

APPLICATION NO: F/YR17/0308/F

SITE LOCATION: 4 Benwick Road, Doddington

UPDATES

1. One further letter of objection has been received from No 48 Benwick Road, with similar reasons for objecting to those already stated in the report.
2. The Conservation Officer's comments are set out below
 1. A proposal has been submitted for development of mid-19th century detached cottage which would involve the demolition of the existing single story elements of the building and replacing them with a modernist two story extension. The property is located within the Doddington Conservation Area and is recognized as a Heritage Asset as described in Annex 2 NPPF (2012) and being identified as a Building of Local Interest within the Doddington Conservation Area Appraisal (Octo 2011).
 2. Due regard is given to the planning history associated with this dwelling. In March 2016 a planning application (F/YR16/0006/F) to remove the single story elements of the building and replace them a large two story extension of barn style in brick and slate was refused. The reason for refusal was that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, and would cause harm to the conservation area.
 3. Subsequent to the refusal of planning application F/YR16/0006/F the property owner sought to follow the pre-application process to get a steer on the possibilities for extending the property. The first preapplication enquiry, 16/0101/PREAPP, submitted in April 2016 resulted in a design approach which was still not considered acceptable and "would fail to respect the interests of this heritage asset and the scheme would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area". At that time the conservation comments gave the following steer:

"In this instance it is felt there is scope to extend this property but realistically the size of any extension is going to need to be less than the size of extension the owner wishes for and is currently proposing. The historic 19th century element of the building needs to remain the dominant element in any scheme and should not be rivalled by or imposed upon by any adjoining extensions; any extensions should sit distinctly subservient to the main 19th century range of the dwelling. It is felt the linked form of extension could work but the link should be single storey and the adjoining range should be no more than 1 ½ storey high. The link should also be set back from the front elevation of the 19th century so the corner of the 19th century building is emphasized. No objection is raised to the "link" having a

rendered finish. There is considered opportunity to step the adjoining range out slightly beyond the building line of the 19th century range if the link is set back. The ½ and ½ brick and weatherboarding finish is not a convincing wall treatment on this building and needs to be reconsidered. If this extension is to have “modernist” connotations then consideration should be given to exploring options such as natural vertical cladding which may complement the light colour of the dwelling’s brickwork and sit better under a slate roof”

4. On the 28th November 2016 a second pre-application enquiry (16/0177/PREAPP), by a new architect, was made for a design of extension which is the same that is now proposed. It should, however, be noted that the pre-application considered development of the dwelling only and did not include proposals for the garage. In connection with that pre-application enquiry concerning extension of the dwelling only and from a conservation perspective it was considered that the *“proposal could be supported from a conservation should formal applications be submitted”*. For the most part these comments reflect those made under pre-application enquiry 16/0177/PREAPP in respect of the design of the extension.
5. Consideration is given to the impact of this proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area with due regard to the duty in law under S72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as well as the interests of 4 Benwick Road as an undesignated heritage asset. **The proposal put forward requires amendment and the design of the garage (height and width) needs to be reconsidered before the proposal can be considered acceptable in conservation terms.** The following comments are made:
 - i. 4 Benwick Road is an attractive mid-19th century property and is specifically mentioned within the Doddington Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2011) (para 8.91) as a *“particularly fine example of an individually designed 19th century dwelling”*. The main range of the building affords a particularly interesting front elevation resulting from its stone surround windows with curved window heads on the ground floor and decorative stonework detail below the central 1st floor window and its architectural style is unique within the village. The property holds particular prominence within the Doddington Conservation Area due to the orientation it holds with the street. The property sits side elevation to the edge of the footpath and the front (west) elevation of this building features prominently in views looking westwards along Benwick Road as you turn into Benwick Road past the clock tower junction heading west out of the village. It is within this context of the interests of the non-designated heritage asset that this proposal is considered.
 - ii. With due regard to the wider character of Benwick Road it is recognized that it is predominantly a residential street with a variety of period and styles of dwelling houses along its length from dwellings of 19th origin, estate style semi-detached houses to modern bungalows. It is notable that

there is a strong contrast in the character of the north side of the Benwick Road and the south side of the road. Focusing on the south side of the road it is notable that property sits predominantly forward to the street but the building line is staggered. While many properties sit right to the edge of the pavement some do sit back that said the overriding character of the settlement morphology to the south side of Benwick Road, is one of buildings sitting forward with the road. Property does however have additions and ancillary structures running back into the plot serving the street fronting range. Where views are afforded between properties you can see trees in the gardens behind, giving a natural backdrop to the street fronting built form. It is within this context of streetscene that the proposed development is considered.

Extension

- iii. The existing single storey side extensions do not possess the architectural qualities of main 19th century range of this property. No objection is made to the demolition of the existing single storey side extensions.
- iv. It is acknowledged that this property is hard to extend given its orientation with the street, the fact the building is particularly distinctive and prominent building within the streetscene and the fact it is of a narrow width (front to back) and hipped roof arrangement. There is not an opportunity to extend on the back of the property and it can only be extended to the side where it will always be visible from the street. The proposed extension involves adding a modernist extension which seeks to complement the existing mid-19th century dwelling. This design solution has not sought to extend the building with a structure that copies what already exists or add a pastiche barn style extension (which would inevitable appear overly dominant) but has sought to allow the architectural qualities of the mid-19th century to first and foremost stand out in the composition with an extension of a height and form that does not seek to rival the attractive mid-19th building. The extension makes no attempt to mimic the historic building's individual style. It is considered that this is an appropriate and clever approach to considerably extending this specific building is acceptable.
- v. The modernist design of extension seeks to allow the main 19th century dwelling, the non-designated heritage asset, to stand out in the composition by having an extension in a link form. A glazed link will join the main accommodation of the new extension to the 19th century building and the separation this creates ensures the bulk of the new extension doesn't adversely affect the proportions and symmetry of the attractive 19th century dwelling and it still retains these qualities. The intention is that the extension extends forward around a formal front garden making a feature and focus of the front garden area in the composition. The massing of the extension has been broken up in the design with the two story element being of flat roof form with a wraparound mono-pitch providing additional single story floor space. The mono-pitch also breaks

up how the massing of the flat roof is perceived. What will be seen of the extension in views along Benwick Road will be the side (SE) Elevation and the front (NE) elevation which sit subservient in height to the main 19th century building with a simplicity in design which is not seeking to rival or dominate the 19th century building. The modern rear (SW) garden elevation will not be seen from Benwick Road so will not affect streetscene views along Benwick Road. It is felt this modern extension can be achieved in a manner which is sympathetic to the interests of this BLI and the Doddington Conservation Area.

- vi. The 3D Render Book which accompanies this application shows clearly how the proportions of the proposed extension will sit with existing 19th century building. Through these illustrations it is felt that it shows that the 19th century building will remain the dominant element of the composition with the proposed extension set back from the road and to the side of the house framing the formal front garden which is a focus point of the development. The success of the extension will come down to the careful selection of appropriate building materials which will need to be agreed by condition.

Garage

- vii. Through the pre-application process it was consistently agreed that the *“existing dilapidated garage can be replaced on a like for like basis”* although no specific designs were reviewed for the garage under pre-application enquiries. This scheme does include replacement of the garage but it is evident that the garage proposed is much bigger than existing garage and allows for a study in the roof space. There is a strong concern that the garage structure is too large, being too high and too wide, and with gable end to the street it will appear overly dominant in views looking down the driveway and in context with the main house. Indeed the ridge height of the garage, at circa 6.1m high, is pretty much the same height as the proposed extension which measures at 6m high. Looking along Benwick Road garages are not particularly obvious within the streetscene, indeed where garaging is associated with property along Benwick Road it is subservient in scale to dwellings. The design of the garage is not acceptable and by virtue of its height and massing fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. **The garage design needs to be reconsidered and it should be single storey in height only (without attic accommodation) and to a narrower gable width.**

Landscaping and Boundary Treatments

- viii. It is to be noted that the existing box hedging is given specific reference in the Doddington Conservation Area Character Appraisal (October 2011) where it is stated *“The parterre box garden laid to the front of the dwelling also contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area”*. It is strongly agreed this is the case but it is also

acknowledged that the box hedging is afforded no specific protection and can be removed by the property owner any time. The scheme submitted has been designed to retain a formal garden arrangement to the front of the house although the shape of the box hedging and the arrangement of space is different to that which currently exists. In maintaining a formal boxed hedge garden to the front of the property this positive landscaping detail is retained and on balance no issue is raised with the fact that the design of the formal garden has changed.

- ix. The scheme submitted is comprehensive in that it not only proposes extension to the property and a new garage but it accounts for landscaping and boundary treatments presenting the development as a composition of design. The focus of the front of the property is maintained as a formally designed garden. Consideration has then also been given to the treatment of the east boundary and it is this boundary, which currently comprises of a low vertically boarded fence with vegetation, and over which the house can be seen at distance. The scheme is looking to retain a vertically boarded fence, at 1.5m high, with hedging behind it to soften the boundary on the side of the dwelling. Trees will then be planted along the section of boundary in front (east) of the proposed extension but not in front of the 19th century cottage itself. This will serve to focus the eye on the 19th century cottage in views along Benwick Road from the New Street junction and break up views of the extension softening its presence. Such landscaping is welcomed.

Amendments

The garage needs reconsidering and its size reducing. See point vii above.

Conditions

To follow

RECCOMENDATION: SEEK AMENDMENT TO THE GARAGE PRIOR TO APPROVAL SUBJECT TO CONDITION

Resolution: Refuse as per Section 11 of Agenda item 8 on page 48.