



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 April 2023

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/23/3314524

126 Northampton Road, Earls Barton, NORTHAMPTON, NN6 0HF

- 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 Mrs Linda Harbicher against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NW/22/00489/FUL, dated 5 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing garage building and stores, and erection of part two-storey part single-storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed extension on
 - The character and appearance of the area around Northampton Road, and
 - The living conditions of the occupiers of No 124 Northampton Road by way of outlook.

Reasons

3. No 126 is a two-storey detached house within a large plot and is situated on the eastern side of Northampton Road. It has a two-storey rear projection on the southern side of its rear elevation, and a single-storey conservatory on the northern side. There is a single-storey double garage/store built up against the boundary with No 124 to the south, and this is connected to the main house by way of a glazed lobby. It is set well back from the front elevation of the house and projects around 6 metres beyond the existing rear elevation.
4. The proposed extensions would involve demolition of the garage/store and the construction of a new building on a larger footprint, referred to by the appellant as an annexe. It would comprise a two-storey element to the front, set further forward than the existing garage/store and set a little beyond the line of the main rear elevation, and a single-storey element projecting from the rear of the two-storey structure to around 1 metre from the rear boundary of the property. Both elements would be set away from the boundary with No 124 by around 1 metre.

5. Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (CS) indicates that development should create a distinctive local character by responding to the site's immediate and wider context and local character to create new buildings which draw on the best of that local character without stifling innovation.
6. Policy EB.D1 of the Earls Barton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) indicates that development proposals should be of a high standard of design and layout in keeping with local character and should seek to utilise sustainable building techniques and materials wherever practical. New development proposals will be supported in the event that they protect, conserve and enhance the built environment, and perform well against all relevant locally adopted design guidance.
7. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Extensions – A Guide to Good Design (SPG) indicates that, when considering applications for extensions, the Council will consider the design in relation to the house; the effect on the character of the area; and the effect on occupiers of neighbouring property. Considerations will include how an extension might affect the outlook from neighbouring properties with regard to the size of the extension and how far it extends from the house. Side extensions should be set back from the front of the house, while with two-storey extensions, normally a minimum gap of 1 metre to the side boundary should be retained to respect the character of the area and give a visual separation between the houses. In some cases even greater gaps to the boundary may be required.
8. With regard to annexes, the SPG indicates that it is important that they are designed to be ancillary to the existing dwelling. The annexe should therefore take the form of an extension to a dwelling with an internal link to the main accommodation, so enabling it to be easily used as part of the main dwelling in the longer term.
9. The Council contends that by virtue of the scale, massing and design, the proposed extensions to facilitate an annexe would be an overly large and incongruous addition to the existing house which would adversely affect the external appearance of the property. The proposed development does not respond to the site's immediate or wider context to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area. In addition, the proposed extensions, due to their scale and positioning, would lead to a loss of neighbouring amenity due to an overbearing and oppressive relationship with the neighbouring property of no. 124 Northampton Road.
10. The appellant contends that the surrounding area displays a variety of different designs with large, detached dwellings and that, by and large, the proposed extensions would make use of the existing garage and lobby footprint and replace the existing feature which currently detracts from the character of the area. The appellant also points to permissions for extensions to other dwellings in the immediate vicinity, and that the host property has no special architectural merit. With regard to impact on residential amenity, the appellant contends that the proposal meets the recommended daylight standards and would not result in a loss of daylight or sunlight. Finally, the use of the extension is apparently required by her family for medical purposes. It would not have a kitchen and the kitchen of the host dwelling would be shared between the occupants.

Character and appearance

11. The proposed two-storey extension would be around 8 metres wide and some 10 metres deep. On the ground floor it would comprise a double garage with a hallway/porch running the full length between the garage and the host property. On the first floor would be three bedrooms and a bathroom. It would be set back a little from the front elevation of the house, but would project some 2 metres beyond the current rear elevation of the house. The single-storey extension would project a further 13 metres to the rear and would be around 7 metres wide. The ground-floor hallway/porch would extend from the front elevation to give access to the rear single-storey element which is shown as comprising a living/dining area.
12. The existing house would appear to have a footprint of around 110 sq metres, with the garage/store/porch adding a little over 80 sq metres approximately. The proposed extension alone would have a footprint of around 170 sq metres. This represents an extension with a footprint significantly larger than the main house itself and almost the same size as the existing house and garage/store/porch combined. In addition the extension would have a front elevation some 8 metres wide, whereas the main house has a front elevation of just 10 metres. The proposed extension would have a large, fully independent hipped roof, a large garage door, and what would appear from the front as a second front door giving access to the new hallway.
13. On the basis of scale, I find that the proposed extension would appear as over-dominant in the context of the host property, and would have the nature of a separate but attached dwelling. It would not appear subservient. Furthermore, the extension would have three bedrooms and an extensive ground-floor living/dining area. Although the appellant notes that the extension would not have a separate kitchen, and would operate as a dependent annexe, the scale of the ground-floor accommodation is such that a kitchen could easily be incorporated into the space available. In addition, the existing door from the house to the porch would appear to be blocked off, and there is no obvious alternative door from the house to the extension clearly shown on the submitted drawings.
14. The appellant also notes that the extension is needed for medical purposes, and has provided a letter from a doctor relating to the issue. I have sympathy with the situation of the appellant, but I am not convinced that a three-bedroomed annexe with an extensive ground floor living space is either necessary, or indeed the only solution to the medical problems experienced by the family.
15. Whilst the appeal dwelling is sited within an extensive plot, the space between the main house and the boundaries on either side is a significant feature. The existing garage/store/porch is single-storey only, and does not fill the visual gap between Nos 124 and 126 in the same way that would occur with the wide two-storey side extension proposed for the appeal property, albeit that the extension would be set 1 metre away from the side boundary. The appellant has referred to previous approved extensions at nearby properties, but from the information before me, it would appear that these are either much smaller than that of the current appeal proposal, or dating from a considerable time back, or both. In any case, I do not consider that these represent a precedent for the current proposal.

16. In conclusion on this issue, I find that the proposed extensions, by virtue of their scale and design, would not be subservient or appear as ancillary to the existing house. They would not respond sympathetically to the immediate context of the host dwelling and although the existing garage/store/porch is not architecturally attractive, this is not reason to replace it with extensions of the type and scale proposed. They would not represent high quality design in the context of the host property and would, therefore, be harmful to the character and appearance of the property and its immediate surroundings. On this basis, the proposal would conflict with Policy 8 of the CS, Policy EB.D1 of the NP and guidance in the SPG.

Living conditions

17. I have no detailed information on sunlight factors affecting Nos 124 and 126. However, the two-storey element of the proposed extension would lie to the west of the rear garden at No 124 at a distance of only 1 metre from the boundary, and would be set further back than the rear elevation of the neighbouring property. It would appear, therefore, that there is a likelihood of the two-storey extension having a detrimental effect on light reaching that part of the rear garden of No 124 that is the closest to the rear of the house and the most private element of its amenity space. Given the limited height of the proposed single-storey extension and its position to the north-west of No 124, I do not consider it likely that this element would result in a significant reduction of sunlight at the rear of the neighbouring property.
18. In the light of the proximity of the proposed extensions to the boundary with No 124, I consider that the projection of the two-storey element beyond the rear elevation of No 124, coupled with the length of the single-storey element along the full depth of the rear gardens, would result in a somewhat oppressive outlook for the occupiers of the neighbouring property. The single-storey extension would be clearly seen above the boundary fence and would be readily visually apparent. The scale and mass of the extensions would be harmful to the outlook from the rear of No 124.
19. In conclusion on this issue, I find that the proposed extensions, by virtue of their scale and siting, would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 124 by way of outlook. I do not think it likely that the proposal would result in significant loss of light at the rear of No 124, but there would be some detrimental effect and this adds to my concerns about the overall impact of the extensions on the residential amenities enjoyed by the neighbouring occupiers. On this basis, I find that the proposal would conflict with guidance on the effect of extensions on the occupiers of neighbouring property as set out in the SPG.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR