



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2024

by H Jones BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/23/3332148

6 Dunsdale Road, Holywell NE25 0NG

- 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 Robert Brown against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 23/02134/FUL, dated 8 June 2023, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2023.
 - The development proposed is a front 2 storey extension and side extension above garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a front 2 storey extension and side extension above garage at 6 Dunsdale Road, Holywell NE25 0NG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 23/02134/FUL, dated 8 June 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 01, 04 A and 05 A.
 - 3) The bricks and the roof tiles to be used in the construction of the front and side extensions hereby approved shall match the bricks and roof tiles used on the rest of the building. The remaining external materials to be used in the construction of the extensions hereby approved - the UPVC windows, composite doors, cladding and render shall match the appearance, distribution and colour depicted on the approved plans.

Preliminary Matters

2. On site, a 2 storey front extension is largely complete. The appearance of the entrance door differs to that on the submitted plans. The proposed side extension has not been constructed. Given this and for the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal on the basis that it is proposed and on the basis of the plans submitted.
3. In December 2023, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. I have had regard to the revised Framework in so far as it is relevant to this appeal.

Background and Main Issues

4. Although both a front and side extension are proposed, the Council's reasons for refusal only refer to the front extension. Given this, the main issues are:
- the effects of the proposed front extension upon the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the effects of the proposed front extension upon the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to light and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. No 6 Dunsdale Road is one of a pair of semi-detached houses located within a predominantly residential area. There are properties on Dunsdale Road which exhibit some similar design features and it is clear to me that the properties were originally built around the same time. However, many properties have been extended and altered. On the street, various roof designs are represented including those that are hipped and flat and those which include projecting gable ends. A mixture of external building materials are used including render. Windows differ in style and colour. Overall, I find that the street scene has a heterogeneous appearance and is not one characterised by uniformity.
6. By reason of its projection and gabled profile, the front extension would have a transformative effect upon the front elevation of the property. However, it would add to the existing varied extensions and alterations which are already prevalent in the area. Upon completion of the proposed development, to either side of the front extension, there would be expanses of the 2 storey front elevations of the host property and of the adjoining No 4, of quite similar scale and width. As a result, the pair of semi-detached houses would have a largely balanced appearance.
7. The use of external materials could be appropriately controlled through the imposition of a condition. However, together, the submitted application form and the plans propose that the materials to be used within the construction of the front extension would be concrete roof tiles, brick, render, cladding and grey windows and doors. Given the mix of materials incorporated within nearby properties such materials would be in keeping with the area.
8. For these reasons, the proposed front extension would be a sympathetic addition to the street scene with acceptable effects wrought upon the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would comply with policies HOU9, QOP1 and QOP2 of the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036 (LP). In summary and amongst other matters, these policies require developments to be visually attractive, to preserve the character of the area and result in no unacceptable adverse impacts upon the style or character of the existing dwelling and its setting. The proposal would also comply with advice within the Framework, including that at paragraph 135, which requires development to add to the quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character.

Living conditions

9. The Council has not identified the address of the property to which its second reason for refusal relates. It is not clear, therefore, which property occupants the Council considers would be unacceptably harmed by the proposed front extension. In articulating the alleged harm, the Council's Officer Report refers to the property "on the north side".
10. North of the appeal site there are properties on the opposite side of the road. These houses are set well back from the road behind driveways and gardens. The closest parts of these houses to the appeal site are porches with the main parts of the houses set farther back still. Each property is set within a spacious plot with gardens on more than one side. Given these factors, considerable separation distances would remain between the proposed front extension and the main rooms within these houses opposite, as well as their garden areas. Consequently, the front extension would not result in an overbearing impact upon the occupiers of these properties nor a harmful reduction in light.
11. Within the adjoining property, 4 Dunsdale Road, the ground floor window closest to the proposed front extension is narrow, set at a high-level and partly opaque. The glazing within the door beside it is also opaque. The front elevation of No 4 is also north-facing. These factors will already be limiting the levels of outlook from these ground floor windows and the levels of light which they receive. Within No 4's first floor, the window closest to the proposed front extension is large and multi-paned. This window has an open aspect to its eastern side and therefore an unrestricted outlook in this direction. This would be unaffected by the proposal. At approximately 2m, the projection of the front extension is quite limited.
12. The plot at the front of No 4 is on the northern side of the property and is hardsurfaced. The property benefits from a garden on the southern side of the house which would be unaffected by the front extension. Due to this combination of factors, the effects of the proposed front extension upon the occupiers of No 4 in respect of their outlook and receipt of light would be acceptable.
13. Given the description of the location of the property to which its second reason for refusal relates, I can only conclude that the Council consider the effects upon the living conditions of the occupiers of other neighbouring properties would be acceptable. I have no reason to disagree.
14. Therefore, I find that the effects of the proposed front extension upon the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to light and outlook would be acceptable. The proposal would comply with policies QOP1, QOP2 and HOU9 of the LP which set out that development should result in no unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers including in respect of daylight, sunlight and outlook. It would also comply with paragraph 135 of the Framework which states that development should ensure a high standard of amenity for existing land users.

Conditions

15. I have imposed the standard condition in respect of time limitation and a plans condition in the interests of certainty. To protect the character and appearance of the area, a condition is needed to secure the appropriate use of materials.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, having taken account of the development plan as a whole and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions above.

H Jones

INSPECTOR