



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2025

by K Lancaster BA (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/25/3358960

Stonecroft, Main Street, Corbridge, Northumberland NE45 5LA

- 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 Paul Dollery against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/03379/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as the retention of trellis at a height of 0.38 metres on existing two-metre-high fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the retention of trellis at a height of 0.38 metres on existing two-metre-high-fence at Stonecroft, Main Street, Corbridge, Northumberland NE45 5LA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/03379/FUL, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing number 1441 L001 B (Site Plan and Elevations).

Preliminary Matters

2. The development description on the application form includes reference to the development being retrospective. I have removed this wording in the description used in the banner heading as this is not an act of development.
3. Planning permission was granted¹ for a two-metre-high timber fence to the eastern boundary of the site, where it adjoins the petrol filling station. However, the fence which has been erected also includes a 0.38-metre-high trellis situated on top of the approved fence. The application was therefore made retrospectively, and I have considered the appeal on this basis.
4. Since the determination of this application, the Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) on 12 December 2024 and updated it on 7 February 2025. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been amended. As a result, I have not sought further submissions on the revised Framework, and I am satisfied that no party's interests have been prejudiced by taking this approach.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to whether it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of Corbridge Conservation Area.

¹ Application Ref: 24/02294/FUL

Reasons

6. The appeal site Stonecroft, is a detached stone-built dwelling with a slate roof located centrally within the village of Corbridge. On one side of the appeal property is The Angel Inn and to the other side is Bishop's Garage, a petrol filling station. Immediately to the front boundary is a wide footpath with a bus stop. The appeal property is prominently located on Corbridge Main Street and within the Corbridge Conservation Area (the CA).
7. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a CA. The Framework also requires that great weight be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
8. The significance of the CA is derived primarily from its origins as a Roman town, and the village layout features twisting streets and narrow lanes, indicative of its organic growth over centuries. The conservation area includes buildings from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries, creating a diverse architectural character and its riverside setting contribute to Corbridge's distinctiveness. The significance of the CA in so far as it relates to the appeal property is the Stonecroft is an example of a large traditional, detached, two storey dwelling, with a Welsh slate roof which is set back from Main Street and has a spacious front garden set behind a low stone wall and railings.
9. As noted above, the appeal property is prominently sited on Main Street. However, the development is positioned at 90 degrees to the main road and as a result it is primarily visible when travelling along Main Street towards the centre of Corbridge and notably in the context of the petrol filling station, which includes a large totem sign, air compressor and other structures associated with this type of use. There is limited visibility of the development from the front of the property or from the boundary closest to The Angel Inn due to the presence of other boundary treatments, typically traditional walls and railings. As a result, the development is not a harmful addition to the street scene.
10. Whilst I accept that stone walls are a more common type of boundary treatment within this part of the CA, I am satisfied that the appellant has demonstrated that it is not possible to build a wall in this location, due to the presence of an underground fuel storage tank. Furthermore, the Council has already granted planning permission for a two-metre-high fence, and therefore the addition of the trellis does not appear as a discordant or jarring feature in this context.
11. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in the Act, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA. For the above reasons, I therefore conclude that the development does not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and has a neutral effect on the CA thus preserving its significance.
12. Accordingly, the proposed development complies with Policies ENV 1, ENV9, HOU 9, QOP 1 and QOP 2 of the Northumberland Local Plan, which require amongst other things, that new development is of a high standard of design and preserves the character of the area and reinforce the local distinctiveness of conservation areas.

Other Matters

13. The appeal site is adjacent to The Angel Inn, which is a Grade II listed building. Its significance is derived from its architectural interest as a C17th, with C18th extensions, substantial and prominently located whitewashed building. It is in three sections, with the central section being taller and is set under a Welsh slate roof. The council did not find harm to the setting of this listed building and based on the evidence before me and my own observations during my site visit, I see no reason to disagree with this conclusion.

Conditions

14. The Council has provided a list of suggested conditions, which I have considered against the tests set out in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.
15. Since the development has already been completed, a condition relating to the standard time limit for implementation is not necessary. However, a condition to specify the approved plans is necessary in the interests of certainty.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

K Lancaster

INSPECTOR