



Planning Services

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO:	6/2011/0208/DM
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Erection of sun room to front
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Mr John Copeland
ADDRESS:	67 Winston Road Staindrop County Durham DL2 3NR
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Barnard Castle East
CASE OFFICER:	Paul Martinson, Planning Officer 03000 260823, paul.martinson@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

1. The application site is a stone built semi detached dwelling located on the outskirts of Staindrop on the north side of the Winston Road. The dwelling is one of two pairs of semi detached dwellings with open front gardens which have an open character with a low stone wall defining the boundaries with the pavement. The front garden of no. 67 is located adjacent to a main route into Staindrop and the open character of the gardens of this property and the adjacent dwellings leads to the site being highly prominent from the road. The application site is approximately 5m away from the boundary of the Conservation Area,
 2. The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a sun room to the front elevation of no. 67 Winston Road. The sun room would be positioned centrally on the front elevation and would project out from the existing building by 3.3m and measure 3.7m wide. It would consist of a 0.7m high stone wall with glazing to all three sides. The sun room would have a hipped slate roof measuring 3.3m high to the ridge.
 3. The application is reported to committee at the request of Councillor Richardson, the local Ward Member, who wished to consider the impact on the street scene in the setting of a conservation area.
-

PLANNING HISTORY

4. No planning history relevant.
-

PLANNING POLICY

5. **NATIONAL POLICY:**

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development sets out the Governments overachieving planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning System.

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant. The full text can be accessed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements>

6. **REGIONAL POLICY:**

There are no RSS Policies of relevance to the consideration of this planning application.

7. **LOCAL PLAN POLICY:**

The following policies of the Teesdale Local Plan are considered relevant to the determination of this planning application:

Policy GD1 – General Development Criteria - All new development and redevelopment within the District should be designed and built to a high standard and should contribute to the quality and built environment of the surrounding area.

Policy BENV4 – Development Within and/or Adjoining Conservation Areas - refers to development within and adjoining conservation areas and requires new development to respect the quality and character of the area; use appropriate materials; and respect trees, hedgerows, landscape features, views and undeveloped areas which contribute to the character or the appearance to the area and its settings. Proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a conservation area or the views into or out of the area will not be permitted.

Policy H11 – Extensions - extensions and alterations to an existing dwelling will be permitted where the relevant criteria listed in policy GD1 are met, and where in particular they respect the scale, character, architectural style and materials of the original property and its neighbours; and respect the amenity of the adjoining residential properties.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=6619>

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

8. The Highway Authority has raised no objections.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

9. The Design and Conservation Section advise that the property and the other 3 no. adjacent semi detached properties are of identical construction with a symmetrical, flush finish to the front elevation and a small garden area to the front of the buildings. None of the other properties have extensions to the front elevation. The proposed sun room extension would disturb the symmetry of the 2 no. pairs of semi detached properties and set a precedent for front extensions to these properties. They therefore consider that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the setting of the conservation area and would object to the principle of this proposal.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

10. The occupiers of neighbouring properties were notified in writing of the proposals and a site notice was also posted. Three letters of objection have been received, two of which are properties to either side of the application site. The content of the representations are summarised below:
 1. The sun room would spoil the attractive view of these cottages which are prominent from the road as you approach Staindrop;
 2. It would be large and out of proportion with surrounding properties and protrude significantly from the front;
 3. The sun room would restrict the views of the neighbouring properties;
 4. It would block light to the neighbouring properties;
 5. The sun room would encroach on privacy of the gardens of neighbouring properties;
 6. It would be detrimental to the value of the neighbouring properties.

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

11. The primary reason for me submitting the application was based on my current health situation and the prognosis on my remaining limb. Social services and my occupational therapist both agree that our current accommodation as standing can not facilitate my current and future health needs i.e. specialist bed and associated needs. In their opinion the house is not suitable for chair lifts and they are not suitable for amputees. I have lived at no. 67 for some 50 years and would like to continue doing so. Our architect considered the extension, as applied for, the only suitable way to accommodate my requirements. Any extension to the rear is excluded by a shared access road and a side extension is not feasible either. An access path would still have to be accommodated for i.e. normal access and wheelchair access to front of property. Consideration was given to the siting and construction of the proposed extension by using materials sympathetic to the property and the surrounding areas. Should some screening be required we would do so. It is our intention to minimise the effect of the proposed extension on the surrounding area. In conclusion we hope for a sympathetic appraisal of our needs.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

11. The application proposes to erect a sun room extension to the front elevation of a semi detached dwelling. Policy H11 of the Teesdale Local Plan allows for the erection of domestic extensions provided that they respect the scale, character, architectural style and materials of the original property and its neighbours; and respect the amenity of the adjoining residential properties. The policy also requires extensions to meet the requirements in policy GD1. The application site is located approximately 5m from the boundary of the Conservation Area and as such the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area is an important consideration. Policy BENV4 of the Teesdale Local Plan refers to development within and adjoining conservation areas and requires new development to respect the quality and character of the area; use appropriate materials; and respect trees, hedgerows, landscape features, views and undeveloped areas which contribute to the character or the appearance to the area and its settings. Furthermore the policy states that proposals which would adversely affect the setting of a conservation area or the views into or out of the area will not be permitted. The main issues are therefore the impact on the setting of the conservation area and residential amenity.

Impact on the Setting of the Conservation Area

12. The application site is located in a prominent position adjacent to a main route into Staindrop and within the setting of the Staindrop Conservation Area, the boundary of which is located approximately 5m away. The property itself is of stone construction and forms part of group of 4no. adjacent semi detached dwellings all of which are of a similar style. The gardens are located to the fronts of these properties and have an open character with a low stone wall defining the boundaries with the pavement. No significant boundary definition occurs between the gardens of these properties which contribute to the area's open character. Furthermore no other extensions have been carried out to the front elevations of these properties and as the main entrance doors are on the side of the properties there are also no porches to the front elevation. In addition, there are also no front extensions further along this part of Winston Road.
13. The proposed sun room extension would therefore be an extremely prominent addition to the front elevation of an attractive dwelling of traditional construction within the setting of the Conservation Area. The extension would be at odds with the current open and unaltered character of the front of these semi detached dwellings and would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of this important approach to Staindrop. The proposed sun room style extension is not a form of extension that would normally be expected on the front of a dwelling such as this and as such, given its prominence and impact on the existing open character, would be an incongruous addition to this part of the streetscene. The modern conservatory/sun room character of the extension would be inappropriate on the front elevation of a dwelling within the setting of the Conservation Area and as such would conflict with policies GD1, BENV4 and H11 of the Teesdale Local Plan, in addition to the guidance provided within PPS5.

Impact on Residential Amenity

15. The proposed sun room would be sited to the front elevation of the dwelling adjacent to the front gardens of the neighbouring properties. There is little boundary definition between the gardens and as such the occupiers of the applicant's dwelling would be
-

able to overlook these gardens from the sun room. However these gardens are located to the front of the property and their open character corresponds to a low level of privacy with neighbours and pedestrians being able to see into each of the gardens. As such it is not considered that the proposed sun room would lead to significant harm to the privacy of the neighbouring properties.

16. The objections received cited a potential a loss of light to neighbouring properties. The extension would be single storey and project out from the existing elevation by 3.3m; it would be sited approximately 1m away from the boundaries with the neighbouring properties. It would also be predominantly glazed which would minimise the loss of light to neighbouring properties. Therefore, given its scale and the materials used, it is considered that the proposed sun room would not be detrimental to the light levels in the neighbouring properties.

Personal Circumstances

17. The applicant has provided details of a medical condition and a letter that has also been received from his occupational therapist stating that if his health is to deteriorate, which is likely, he would have difficulty safely accessing bedroom facilities and in this instance the sun room could be used as a ground floor bedroom. It is understood that the proposed sun room would be sufficiently large enough to accommodate a purpose built bed and associated equipment.
18. The applicant would therefore require the sun room extension in order to provide the ground floor sleeping accommodation that would allow him to live with his disability.
19. With regard to personal circumstances and planning applications, the companion guide to PPS1 states "*while the personal circumstances of an occupier or personal hardship may be material to the consideration of a planning application, such arguments will seldom outweigh the more general planning considerations*".
20. In this case, the application proposes a sun room extension to the front elevation which would be significantly harmful to setting of the Conservation Area and detrimental to the wider character and appearance of the streetscene. Although the applicant's reasons for requiring the extension have been given due weight in the determination of this application, these do not outweigh the clear visual harm of the extension as demonstrated above. This is supported by paragraph 21 of the PPS1 companion guide.
21. The applicant has been advised to consider the construction of a side extension that would be able to provide in excess of the additional floor space that he would require. This could be utilised as a bedroom, or the internal arrangement could be altered to provide a bedroom elsewhere within the dwelling and relocate the displaced room into the extension. An extension to the rear of the property is not possible as a shared access is located immediately to the rear of these dwellings, however the side extension remains an option and the applicant has been urged to consider this.

Other Issues Raised

22. The consultation response raised the issues of the impact on property value and loss of a view resulting from the sun room. However these are not material planning considerations and as such cannot be given significant weight in the determination of this application.
-

CONCLUSION

23. The proposed sun room extension would be an extremely prominent addition to the front elevation of an attractive dwelling of traditional construction within the setting of the Conservation Area. The extension would be at odds with the current open and unaltered character of the area and would have a negative impact on the character and appearance of this important approach to Staindrop. The proposed sun room style extension is not a form of extension that would normally be expected on the front of a dwelling such as this and as such, given its prominence and impact on the existing open character, would be an incongruous addition to this part of the streetscene. The modern conservatory/sun room character of the extension would be inappropriate on the front elevation of a dwelling within the setting of the Conservation Area and as such would conflict with policies GD1, BENV4 and H11 of the Teesdale Local Plan, in addition to the guidance provided within PPS5.
24. The proposed sun room would not have a negative impact on the privacy of the neighbouring properties as there relatively low levels of privacy exist at present; the proposal would be sited to the front of the properties in an open situation where neighbouring properties are currently able to look over each others gardens in addition to pedestrians and motorists. There would also be no significant loss of light to neighbouring properties due to the scale and large amount of glazing used in the construction of the sun room.
25. Although the applicant's reasons for requiring the extension have been given due weight in the determination of this application, these do not outweigh the clear visual harm of the extension as demonstrated above. Officers are therefore unable to offer their support to the application.

RECOMMENDATION

27. That the application be **REFUSED** for the following reason:

The local planning authority considers that the proposed sun room extension would, by reason of its form, appearance and prominence in the streetscene, significantly harm the existing character of this group of semi-detached dwellings, detrimental to setting of the Conservation Area and contrary to policies GD1, BENV4 and H11 of the Teesdale Local Plan and PPS5.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Submitted Application Forms and Plans
- Design and Access Statement
- Teesdale District Local Plan 2002
- Planning Policy Statements: PPS1 and PPS5
- Responses from Highway Authority and Design & Conservation Section
- Public Consultation Responses