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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2024 by J Reed MPlan

**Decision by Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 February 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/24/3355434**

**Roseworth, Alnmouth Road, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 2PR**

- 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 and Mrs Bowden against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
  - The application Ref is 24/01428/FUL.
  - The development proposed is residential Annex To Be Used Ancillary To Main Dwelling.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Main Issue

3. The main issues are;
  - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and the host property; and
  - The effect of the development on the living conditions of future occupants of the proposed annex with regard to outlook and access to natural light.

### Reasons for the Recommendation

#### *Character and appearance*

4. The appeal property is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling set within a generous garden to the front, side and rear within a residential area. The surrounding area is characterised by a variety of differing properties. However, the side of Alnmouth Road, that the appeal site occupies, consists of similar rendered two storey properties with a largely regular front building line. The similar style of properties, as well as the consistent set back of development from the highway, results in a harmonious character and appearance to Alnmouth Road.
5. The proposed annex is to be situated in the front garden of the appeal site and would occupy a large proportion of this space by virtue of its depth and width. This would result in an overly large and dominant form of development which would be viewed as the addition of a second visible dwellinghouse to the appeal site. This would not accord with Policy HOU 9 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022)

- which requires householder development to be well-related and subordinate in size and massing to the existing dwelling.
6. Whilst the appeal site has thick hedging to its front and side boundaries, the proposed annex would be seen above this. As a result, the scale of the proposal would be highly visible within the locality, and it would appear as an overly large addition to the site and be clearly viewed from both directions of Alnmouth Road. Furthermore, the hipped roof design would appear at odds with the existing dwellings gable form which would further exacerbate the proposal's prominence. Development beyond West Acres and at Alnbank Cottage has a more staggered building line, where development is closer to the highway, but this is not within the local vicinity of the site and only makes a modest contribution to its character and appearance. Consequently, the annex would erode the uniform design quality observed within the direct vicinity of the site.
  7. I also acknowledge that the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (2017) (ADNP) outlines that Alnmouth Road is an important approach to the main historic core of Alnwick, and agree with this conclusion. As a result, due to the annex's forward projection from the existing building line, its prominence is further increased for users of this important approach. The ADNP also outlines that suburban areas, such as Alnmouth Road, are often more vulnerable to inappropriate development. In this case the proposals would be starkly out of character with the built pattern of the surrounding area.
  8. I recognise that the proposed annex would use materials that would match the main dwelling, but this would not sufficiently mitigate the harm caused by its scale and massing. I also acknowledge that there would be a certain degree of screening by the vegetation surrounding the site. Nevertheless, the addition of the annex would still be visible from numerous public vantage points within the street scene and would be read as an incongruous feature.
  9. For the reasons as set out, the proposed annex would lead to harm to the character and appearance of the host property, surrounding area and the approach to Alnwick's historic core and as a result would conflict with the requirements of Policies HOU 9, QOP1 and QOP 2 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022)(LP) the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and Policies H5, HD4 and HD5 of the Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (2017) which mutually seek to ensure new development is appropriate within its locality.

#### *Living Conditions*

10. The proposed annex would be directly adjacent to the boundary hedging surrounding the appeal site on both its north and east elevations. To both these elevations there would be windows that serve habitable rooms. In both instances these windows will face directly onto the thick, dense and dark hedging which would dominate users views due to the annex's proximity to the boundary. This visual dominance would obscure the outlook from these windows to the detriment of the living conditions of its users.
11. LP Policy QOP1 states that proposals should not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing and future occupiers of the site and its surroundings. Taking into account the above, there will be a distinct lack of daylight and sunlight received to the habitable room windows of the north and eastern elevations of the annex. This would result in the creation of a dark and oppressive living environment.

12. For these reasons, the development would result in an adverse effect on living conditions with regards to available outlook daylight and sunlight of the future occupiers of the proposed annex. The proposal would therefore not comply with the requirements of LP policy QOP1 and the Framework which seek to protect the amenity and living conditions of future occupiers.

### **Other Matters**

13. I have noted the appellant's submission in relation to the creation of appropriate accommodation for their elderly family. Whilst I do not doubt that this would be the case, it does not outweigh the harm that I have identified in relation to the main issue. I also acknowledge the support provided by interested parties in favour of the proposal. However, this support has not outweighed the conflict I have found with the development plan.
14. In regard to the similar development forward of the building line referenced by the appellant, I have not been passed any further details of these cases or made aware of their specific circumstances. As such, I cannot be sure there are sufficient similarities between said development, or their contexts, and the proposal to alter my conclusions on the main issues.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

15. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

*J Reed*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

*Ben Plenty*

INSPECTOR