge the nearby presence of dormer windows, including on the single-storey terraced dwellings a short distance to the west. However, these dwellings are set back from the street frontage and their single-storey stature results in a limited contribution to the overall street frontage, particularly in terms of views from outside of the CA. Conversely, the position and proportions of the host property and the scale and massing of the proposed development would have a significant effect on these views, and accordingly I give limited weight to the presence of the nearby features. For the reasons outlined above, the development detracts from the character and appearance of the CA.
11. The effects on the LB would primarily be felt in terms of longer-range views where the LB and the host property appear closely related, and the effect on the elevated views over the surrounding landscape from the LB and its grounds. Accordingly, the introduction of uncharacteristic and incongruous features would adversely affect the setting of the LB. The development would not be of such significant scale or materiality that would compete with the prominence of the LB, and accordingly the harm to both the CA and the setting of the LB would be less than substantial. Nevertheless, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) directs that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

12. The Framework directs that in cases of less than substantial harm, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Whilst the development would enhance the living accommodation for the benefit of the occupiers, this would constitute only negligible public benefit in terms of the Planning Practice Guidance. I find no evidence that any other public benefits would outweigh the identified harm.
13. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area, including the significance of the Newbottle CA and the setting of the LB. The development therefore conflicts with Policies BH1, BH7 and BH8 of the Sunderland City Council Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 (January 2020) which seek, among other objectives, to achieve high quality design and positive improvement, to value the historic environment, and to give great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. It also fails to accord with the objectives of the Framework in respect of conserving and enhancing the historic environment, and Management Proposal 1a of the Newbottle Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy, which seeks to protect key views into and out of the CA.

### **Conclusion**

14. The proposed development fails to accord with the policies of the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations that outweigh this conflict. For the above reasons, and taking account of all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*P Storey*

INSPECTOR