



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2023

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/23/3328216

109 The Ridge, Great Doddington NN29 7TU

- 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 Carwyn Bradbury against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NW/23/00318/FUL, dated 31 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 28 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion to provide three bedroom and bathroom. Nett increase of two bedrooms
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. While the appellant has described the proposal as in the above heading, the Council has additionally referred to a rear dormer and a part 2-storey, part first floor front extension. From my inspection of the plans, I consider that the Council's description more fully reflects the development sought. I have assessed the appeal scheme on that basis.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development firstly, on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area; and secondly, on vehicle parking and highway safety for users of The Ridge.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is one of a pair of modest sized, hip-ended semi-detached bungalows. It addresses The Ridge along which a mix of detached and pairs of bungalows that are broadly similar in age and design predominate. I saw that several properties within the row to which No 109 belongs have been extended and externally altered including No 89 to which the appellant has referred.
5. The proposal includes a part 2-storey, part first floor front extension with a new dual pitched roof and a central gable facing the road. The existing hipped roof would also be altered to form a gable end. Combined, these elements of the appeal scheme would add disproportionate scale and bulk to the upper part of the appeal dwelling. In doing so, the proposal would seriously imbalance the pair given that the attached counterpart to No 109 largely retains its original

built form and hipped roof save for a small front porch. The overall effect would be an incongruous and over-sized addition to the host building, detracting from it, the pair and the character and appearance of the local area.

6. The appellant places some reliance on the Council's decision to approve a front extension and alterations at No 89, which are similar to the proposal before me. To my mind, No 89 exemplifies the visual harm that can arise when one dwelling within a pair is significantly enlarged. Consequently, it does not set a desirable precedent to follow. Even if the Council has been inconsistent in deciding to approve the development at No 89 and not in this instance, which is unclear from the limited evidence provided, it does not justify allowing this appeal. In other words, additional harm cannot be justified on the basis that some harm exists.
7. Some properties along The Ridge have been altered in ways that differentiate the built form and appearance of one dwelling from another within a pair, including those to which the appellant has referred and provided details. Except for No 89, none of these examples are directly comparable with the scale and design of the proposal or in their relationship with the host building. These cases do not lend support to the proposal to the extent that it outweighs the significant and lasting harm that would come from the substantial and inappropriate enlargement that it would entail. In any event, each proposal must be assessed on its own merits, as I have done.
8. On the first main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (JCS) and the advice in the Residential Extensions: A Guide to Good Design Supplementary Planning Guidance. These policies and guidance aim to ensure that new development responds to the site's context and local character. It is also at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that development should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.

Vehicle parking and highway safety

9. A total of 3 off-road parking spaces are proposed along the site's highway frontage to serve the enlarged dwelling. According to the Officer's report, this level of parking would meet the relevant standard for a 4-bedroom house.
10. Given the limited size and shape of the new parking area, there would not be sufficient space to turn a vehicle within it. The proposal would therefore result in vehicles reversing from or into the main carriageway. Unlike the existing driveway of No 109, this might occur between existing parked vehicles if a driver were turning into or out of the new central parking space on site with cars parked on either side. As The Ridge is a reasonably busy highway as it passes the site, this scenario would be far from ideal given the restricted visibility of oncoming road users. Similarly, views of a reversing vehicle by approaching drivers could also be obscured by parked cars on site. A driver reversing from the site could also have limited visibility of the adjacent footway with an obvious safety risk for pedestrians.
11. The Council notes that a new hard surface area for vehicle parking on the site could come forward through the exercise of permitted development rights save for an extension to the existing dropped kerb to provide access from the

highway. I have no reason to doubt this opinion. However, few details of any extension to the existing dropped kerb and the visibility of other road users that can be achieved if the new parking spaces were occupied are before me.

12. Given these safety concerns, and the absence of information relating to the access arrangements to the new parking spaces, I am unable to conclude on the second main issue that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users, as required by the Framework. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to JCS Policy 8, which seeks to ensure that developments include satisfactory parking provision and do not prejudice highway safety.

Other matters

13. I note that the proposal was revised from a previous scheme to enlarge the appeal property. Others raise no objection, including the occupiers of the property that is attached to No 109 and the Parish Council. The appellant also states that the parking arrangements to serve the completed dwelling were dealt with in consultation with the Case Officer that handled the previous planning application. However, these matters do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified on both main issues.
14. An interested party raises additional concern about the effect of the proposal on daylight and privacy. These are important matters and I have considered all the evidence. However, given my findings on the main issues, these are not matters that have been critical to my decision.

Conclusion

15. Overall, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the policies of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan.
16. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR