
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 May 2026

by **Paul Martinson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 May 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/25/3376392

127 Princess Louise Road, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 2NE

- 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 Paul King against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/02714/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Conversion of garage to AirBnB/holiday let accommodation
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers; and
 - whether the proposal would accord with the development plan policies with regard to highway safety and parking stress.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Princess Louise Road in the vicinity of the appeal site is a wide residential street with properties fronting the pavement edge, with their main entrance doors set behind small front gardens. The larger gardens to the rear back onto a narrow access lane off Broadway Crescent. This lane is bounded to both sides by a mix of tall, blank walls and fencing. Whilst there are gates and sometimes outbuildings adjacent to or forming these boundaries, there are typically no windows or doors opening on to the lane. The prevailing character is thus of dwellings and their associated built form typically set back some distance from the lane and predominantly obscured by the high boundaries.
4. The appeal property has a rear extension and adjoining garage building which fronts the edge of the lane with an up and over garage door. This property is located at the junction of the lane with Broadway Crescent. The garage door is thus visible for much of Broadway Crescent when approaching from the south west. It is located alongside a high timber fence. As a garage with a blank door, set amongst other outbuildings and high boundaries and away from the dwelling itself, the appeal site is reflective of the character and appearance of the rear lane.

5. The appeal proposal would involve the partial bricking up of the garage door opening and its replacement with a large casement window with a horizontal emphasis. This would give the impression of residential built form extending right out to the boundary of the appeal site, at odds with the prevailing character. Moreover, as a distinct and separate residential unit fronting the lane with access from it, the activity generated would emphasise its incongruity within the streetscene. Owing to the site's prominence, the harm would be visible for much of the length of Broadway Crescent.
6. For the above reasons, the proposal would appear as an incongruous form of development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies QOP1 and QOP2 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022) (the NLP), which require new proposals to constitute high quality design that make a positive contribution to character and appearance. There would also be conflict with paragraph 135 of the Framework which requires planning decisions to ensure new developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character.

Living Conditions

7. Owing to existing dwellings being set back from the road with intervening front gardens and enclosed rear gardens, the privacy levels of properties along Princess Louise Road and the nearby Broadway Crescent are reasonably high.
8. The appeal scheme would result in the provision of the only window and main source of light being installed on the elevation of the garage fronting the pavement edge. This large opening would allow views directly into the unit from the pavement, nearby dwellings and for a considerable length of Broadway Crescent. The privacy levels within the entirety of the living space would thus be very low, and significantly below what is typical here, to the detriment of living conditions.
9. Whilst a condition requiring the window to be obscure glazed may reduce the potential for overlooking, the obscuration of the only window would severely limit outlook from the proposed unit, adversely affecting the living conditions of future occupants. Such a condition would therefore not make the development acceptable with regard to living conditions.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers. The proposal would conflict with Policies HOU9 and QOP2 of the NLP insofar as those policies seek to provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers. There would also be conflict with paragraph 135 of the Framework which seeks to ensure new developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Parking

11. Although some properties have small driveways for off street parking, many properties along Princess Louise Road and Broadway Crescent do not. As a result, parking predominantly takes place along the road, and, on Broadway Crescent, along the pavement. On the site visit I saw a high number of vehicles parked along Princess Louise Road. I also saw cars parked end to end to both sides of the road for much of the length of Broadway Crescent. It is clear that parking pressures and the demand for parking within these streets is high. The

comments received from local residents are consistent with this assessment and highlight issues at particular times such as on Blyth Spartans FC matchdays. In that regard I note that the Croft Park football ground is located within a short walk of the appeal site. It is therefore important that any proposal that could potentially increase that demand is carefully considered in line with the development plan policies.

12. NLP Policies TRA1 and TRA2 seek, amongst other things, to provide safe efficient transport networks through minimising conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management where necessary. Policy TRA4 of the NLP sets out that parking should normally be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix E of the NLP. These set variable parking standards dependent upon the number of bedrooms. Where provision is not made in accordance with the relevant standards, it must be demonstrated how the amount of parking proposed to serve the development takes into account, amongst other things, the scale, type, mix and use of the development, and the potential for road safety and environmental problems as a result of increased parking demand in the area.
13. The application form states that the existing property is a ground floor flat and that there is an existing parking space with no additional spaces proposed as part of the proposed development. A parking space is shown on the proposed plans in addition to the garage which itself could accommodate a vehicle. It is unclear if the parking space shown on the proposed plans would serve the existing property or the proposed unit.
14. The appellant did not provide details of the number of bedrooms within the existing property at the application stage, despite requests from the Council. The appellant has also not provided that information at appeal, which limits my ability to make a judgment on the likely number of vehicles that would be displaced onto the highway by the proposed development.
15. Nonetheless, it is clear that there would be an increase in demand for on street parking along Broadway Crescent in particular, exacerbating the parking stress that already exists. Given this existing situation, even a small increase in demand for parking would increase the potential for inconvenience to local residents and obstruction to vehicles accessing Broadway Crescent which could impede the free flow of traffic and have implications for highway safety.
16. I have had regard to the appellant's photographs of Princess Louise Road, which show a number of vehicles parked along the highway at different times of the day. I acknowledge that these show available spaces, however, there do not appear to be any photographs of Broadway Crescent, where those accessing the proposed unit or the rear of the appeal property are more likely to park.
17. On the basis of the information before me I therefore conclude that the proposed development would fail to accord with the development plan policies with regard to highway safety and parking stress. There would be conflict with Policies TRA1, TRA2 and TRA4 of the NLP, described above.

Other Matters

18. The fourth reason for refusal referred to the lack of provision to secure Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) monitoring contributions. However, in its comments at appeal the

Council sets out that, due to the red-line application boundary being restricted solely to the footprint of the garage, the proposal would be exempt from statutory BNG as the de minimis exemption would apply. The Council has subsequently confirmed that it considers that a Unilateral Undertaking or s106 would therefore not be required to secure monitoring of BNG. I see no reason to disagree. There is therefore no dispute in this regard.

19. The Council's Ecologist refers to the lack of a financial contribution towards a strategic Coastal Mitigation Service. This seeks to mitigate against the impact of increased recreational disturbance to bird species within coastal SSSIs and European sites and increased recreational pressure on dune grasslands. This issue did not form part of the reasons for refusal, nonetheless, as I am dismissing on other grounds, I need not consider this matter any further.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

20. The proposal would result in a small economic benefit to the local area through increased tourist spend. This benefit is limited by the scale of the proposal.
21. I have found that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, would not provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers and would fail to accord with development plan policies with regard to highway safety and parking stress. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations that justify taking an approach contrary to the development plan, having regard to the requirements of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
22. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Martinson

INSPECTOR