Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2025

by T Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/25/3367376
Dunstan House, C74 Dunstan Village Main Road, Dunstan, Northumberland, NE66 3SY

- 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 Janet Stansfield against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
- The application Ref is 24/00121/FUL.
- The development proposed is Construction of two holiday lets (Sui Generis) with associated landscaping.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on the development strategy for the area. The second is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with regard to the site access. The third is the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of nearby occupiers.

Procedural Matter

3. The evidence indicates that an aerial view of the site showing the proposed layout was submitted after the Council made its decision. I have taken this into account.

Reasons

Development Strategy

4. Whilst noting the description of the proposal, the plans refer to House 1 and House 2 respectively. The design and access statement refers to holiday let houses. House 1 would incorporate a lounge and kitchen area along with 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms. House 2 would be smaller but would incorporate a lounge, kitchen, 2 bedrooms as well as 2 bathrooms. They would be set within the grounds of Dunstan House.

5. Both houses would therefore be well provisioned with facilities which would afford future occupants the facilities required for a comfortable day to day private domestic existence. In Gravesham[1], it was accepted that the distinctive characteristic of a dwellinghouse was its ability to afford those who used it the facilities required for day to day private domestic existence. I afford this significant weight.

6. Taking these matters into account and regardless of the description of the proposal, what are actually the subject of this appeal are dwellinghouses.

[1] Gravesham BC v SSE and O'Brien [1983] JPL 306.

7. The appeal site is within Dunstan, which comes under the Craster Neighbourhood Plan (NP) (2021). This plan only has one policy, relating to principal residence housing. Citing matters such as a notable increase in second and holiday homes from 2001 to 2011, the NP has the aim that by the end of the plan period Craster Parish will contain a mix of housing that meets the needs of a revitalised local community and that new residential developments will be permanently occupied by residents.

8. Given that the proposed dwellinghouses would be for holiday lets, the proposal would conflict with the development strategy for the area as permitting the proposal would undermine the aims of the NP, conflicting with Policy 1 which states that amongst other things new housing will only be supported where occupation is restricted in perpetuity to ensure that each new dwelling is occupied only as a principal residence.

9. Given the stated purpose of the proposal, it would not be reasonable for me to add a condition restricting the proposed dwellings for principle use and, in any event, the design of the scheme as a whole is for holiday let purposes given that amongst other things it includes the central provision of a natural swimming pool for the use of guests.

Character and appearance

10. There would be some alterations at the entrance to the site which would see the stone wall which bounds the front of the site removed and altered to allow for a central access on the plot frontage.

11. Whilst stone walling to the front boundaries is a common feature on this side of the road, it is punctured at various points by driveways. Further, on the opposite side of the road there is more variation in boundary treatment including properties where there is none at all. With regard to these matters the area is therefore mixed. It would subsequently be the case that alterations to the boundary walling at the site would not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area.

12. There would therefore be no conflict with Policy QOP 1 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022) (NLP) which amongst other things requires that development proposals should integrate the built form of the development with the site overall and the wider local area.

Living conditions

13. It is the case that the proposal would introduce notable additional activity into areas adjacent to Dunstan House which are in parts well planted with trees and shrubs.

14. However, the proposals would allow for the provision of boundary planting between the two immediately adjacent properties at Crag View and The Bungalow. Windlesham is set slightly further away and enjoys its own setting within its substantial grounds.

15. House 2 would be set well away from these properties on the opposite side of the Dunstan House grounds, whilst only the side elevation of House 1 would be facing towards the closest properties at Crag View and The Bungalow. It is also the case that given the access would be provided towards the centre of the front part of the site, an area would remain between the access and The Bungalow which would allow for significant landscaping including planting which would limit the effect of comings and goings on the living conditions of the occupiers at this property.

16. It is the case that those on Holiday may tend to make more use of their time outside and I note the proposal includes an outdoor swimming pool. However, the large

Dunstan House already appears to be in use as a Holiday let. There is no clear evidence that this causes any significant adverse impacts on the living conditions of nearby occupiers.

17. The proposal would not have any significant adverse impact on the living conditions of nearby occupiers. There would therefore be no conflict with policies QOP 1 and QOP 2 of the NLP which amongst other things require that development proposals support health and wellbeing and enhance quality of life and that neighbouring uses are compatible and that there are no unacceptable adverse impacts from noise or disturbances.

Other Matters

18. There is evidence that a financial contribution towards coastal mitigation in relation to potential impacts on nearby European sites including the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area is required via a planning obligation. This has not been supplied. However, I have not undertaken a Habitat Regulations Assessment and the matter is not determinative because the scheme is unacceptable for other reasons.

Planning Balance

19. I have not identified any significant adverse impact with regard to the character and appearance of the area or with regard to the living conditions of nearby occupiers.

20. There would be social and economic benefits. These would include the support the proposal would provide to the visitor economy in Northumberland including the local construction trade. Due to the limited scale of the proposal, this can only be afforded limited weight.

21. There would be the opportunity for biodiversity improvement, although the exact manner of any improvement is not fully detailed and this matter should be afforded limited weight. The houses would be modern, on a single level and could include sustainable design features with a high quality design. However, these matters are afforded only limited weight.

22. The provision of two dwellinghouses for use as holiday lets would be in direct conflict with the development strategy for the area and would give rise to social harm as the proposal would not contribute appropriately to the mix of housing sought within the NP area. This matter is afforded substantial weight.

Conclusion

23. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and there is nothing indicate a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

T Burnham

INSPECTOR