



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2023

by F Harrison BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/23/3318350

57 Church Street, Amble, Northumberland NE65 0DY

- 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 Alison Lewis against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 22/04246/FUL, dated 14 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is single storey garage extension including a study and a shower room.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the appeal property and the Amble Conservation Area (ACA).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey dwelling which has previously been extended. It is located within a spacious end of terrace plot and while attached to the row of terraces it does not follow the building line and has a significant set back from Church Street. The main elevation comprises natural stone and the side and rear elevations are rendered in white.
4. The appeal site falls within the ACA and I have assessed the appeal scheme against this heritage asset. From my observations and as set out in the Amble Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Matters (2008) the significance of the ACA derives from the story of its evolution and its special historic, architectural and townscape interest which survive with a coherent integrity. Stone terraces are noted as an important feature in the ACA. While of a smaller scale and set back from the row of terraces on Church Street the appeal property has a traditional appearance and contributes positively to the ACA in views from Church Street.
5. The proposed development would be substantial in width and would extend to the full depth of the appeal property. Despite being single storey, it would appear as a bulky addition that would not be subservient to the appeal property. While the extension may not be the same width as the appeal property and irrespective of the precise increase in floorspace, the proposed development would be a dominant feature.

6. The use of white render for the extension would tie in with the side and rear elevations of the appeal property. However, the proposed wildflower roof would be an incongruous addition, adversely affecting the appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area. It is indicated that the roof has been designed to enhance the natural environment in what is a predominantly urban area, however this would be to the detriment of the positive contribution the property makes to the appearance of the ACA.
7. The appeal site is relatively secluded, and the single storey height of the proposal would result in the extension not being readily apparent from public vantage points. Nevertheless, this does not mean that an otherwise unacceptable development should be permitted. Moreover, it would be visible from a number of nearby properties, including from the rear upper floor windows of the adjacent row of terraces. In these views, the proposal would be visually intrusive, detracting from the generally traditional appearance of the surrounding terraces.
8. As such, the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the ACA. The harm that I have identified is 'less than substantial' harm. The National Planning Policy Framework requires that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, irrespective of the level of harm. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should also require a clear and convincing justification.
9. While the extension would provide secure off-street parking and facilitate home working these benefits would be largely private. There would be modest benefits arising from short term employment during the proposal's construction. However, in having special regard to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the ACA there are no public benefits sufficient to weigh against the permanent harm that would arise to the significance of the heritage asset.
10. Consequently, the proposal would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the area, including the appeal property and the ACA, in conflict with policies QOP2, HOU9, ENV1, ENV7 and ENV9 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022). Amongst other things, these policies require development to preserve the character of the area, reinforce local distinctiveness of conservation areas and conserve, protect and enhance the significance, quality and integrity of Northumberland's heritage assets. Residential extensions are required to be well related and subordinate in size and massing to the existing dwelling and respect its style and character.

Conclusion

11. My above findings bring the proposal into conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that have been shown to have sufficient weight to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

F Harrison

INSPECTOR