



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2024

by A Caines BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/24/3353689

14 Birney Edge, Darras Hall, Ponteland NE20 9JJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Smith against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
- The application Ref is 24/00697/FUL.
- The development proposed is: Demolition of extensions to North and West. Removal of existing roof; eaves height raised and construction of new dormer roof with bedroom and bathroom accommodation. Small hipped roof extension to East to form new integral two car garage. New extensions to South and West to form additional bedroom accommodation and enlarged kitchen, dining and living accommodation. External facing materials upgraded and new elements to be faced in stone and render, external window and door treatment upgraded, new replacement driveway and landscaping design, boundary treatment works and associated internal and external alterations.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of extensions to North and West. Removal of existing roof; eaves height raised and construction of new dormer roof with bedroom and bathroom accommodation. Hipped roof extension to East to form integral two car garage. Extensions to South and West to form additional bedroom accommodation and enlarged kitchen, dining and living accommodation. External facing materials upgraded and new elements to be faced in stone and render, external window and door treatment upgraded, new landscaping design, boundary treatment works and associated internal alterations at 14 Birney Edge, Darras Hall, Ponteland NE20 9JJ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 24/00697/FUL, and 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 drawing nos: 001; P-10 Rev A; P-11; P-12; P-13 Rev A; P-14 Rev A.
 - 3) Other than demolition and site preparation, no above ground construction works shall take place until details of all hard and soft landscaping works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include: specifications of all new or retained boundary treatments; hard surfacing materials; planting species, sizes, layout, and numbers; and a timetable for implementation.

Thereafter, the hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings. If any trees or plants subject to the landscaping scheme die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or defective, they shall be replaced in the next available

planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading is taken from the appeal form as this is a little more concise than the one given on the planning application form.
3. The appeal was accompanied by a revised site plan [P-10 Rev A] which seeks to address the second reason for refusal about a driveway extension and vehicular access from Birney Edge. The amendment is modest and would have no appreciable effect on other interested parties outside the site. Having regard to the principles in the Holborn Studios judgement, I consider it is reasonable for me to take the amended plan into account in reaching my Decision.
4. The recent revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) do not materially affect the matters which are most relevant to this appeal and I have had regard to the latest version in reaching my Decision.

Main Issue

5. The main issues are the effects of the development on i) the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and ii) highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal relates to a detached bungalow set within a spacious plot at the corner of Hillside and Birney Edge. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of dwelling sizes, design, and materials, including dormer/chalet style bungalows and large two-storey houses, all with different roof styles and configurations. Dormers and gable projections are very common features and the individuality of each dwelling adds variety in the street scene.
7. The proposal involves various alterations and extensions, including raising the height of the roof to around 7 metres and adding a series of gable projections and dormers at the front. While these works would undoubtedly result in a substantial change to the appearance of the host building, the existing bungalow is, by and large, uninspiring. The altered dwelling would still sit comfortably within the plot and would not come any closer to the road, thus maintaining the spatial character of the area. The one-and-a-half storey height and general dormer bungalow typology would be reflective of many dwellings in the immediate and wider vicinity. This includes 12 Birney Edge which lies immediately opposite. The dormers would be wide, and one of them would be part of a full height bay. However, they would be subordinate to the whole and would form part of a compatible design overall.
8. Plan P-10 Rev A removes the driveway extension and use of the Birney Edge vehicular access, which, in turn, would reduce the amount of hardstanding within the site compared to the initial proposal. It is still proposed to replace the boundary hedge along the site frontage, but subject to satisfactory details being secured by a condition this would not lead to any long-term harm to the street scene.

9. This is an area where incremental change is occurring as time passes. Rather than being a dominant and unsympathetic development, I consider that the changes to the dwelling would transform its appearance to something more interesting that would make its own appropriate contribution to the street scene in this location.
10. Thus, although the development could not be regarded as subservient to the existing dwelling, I have not found specific harm in relation to layout, scale, and design. Hence, I conclude that the proposal would not detract materially from the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In this regard, the proposal complies with the overarching design requirements of Policies QOP1, QOP2, and HOU9 of the Northumberland Local Plan 2022 (NLP); Policies PNP2 and PNP4 of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan; and paragraph 135 of the Framework. When read together, these seek good design which respects the quality, distinctiveness, and character of the area, having particular regard to prevailing building heights, form, scale and massing, architectural styles, and layout.

Highway safety

11. It is clear from the refusal reasons and the planning officer's report, that the Council's objection on highway safety grounds was solely in relation to a driveway extension and vehicular access from Birney Edge. No concerns were raised in respect of the existing access arrangements from Hillside, which would be retained. Off street parking provision would be made for two cars, in line with the Council's parking standards.
12. I am satisfied that the removal of the driveway extension addresses the concerns that were raised. Thus, the proposal would not be detrimental to the interests of highway safety, and so, complies with Policy TRA2 of the NLP.

Other Matters

13. The roofslope facing 4 Hillside would contain a number of rooflights. However, the plans clearly show these as being obscurely glazed and I note that no concerns were raised by the Council in respect of the impact on neighbouring occupiers. I see no reason to reach a different conclusion. Protection of boundaries would be a private matter between the parties concerned.

Conditions

14. As suggested by the Council, I have imposed the standard commencement and approved plans conditions to provide certainty. I have also added a condition relating to hard and soft landscaping to preserve the character of the area. However, a condition relating to external materials is not necessary as these are specified on the approved plans.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given, the appeal should be allowed.

A Caines

INSPECTOR