
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 November 2025

by K Lancaster BA (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/D/25/3373302

Elder Cottage, Mile Road, Widdrington Station, Northumberland NE61 5QW

- 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 John Russell against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/02012/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as a single storey side garage extension with single storey rear kitchen and bathroom extension and attached 'granny' annexe.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr John Russell against Northumberland County Council and is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached, single storey dwelling with a substantial rear garden. It sits within a linear row of dwellings of varying styles and scales. The proposed development would involve the erection of a single storey garage, single storey rear extensions, including to provide annexe accommodation and alterations to the roof over the existing rear extension.
5. Policy HOU9 of the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036, adopted March 2022 (the NLP) expects new development to respect, complement and to not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the style and character of the existing dwelling and its setting in terms of its design and use of materials, or on the character of the surrounding area.
6. The proposed extension to the rear of the dwelling would be substantial, extending approximately 14 metres from the existing (not original) rear wall of the dwelling. These rear projections would comprise a single storey flat roof element, with a larger single storey pitched roof element, which the appellant states would be used as an annexe. The overall depth of the appeal property would be in the region of 26 metres, which is much larger than any of the neighbouring properties, which are typically more modest in size.

7. Although the proposed development would primarily be located to the rear of the existing dwelling, and an existing garage would be removed, the introduction of varied roof heights and pitches, while intended to break up massing, results in a fragmented and visually complex roofscape. This approach would fail to reflect the simplicity of the surrounding built form and whilst I accept that views into the site are limited, the proposed development would nevertheless be at odds with the surrounding character and appearance of the area.
8. The site occupies a generously sized plot that could still accommodate adequate outdoor amenity space to the front and rear. However, the proposed development, owing to its scale and massing, would amount to an overdevelopment of the existing semi-detached bungalow and would not represent good design. Furthermore, the proposed extensions to the rear would as a result of their scale, bulk and massing, fail to respect the character of the existing dwelling and would this cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.
9. I acknowledge that a number of neighbouring properties have been extended or have ancillary buildings within the generous rear gardens. I also recognise that the appeal proposal has been amended to reduce the overall scale and height of the proposed development. However, for the reasons set out above, the proposed development would add significant scale and bulk to the host property, and this would be at odds with the modest semi-detached bungalow it adjoins.
10. The consideration of a fallback position, including what could be carried out under permitted development rights set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, is a well-established principle. I have no reason to consider that permitted development rights do not exist and therefore, I have had regard to the appellant's suggestion that the appeal property could be extended. However, whilst permitted development fallback positions can be a material planning consideration, in this case, the fallback presented by the appellant as 'more than a theoretical possibility' does not reflect what is actually being applied for. Furthermore, even if the alternative proposed development¹ was capable of being constructed, it would not, due to its layout, form and scale have a greater or similar effect as the development being proposed under this appeal. I therefore attribute this limited weight.
11. For the reasons set out above, I therefore find that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. Thus, it would be in conflict with the provisions of policies HOU9 and QOP1 of the NLP, which seek amongst other things, to ensure development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and is of a high-quality design.
12. The scheme also fails to accord with the principles of good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly Paragraphs 131 and 135, which require developments to be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character, and to maintain a high standard of design.

¹ As shown on Drawing Ref: 006 (PD Rights Plan)

Other Matters

13. I understand that the appellant requires the additional space to assist in the accommodation of an elderly family member with mobility needs. I have had regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, particularly the need to eliminate discrimination against persons with protected characteristics of age and/or disability, advancing equality of opportunity for those persons and fostering good relations between them and others.
14. However, it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposal is the only way of providing for those personal circumstances at the site. Therefore, the potential benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the harm that has been identified and interference with the duty under the above act is proportionate in this case and the refusal of planning permission justified given the harm itself would be long lasting.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

K Lancaster

INSPECTOR