
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 April 2024

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01.05.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K2610/D/24/3337354

34 Pound Lane, Blofield, Norfolk NR13 4NB

- 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 David Greening against the decision of Broadland District Council.
 - The application Ref 2023/2552, dated 22 August 2023, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is side extension to provide enlarged kitchen, utility and WC at ground floor, and additional bedroom and bathroom at first floor. Internal alterations to suit revised layout. New carport.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 32 Pound Lane, with regard to natural light and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached bungalow in a residential road of detached, semi-detached and terraced bungalows. No 34 is close to the settlement edge with open countryside behind the dwellings and to the east beyond the built-up part of Pound Lane.
 4. Policy GC4 of the Broadland Development Management DPD (2015) (DM DPD) and Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2014 (amended) (JCS) both require high quality design in new development that has regard to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Policy HOU4 of the Blofield Parish Neighbourhood Plan (2016) (NP) seeks to maintain and enhance the rural image of the villages including through high quality design, with regard being given to density, footprint and separation of buildings.
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5. There is a good degree of uniformity of layout and appearance of dwellings within the street scene. The driveways between dwellings and consistent building lines and front gardens on the southern side of the road provide a relatively spacious character, with consistent spacing between the built forms, reflecting the original planned layout and design of the street.
6. The proposed extension would comprise a sideways expansion of the appeal property, adding around half of the original frontage width and resulting in a metre gap between the side elevation and the shared boundary. The extended front elevation would be set well back due to the open carport, but the roof height would be the same as that of the original dwelling. Consequently, the extension would not appear subordinate to the original dwelling and it would result in the loss of much of the characteristic openness and separation between neighbouring dwellings. This would disrupt and undermine the uniformity of design and layout that is an important character of the street scene.
7. There are no obvious examples of similar extensions within the surrounding area, except for the side extension to No 26. However, it appears that the remaining gap between the extension and shared boundary is wider than proposed here. Moreover, it appears that this development pre-dates the relevant policies referred to above. Therefore, this limited example should not be seen as a positive precedent where the layout and appearance of dwellings remains largely unchanged.
8. The appellant contends that an extension closer to the boundary could be undertaken as permitted development. However, this would be of more limited height than the appeal proposal and would, therefore, appear more subservient in this regard, both in relation to the host dwelling and the extent of infilling the space to the side of the property. As such, the possible exercise of permitted development rights in this instance does not overcome the harmful effects of the form of extension proposed.
9. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed extension would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, it is contrary to Policy GC4 of the DM DPD, Policy 2 of the JCS and Policy HOU4 of the NP, as described. The appellant contends that Policy HOU4 is not directly relevant as it does not relate to the type of development proposed here. However, while the policy does not specifically refer to extensions or alterations it is not unreasonable that its provisions should apply to them. Policy EN2 of the DM DPD is less relevant in my reading of it as it concerns the effect of development on landscape.

Living conditions

10. The neighbouring dwelling, No 32, has a pair of windows and a single storey conservatory facing the side of the appeal property. The closer proximity of the extended dwelling would inevitably have some effect on the outlook from these rooms. However, No 32's driveway would provide sufficient separation such that the extension would not cause material harm to the neighbouring occupiers' outlook.
11. For the same reason, there would not be a harmful effect on the daylight reaching the side windows to No 32; and the relative orientation of the

properties combined with the separation between them would ensure that the sunlight available to these rooms would not be unacceptably compromised. An interested party raises additional concerns about a loss of privacy to No 32's occupiers as well as noise and disturbance. The upper floor window in the extension would include obscured glass, while the ground floor windows would serve non-habitable rooms or could be required to include obscured glass. The rear dormer would face directly to the rear and would not enable views towards No 32. Normal residential use of a domestic extension in this location would not result in harmful noise and disturbance to neighbouring occupiers.

12. Accordingly, for these reasons, I conclude that there would be no material harm caused to the neighbouring occupiers' living conditions, with regard to these matters. As such, there is no conflict with Policy GC4 of the DM DPD, which includes the requirement that development proposals should pay adequate regard to the impact on the amenity of existing properties.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge that the appellant may be frustrated with the process involved in pursuing this proposal. However, this matter is outside the scope of this appeal. I accept also that the Parish Council and Highways Authority did not object, but this is not sufficient reason to set aside the findings of harm set out above.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given with regard to the effect of the proposal on character and appearance, the appeal should not succeed.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR