
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 March 2022

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/21/3292140

8 Walcot Close, Oundle PE8 4QU

- 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 and Mrs Richard Dowman against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NE/21/01425/FUL, dated 16 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension over existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs Richard Dowman against North Northamptonshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - (i) the character and appearance of the host property and the area, and
 - (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property at No. 10 Walcot Close with particular regard to light, overshadowing and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling with a single storey detached garage to the side. It is located in a modern well-established residential area characterised by detached and semi-detached properties of varied styles and design set back from the road behind front gardens/driveways. The surrounding detached properties along Walcot Close are of comparable scale and form, characterised by gabled roofs with distinctive small gabled roofs over the first floor level windows on the front elevation of the properties.

5. The appeal proposal would involve the construction of first floor extension over the garage that would be stepped down below the ridge of the host property with a gabled tiled roof. The proposed extension would set back from the front elevation of the main house and would be separated from the side elevation of the adjacent two storey property at No. 10 Walcot Close (No. 10) by a pedestrian accessway measuring about 1m in width.
6. The closing of the gap between the side elevation of the appeal property and the adjacent dwelling at No. 10 would not appear out of character. From my site visit I noted a number of properties in the road appear to have been built to the side boundaries or in close proximity to such. The reduced space between the extended property and the adjacent dwelling would be offset to some degree by the pedestrian accessway along the side of the appeal property and the different heights and setback distances between the proposed extension and the front elevation of the adjacent property, that would allow reasonable space to prevent any significant terracing effect.
7. The scale and form of the proposed first floor extension would nevertheless still be a significant addition relative to the main property. As such, although set back from the front elevation of the main house and stepped down at roof level, the proposed first floor extension would result in substantial bulk at the side of the main dwelling that would be out of character with the more modest form and appearance of the host building with its distinctive small gabled roofs over the first floor level windows.
8. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's prominent position, where the proposed first floor extension would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Walcote Close. The first floor side extension, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would fail to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and would detract from its architectural integrity. As such, I consider that the proposed first floor extension would result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that would cause unacceptable harm to the host property and the area.
9. I have considered the appellants arguments that the design and layout of the extension have been carefully considered in order to take into account the character of the host property and to minimise any impacts on the area. However, whilst the use of matching materials and fenestrations would assist in integrating the proposal with the host property and the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed first floor side extension would adversely harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It is contrary to Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016 (JCS) and the Council's Householder Supplementary Planning Document 2020 (SPD). This policy and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development proposals, including extensions, complement the existing dwelling and respond to the local character and characteristics of the site's immediate and wider context. The proposal would also not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that developments should seek to secure a high quality of design (paragraph 126) that are sympathetic to the local character (paragraph 130).

Living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property

11. The proposed first floor side extension would be located adjacent to the two storey detached property at No. 10 Walcot Close, to the west of the site. The proposed side extension would be built up to the common shared boundary with No. 10 and would be separated from the rooms and garden at the rear of the adjacent property by a high close boarded fence and a pedestrian accessway running between the properties. The main rear elevation of the detached property at No. 10 would also be set further back than the rear elevation of the proposed extension at the appeal property.
12. Whilst I accept that there would be some impact from the development, given the proposed design and layout of the proposed extension, set back and stepped down, together with the separation distance between the properties and the orientation of the buildings, I consider that the proposal would not result in a significant loss of light and overshadowing to the garden at the rear of No. 10, nor significantly dominate the views to cause an overbearing effect and an unacceptable sense of enclosure at the rear of No. 10. Whilst there would be some loss of light to the obscured bathroom window on the side elevation of the adjacent property, this is a non-habitable room and as such is a matter to which I can give limited weight in making my decision.
13. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed first floor side extension would not result in an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property at No. 10 Walcot Close with particular regard to light, overshadowing and outlook. It would be consistent with Policy 8 of the JCS and the SPD which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development proposals do not result in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties. In addition, it would accord with the Framework that development should seek to create places that promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users (paragraph 130).

Other Matters

14. I have noted the other development in the area drawn to my attention by the appellants. However, whilst I note some parallels, the extension and alterations at No. 7 Walcot Close are of a different scale and form and were approved in a different policy context. In any event, each proposal falls to be assessed primarily on its own merits and I am unaware of the full circumstances associated with this other case.
15. I have considered the appellants comments regarding the lack of formal objections from the neighbours at No. 10 Walcot Close to the appeal proposal. Whilst this maybe so, this does not preclude the proper planning assessment of the impact of the proposal on the host property and the area and is not a determinative factor on its own.
16. I note the appellants comments regarding the various benefits arising from the proposal including the scheme's high quality design and to create additional accommodation to meet the needs of the appellants. While I have given them some weight, these benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified. For all these reasons, there are no other material considerations to outweigh the development plan conflicts identified.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR