



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 March 2025

by H Jones BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/24/3357524

6 South Victoria Terrace, Bamburgh, Northumberland NE69 7BU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
- The appeal is made by Mr Alistair Darling against Northumberland County Council.
- The application Ref is 24/02949/FUL.
- The development proposed is a rear, single-storey extension and internal alterations.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a rear, single-storey extension and internal alterations at 6 South Victoria Terrace, Bamburgh, Northumberland NE69 7BU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/02949/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the development proposed within my banner heading and decision above is based upon the description given on the planning application form. However, I have omitted a reference to the site's address as this is not an act of development.
3. Although the Council did not determine the planning application, it is clear from the evidence before me that amended plans¹ were submitted to the Council and that these would have formed a part of the suite of plans upon which the Council would have based its decision. In turn, and for the avoidance of doubt, I have determined the appeal in its amended form. As necessary, I return to the amendments made later in my decision.
4. A screening direction was issued under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations). In exercise of the powers conferred by Regulations 14(1) and 7(5) of the EIA Regulations, the Secretary of State directed that the development is not EIA development.

Background and Main Issues

5. This is an appeal against the Council's failure to determine the planning application within the statutory timescale. The Council has provided an Appeal Statement. This sets out what it considers to be the main issues for consideration, its views upon them and ultimately explains that, had it been in a position to do so, it would have granted planning permission for the proposed development. Having regard to the

¹ Plan references 01 Rev P3, 03 Rev P3 and 15 Rev P6

Council's appeal statement, the other evidence before me and my own observations on site, I consider that the main issues are:

- Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Bamburgh Conservation Area;
- Whether the provision made for parking would be acceptable;
- The effects of the proposed development upon the Northumberland Coast National Landscape; and
- The effects of the proposed development upon bats.

Reasons

Bamburgh Conservation Area (the CA)

6. Characteristics of the CA which contribute substantially to its significance as a whole include the landmark buildings of Bamburgh Castle and St Aidan's Church which provide a dominating presence. The CA includes concentrations of other traditionally designed buildings with various architectural styles represented. Stone is a prevalent building material whilst Bamburgh's roofscape is distinctive owing in part to the chimneys and the hipped and gabled roofs which feature heavily. Verdant open spaces, such as the recreation ground beside Bamburgh Castle, and the coastal views available also positively contribute to the CA's significance. Such elements provide architectural and artistic interest. Bamburgh has significant associations with the early Christian saints, is a historical cradle of English Christianity and was the one time capital of Northumbria. Therefore, the CA also has historic interest.
7. No 6 Victoria Terrace (No 6) is a large end-of-terrace house. Like other properties within the terraced row, it is traditionally designed and features stone, chimneys and hipped and gabled roof pitches. Owing to its design and its features, and the building materials it exhibits, No 6 is very reflective of the traditional buildings which typify Bamburgh. Consequently, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA and its significance as a whole.
8. The proposed rear extension would be single storey, and it would replace an existing store. As a result, it would constitute a quite modestly sized addition to the existing house. The extension would incorporate variances to its width and to the ridge height of its roof slopes which would assist in reducing its overall mass. Its roof slopes would be pitched whilst the main external material finishes would be stone, render and slate which would all suitably match the appearance of the existing house. Furthermore, owing to its position at the back of the property, the proposed extension would be discreetly positioned.
9. For these reasons, the proposed development would form a sympathetic addition to the existing property and the character and appearance of the CA would, as a result, be preserved. Consequently, the proposed development complies with Policies QOP2, HOU9, ENV1 and ENV9 of the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036 (the LP) as well as Policies 5, 8 and 11 of the North Northumberland Coast Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2032 (the NP). Altogether, and in summary and amongst other matters, these Policies require developments to be of a high quality of design, to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation

areas and make a positive contribution to their distinctiveness, and they require residential extensions to respect and complement the existing property.

Parking

10. As my preliminary matters set out, my decision is made having regard to the appellant's amended plans. These show that, upon completion of the proposed development, No 6 would remain a 2-bedroomed house. No 6 is served by a single car parking space.
11. Appendix E of the LP sets out parking standards and it identifies that for a 2-bedroomed property there is a requirement for 2 parking spaces. There would, therefore, be a shortfall of a single space set against the parking standards.
12. However, the operation of LP Policy TRA4 is such that whilst it normally requires developments to comply with the Appendix E parking standards, exceptions are permissible having regard to contextual circumstances. These relate to the scale of the development, the availability of sustainable modes of transport and facilities, the parking restrictions in force and the likelihood for problems to arise from an increase in parking demand.
13. Importantly in this case, no increase in bedrooms would result from the proposed development. Consequently, I have no reason to conclude that an increase in parking demand would result from the proposal. Bamburgh is a small rural village. However, it is not without its services and facilities and, together with its compact nature and the site's quite central position within the village, this means that those services and facilities are readily available to the property occupiers. Some parts of the village are subject to parking restrictions, and the village is served by a dedicated carpark. Therefore, there are parking management measures in place.
14. Overall, and principally because the development would not generate an increased parking requirement, the single parking space to serve No 6 would constitute acceptable parking provision. The proposal therefore complies with LP Policy TRA4 and Policy 8 of the NP which require an appropriate and sufficient amount of parking provision to serve development.

Northumberland Coast National Landscape

15. The appeal site lies within the Northumberland Coast National Landscape (NL). The NL comprises of a narrow but lengthy strip of coast between Spittal and the Coquet Estuary. The NL's special qualities stem from the combination of, and interaction between, its various landscape, natural environment and cultural heritage assets. Tranquillity and exposure contribute to these special qualities, and they are generated by factors such as the NL's flat coastal plain, the seascape views available and the sparse and scattered elements of human habitation and infrastructure. In respect of this designated landscape, I am mindful of the statutory duties imposed upon me to seek to further the purposes of this designation, which includes conserving and enhancing its natural beauty.
16. The appeal site is located within a central position within Bamburgh close-by to other buildings within the settlement. As such, the appeal site is within an area where built development and habitation are established, and some vibrancy including as a result of traffic can be expected. Consequently, the appeal site and

its immediate surroundings do not exude quite as strongly as some other parts of the NL that sense of tranquillity and exposure.

17. In my second main issue, I have identified that the provision made for parking would be acceptable. A quantum or character of development is not proposed that would generate more traffic in Bamburgh. Windows including roof lights are proposed, but given their number and size, and the site's position amongst built-up parts of the village, the levels of light which would arise from the proposal would not be significant. Furthermore, for ecological reasons which I explain later, I have imposed a condition which would control any external lighting. Therefore, the proposal would not harm the NL's sense of tranquillity or exposure.
18. In my first main issue, I have set out that the proposed development would be sympathetically designed and would preserve the character and appearance of the CA. In turn, the proposal would also be respectful to Bamburgh's cultural heritage which contributes to the heritage value of the NL overall. Being a modest, appropriately designed and inconspicuous addition to the area, the proposed development would also not harm the NL's landscape or overall beauty.
19. For these reasons, the proposed development would not harm the special qualities of the NL and the designated landscape's natural beauty would be conserved and enhanced. Therefore, the proposed development complies with Policies ENV1, ENV4 and ENV5 of the LP as well as Policy 5 of the NP. Collectively, these Policies require developments to protect Northumberland's valued environments, to be respectful to local character, to preserve and enhance the NL's special qualities and to not adversely affect the NL's dark skies.

Bats

20. Surveys have confirmed that No 6 contains a bat roost. The roost was identified as being at roof eaves level within the property. As such, the roost is set away from the areas where the demolition and construction activities to facilitate the proposed development would take place. This separation distance is sufficient that the proposed development would be able to take place without the roost being disturbed.
21. In addition, the submitted Bat Survey² recommends a series of mitigation and enhancement measures which would further ensure that the proposed development would result in no harmful effects upon the protected species. In my decision, I have imposed conditions so that such measures are implemented, and I return to these conditions later.
22. For these reasons, the proposed development would result in no harmful effects upon bats. As a result, the proposal complies with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the LP which, amongst other matters, seek to protect the natural environment and minimise the effects of development upon protected species.

Other Matters

23. The Council has submitted that the proposed development would result in no harmful effects upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, and I have no reason to come to a different conclusion.

² Bat Survey R01

Conditions

24. The Council has provided a list of suggested conditions that it considers would be appropriate. I have considered these in the light of the tests for the imposition of conditions set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the content of the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG). Having regard to the Framework and the PPG, and in the interests of clarity or precision, I have made some amendments to the Council's suggestions.
25. Condition 1 sets out the standard time limitation. Condition 2 is necessary to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the reason of certainty.
26. The proposed development is a relatively minor undertaking. However, No 6 is located within a backland position, without a wide road right beside it, and parking restrictions are in the area. Consequently, careful management will be required in undertaking the development to ensure that the development activities and the comings and goings associated with them do not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers or result in prejudicial effects upon highway safety. I have therefore imposed condition 3. Condition 3 is a pre-commencement condition as the content of the Construction and Demolition Method Statement must be agreed before the development works, and any ensuing effects of it, take place.
27. Having regard to the content and findings of the submitted Bat Survey, and in the interests of protecting the natural environment, habitats and protected species, I have imposed conditions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Of these conditions, Nos 4 and 5 are of the pre-commencement type. This is necessary, as the detailed method statements in relating to working practices must be devised before those working practices commence. Finally, I have imposed condition 9 in the interests of achieving a high quality of design and so that the character and appearance of the CA is preserved.

Conclusion

28. The proposed development accords with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations which indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

H Jones

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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 drawings:

Location Plan 01 Rev P3

Proposed Block Plan 03 Rev P3

Proposed Site Plan PSP1

Proposed Plans 15 Rev P6

Proposed Elevations 17 Rev P4

Proposed Elevations 2 18 Rev P1
- 3) No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction and Demolition Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The Statement shall provide details of the following:

the provision to be made for the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
the loading and unloading of plant and materials;
the storage of plant and materials used in the development; and
the delivery, demolition and construction working hours.

The approved Construction and Demolition Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction and demolition periods of the development.
- 4) No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Bat Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Bat Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction and demolition periods of the development.
- 5) No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until an Invasive Species Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Invasive Species Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction and demolition periods of the development.
- 6) No external lighting to serve the development hereby approved shall be erected/installed unless details of it have first been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The details to be submitted for approval must include details of the external lighting's design, location and intensity.

Any external lighting erected/installed must be carried out, and thereafter maintained, in accordance with the details approved.

- 7) The proposed Bat Block/Brick and Schwegler 17 Swift Box, identified on drawing Proposed Elevations 17 Rev P417 Rev P4, shall be installed prior to the development hereby approved being brought into use or occupied.
- 8) No vegetation removal shall take place during the bird nesting season (March- August inclusive) unless a survey by a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed the absence of nesting birds immediately prior to the removal commencing.
- 9) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those detailed within, and depicted on, the submitted Planning Application Form and the following approved drawings: Proposed Plans 15 Rev P6, Proposed Elevations 17 Rev P4 and Proposed Elevations 2 18 Rev P1.

End of Schedule