
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 May 2019

by R Bartlett PGDip URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/V2825/D/19/3225498

58 Whitworth Road, Northampton, NN1 4HJ

- 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 Hussain against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2018/1721, dated 11 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 5 February 2019.
 - The development is loft conversion with dormer to rear
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The development had already taken place at the time of my visit. This has had no bearing on my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area; and
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties at 56 and 60 Whitworth Road (Nos 56 and 60) by way of privacy to their rear gardens.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is situated within a large block of terraced houses, which despite minor differences, are generally uniformed in terms of their height, form and appearance. This uniformity extends to the rear outriggers, which each share a pitched roof with the adjoining property, the ridge height of which is significantly lower than that of the main dwelling.
5. The development that has taken places comprises a large dormer window across the rear roof plane of the main dwelling together with an upward extension to the rear outrigger, which exceeds the eaves and ridge height of the original structure. These large box-like structures that have been added to the roofs of the appeal property, when combined, result in a very top heavy and unbalanced appearance, which does not respect the traditional scale and design of the dwelling.

6. The extension to the outrigger in particular, due to its shape and height, significantly detracts from the symmetry of the existing dwelling and that of the adjoining dwelling No 60.
7. I acknowledge that the development is to the rear and as such is not visually prominent in the street scene. I also acknowledge that a large dormer window in the rear roof plane of the main house could be permitted development. However, this does not justify the inappropriate design of the outrigger extension. The development is visible from a large number of surrounding properties as well as being partially visible from Billington Street.
8. I therefore conclude on this issue that the development, due to its scale and design, is a dominant and incongruous feature in the otherwise uniformed roofscape, which detracts from the character and appearance of the area. The development is therefore contrary to Policies E20 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan and Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, which seek to ensure new development is of high standard design that reflects the character of its surroundings in terms of form, scale and materials.
9. The development also conflicts with the related guidance in the Council's Residential Extensions and Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) where it concerns good design principles, and high quality inclusive design that positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area. Nor does it accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where it concerns achieving well designed places.

Living conditions

10. The dormer window in the main roof serves an en-suite bathroom and is obscure glazed. The French doors to the dressing room and the glazed safety panel in front of them are set back into the walls of the extension, which obscures views to either side. Access to the balcony has now been restricted by the repositioning of the guard rail.
11. Dwellings to the rear of the property have long gardens and the Council has acknowledged there is a separation distance of approximately 27m. Whilst the doors do provide views into parts of the neighbouring gardens of Nos 56 and 60, this is not at a direct angle. Even with the elevated positioning of the doors, the level of overlooking is in my view no greater than it is from the first floor windows or than it would be from a standard rear dormer.
12. I therefore conclude on this issue that the development does not result in a greater level of overlooking than the original dwelling and is not detrimental to the living conditions of occupiers of the adjacent dwellings. In this respect there would be no conflict with those parts of Policies E20 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan that seek to protect residential amenity or with relevant parts of the SPD or the Framework.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rachael Bartlett

INSPECTOR