



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 October 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/3326471

1 Queenswood Avenue, Northampton, NN3 6JS

- 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 Jon Curtis against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WNN/2023/0334, dated 31 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 May 2023.
 - The development proposed is: Bungalow extension and alterations to create additional living and bedroom space plus a new double garage.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issues in this appeal the effect of the proposed development on:-
 - the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area;
 - the living conditions of the neighbouring occupier/s at 43 Booth Lane North, in terms of outlook and light.

Character and appearance

3. The development plan includes policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (2014) and policies Q1 and SD1 of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 2011-2029 (2023) LP. Together those policies contain a presumption in favour of sustainable development and require that proposals are of a high-quality design that integrates within the existing local context and enhances the built environment. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has similar objectives.
4. The appeal site comprises a small bungalow within a residential area of mainly 1930's built, houses and bungalows. It occupies a wide but shallow plot in a prominent position on the corner of Queenswood Avenue and Booth Lane North, with its main elevation facing the former. It has a main pitched roof with a front gabled porch, a smaller gabled roof on the side elevation facing Booth Lane North and a hipped roof single storey extension across the other side elevation facing the garden to the side of the plot. A separate, detached garage with a pitched roof at the end of that side garden faces onto Queenswood Avenue. The dwelling has been converted to provide accommodation in its roofspace with small windows in each of the gable ends

and small rooflights on both the front and rear roofslopes. All of the surrounding dwellings, a bungalow adjoining the side boundary on Queenswood Avenue, a bungalow adjoining the rear boundary on Booth Lane North, a bungalow opposite whose side elevation faces the appeal site and a bungalow opposite that faces the garage, have main hipped roofs as is the case for the majority of houses and bungalows in the surrounding area. Those roofs provide a sense of space at roof height and contribute strongly to the suburban character of the street scene.

5. The proposed development would extend the dwelling on the side elevation facing Booth Lane North by some 3.9m and would replace the whole roof with an increased ridge height of 0.75m and a new, gambrel style roof form to provide first floor accommodation across the whole dwelling. The front and side elevations would contain windows whilst the rear elevation would contain two rooflights. The existing garage would be replaced with a pitched roof garage sited closer to and facing the dwelling, with its side elevation adjacent to the boundary with the road.
6. The proposed design of the remodelled dwelling would introduce an unusual form of building within an area in which there is a strong tradition of hipped roof building forms. The unusual side elevations would be clearly seen from both Queenswood Avenue and Booth Lane North and would appear incongruous and overly dominant in the context of the more traditional surrounding bungalows. On the front elevation, the gambrel style roof would sit uneasily above the more traditional bay windows of the existing dwelling. The size and scale of the roof would dwarf the small, existing porch and the size and pattern of windows would appear discordant, resulting in a contrived elevation that would detract from the street scene.
7. I have noted that the existing bungalow is of no particular architectural merit and the proposed extension and alterations would in effect represent a remodelled 'as built' rather than an extended dwelling. It would also provide the opportunity to provide a design to suit the occupiers as they get older and to improve insulation standards and use high quality materials.
8. However, whilst I have noted that this proposal seeks to address the planning officer's comments on a previous pre-application submission, I am not convinced that those benefits could not be achieved by an alternative, more appropriate design. They do not, therefore, outweigh the significant harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the street scene, contrary to the policies referred to earlier and to the Framework.

Living conditions

9. The rear elevation of the existing dwelling is sited very close to the boundary with a bungalow at 43 Booth Lane North, with only a narrow path separating the dwellings on each side. The boundary comprises a 2m high fence with planting above and within the neighbour's control.
10. Although there would be no windows at first floor level other than two small roof lights and the resulting dwelling would remain outside a line of 45° from the windows in the front and rear elevations of the neighbouring dwelling, the additional height and massing of the building in such close proximity to the boundary would introduce an overly dominant elevation that would be seen

clearly from the side facing windows of habitable rooms at no 43. This would be unduly overbearing and would harm the outlook from those rooms.

11. The appellant says that there would be minimal additional shadowing, with shadows largely falling on the adjacent roof surface and no additional impact on the windows of no 43. However, although there is a flat roof garage attached to part of the side of the neighbouring bungalow, as noted previously there are habitable room windows in the side elevation. Given the orientation of the appeal dwelling to the southeast of 43 Booth Lane North and the additional height and massing of the proposal, there would be some loss of sunlight during the middle part of the day to those rooms.
12. Together, these impacts would cause significant harm to the living conditions of the occupier/s of that property, contrary to LP policy Q2 which seeks to ensure that developments protect the amenity of occupiers.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would be contrary to the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector