

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 October 2016

by Richard Schofield BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 05 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/V2825/D/16/3159026
101 Martins Lane, Northampton NN4 6DJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Dillow against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2016/0402, dated 29 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is side and rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on a) the character and appearance of the area and b) the living conditions of the occupiers of 103 Martins Lane and 67 Bouverie Road, with regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. 101 Martins Lane (No 101) is a 1960s/70s semi-detached bungalow situated on part of an area of Martins Lane that is dominated by bungalows of similar design and proportions. Originally matching its neighbour, No 99, with a hipped roof, the symmetry between the two dwellings has been lost with the insertion of a large flat roofed rear dormer extension running almost the full width of No 101's rear elevation, enabled by its conversion to a gable end roof.
 4. Pairs of dwellings are typically well-spaced, with a significant gap between them provided by driveways. In the case of No 101 and 103 Martins Lane (No 103), this sense of space is provided by, rather than exaggerated by, the footpath between them. This, combined with the low height of the dwellings here, gives the street an open, 'airy' feel.
 5. The appeal scheme would extend the dwelling further east, almost to the side boundary. This would serve to undermine the characteristic sense of space between dwellings and give No 101 the appearance of being crammed onto its plot, at odds with the prevailing character of the area. In addition, the enlargement of what is already a very substantial and prominent rear dormer would appear further at odds with the simple form and lines of dwellings in this locality. It would be ungainly, further unbalancing the appearance of the dwelling, with its large, blank side elevation prominent from Martins Lane. In
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addition, it would loom over the footpath between Nos 101 and 103, having a significant impact upon its character and appearing oppressive to users.

6. I conclude that the appeal scheme would have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Northampton Local Plan policies H18 and E20, and policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. These seek, among other things, to ensure that new development is well designed and reflects the character of its surroundings and, if an extension, that of the original dwelling.

Living Conditions

7. There is already some overlooking of the rear gardens of No 103 and 67 Bouverie Road (No 67) from the extant dormer at No 101. However, the dormer is, at least, set into the site such that primary views from it are to the rear. The proposed dormer would bring a large rear window much closer to the rear gardens of Nos 103 and 67. These gardens would be at an oblique angle to the window, but they would still be readily apparent in the outlook from it. Furthermore, the gardens are sufficiently small that they would be overlooked almost in their entirety with no areas affording complete privacy. Thus, I share the Council's concerns that the considerable reduction in distance between the first floor windows of No 101 and the rear gardens of Nos 103 and 67, would give rise to a significant sense of, if not actual, loss of privacy.
8. I conclude that the appeal scheme would have an adverse impact upon the living conditions of the occupiers of 103 Martins Lane and 67 Bouverie Road, with regard to privacy. It would conflict with Northampton Local Plan policies H18 and E20, and policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. These seek, among other things, to ensure that new development is designed in a manner that ensures adequate standards of privacy and has no adverse impacts upon adjoining properties.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Schofield

INSPECTOR