
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 September 2020

by I Radcliffe BSc(Hons) MRTPI MCIEH DMS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10th September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V2825/D/20/3251078

91 Broadway East, Northampton NN3 2PP

- 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 V Mihejevs against the decision of Northampton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref N/2020/0083, dated 24 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 20 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a side extension to an end of terrace house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The structure of the side extension has been built with its height approximately 6 brick courses lower than that shown on the submitted plans and without the parapet wall shown on its flank. On the basis of the appellant's appeal statement it is clear that he wishes me to assess the side extension as it has been built rather than on the basis of the taller height shown on the submitted plans. As the reduction in height slightly reduces the scale of the extension it would not exacerbate any of the harm alleged by the Council and so would not prejudice the interests of third parties invited to comment on the application. I have therefore assessed the application on the basis of what has been built.
4. The appeal property is an end of terrace house located in an urban part of Northampton. In keeping with other houses in the immediate area it is set back from the pavement behind a shallow front garden with a front boundary wall that separates public from private space. Given the tight urban grain of the locality the modest side gardens to corner plots, such as existed at No 91 before the extension was built, provide a welcome sense of openness that helps offset the high density of development. It is also clear from the submitted photographs that before the construction of the extension the outline of two chimney flues and a ground floor window were present on the flank wall of No 91. These details provided a varied relief and visual interest that made a positive contribution to the streetscene.

5. The single storey flat roofed side extension is set close to the front elevation of the house and occupies the whole width of its side garden. As a result, the openness of the corner has been lost and the varied relief and visual interest of the side of the house at ground floor level no longer forms part of the streetscene. With the extension presenting blank brick walls to Broadway East and Linden Road, in appearance, it resembles a large shoe box. As a result, the extension is contrary to the supplementary planning document 'Residential Extensions and Alterations Design Guide' (SPD). It advises that in areas where open space on street corners is a strong characteristic of the area side extensions should respect this and that the elevations of extensions on corner plots should provide active frontages.
6. The significant adverse effects caused by the side extension to the character and appearance of the area could not be overcome by the use of a condition requiring a different external finish.
7. In support of the appeal reference has been made to the single storey side addition at No 91 on the adjacent corner. However, as it is set back several metres from the front elevation, and is shorter in length, a significant part of the side garden remains as well as a flank ground floor window. As a consequence, it is noticeably different to the development that is the subject of this appeal and its existence does not alter my findings.
8. Side extensions to other houses in the area, as well as domestic garages of a similar volume to the side extension, have also been referred to. These developments are different in design and in location and I do not consider that their existence justifies the extension before me. Each appeal must be considered on its merits. The fact that these developments may have been permitted is therefore not a consideration of material weight in favour of the appeal.
9. For all of the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the development unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the area contrary to policies E20 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan, policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the SPD. These policies, amongst other matters, require the protection of the character and appearance of a locality through high quality design that respects local design features. If the extension was finished off in accordance with the submitted plans its scale, and thus the harm caused, would be even greater.
10. The occupants of the house would benefit from the extra space that the side extension would provide when completed and the extension prevents the side garden being used for fly tipping. These considerations though are insufficient to outweigh the harm that has been caused to the character and appearance of the area and the conflict with the development plan that has occurred. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Ian Radcliffe

Inspector