



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2025

by **Les Greenwood MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/24/3354563

56 Overstone Road, Sywell, North Northamptonshire NN6 0AW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs A Fischer against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NW/24/00323/FUL.
 - The development proposed is change of roof to provide habitable living space, rear and front extensions, alterations and new vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024, with minor updates on 7 February 2025, all during the course of this appeal. Having regard to the changes in the Framework and to the comparatively minor scale and nature of this appeal proposal, I consider that further consultation on this matter is not necessary.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on:
 - i) The character and appearance of the building and the local area; and
 - ii) Living conditions at 52 Overstone Road next door, in terms of the impact on light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. 56 Overstone Road is a bungalow set within a row of modern bungalows along a main route through the village. It has been extended to the rear, including a box dormer window. The proposal would raise the roof significantly and extend the full height structure further to the rear, with a glazed full height gable extension to the front and 6 new dormer windows, to provide much increased first floor accommodation. The Council raises no objection to proposed changes to the vehicle access. Its concerns relate to the upper floor extensions.
5. In some ways the proposal would fit in well within its varied architectural context. The proposed raising of the roof and front gable extension would not conflict with

local character, which includes differences in height and design. A similar front extension built nearby at 49 Overstone Road is an attractive feature in the street scene, adding interest. Dormer windows are a common feature of the area, including next door at No 52, and the proposed dormers would be well designed and scaled to fit into the roof slopes. The proposed new roof would be half-hipped. Though not fully in line with the local roof styles, this would be a minor design element that would add to local variety without causing harm.

6. Stretching the increased height of the building so far to the rear, however, would create long, tall and bulky side walls that would contrast substantially with the more traditional, smaller scale proportions of most nearby bungalows and houses. These walls would be nearly blank and largely unarticulated, so that they would appear as out-sized blocks of masonry. As No 56 is set well forward of No 52, the new side walls of the building on that side would be particularly prominent in views from the street, highlighting this unsympathetic element of the design. I note that the recent extensions and alterations to No 49, though similar in some aspects, have not created a building of comparable height, bulk and massing.
7. Although I find no fault with some of the more detailed aspects of the proposed design, the sheer bulk of the proposal in this location would unduly harm the character and appearance of the building and the local area. The proposal conflicts in this respect with policy 8(d) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (JCS), the Framework and the guidance in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance *Residential Extensions: a Guide to Good Design* (SPG), which aim to secure high quality design that responds to the site's immediate context and local character.

Living conditions

8. 52 Overstone Road next door is set well back behind the main bulk of No 56, with a ground floor front window near to the shared boundary and a ground floor side window facing a low, flat roof rear extension at No 56. I understand from the submitted plans that these serve a study and a living room, respectively. Both of these are habitable rooms where natural lighting is important. Although the side window is a secondary window, this part of the long living room must not get much light from the remotely positioned main rear glazing, so depends largely on the side window for natural light.
9. The proposed extension would sit to the south/southwest of these windows, only a few metres away. The height, bulk and proximity of the taller and deeper side wall would, in this position, block out a considerable amount of direct sunlight from both windows. Although the neighbour supports the proposal, commenting that there would be no loss of light, no information has been submitted by the appellants to show that overshadowing would be acceptably limited. In my view, these windows would be heavily overshadowed by the proposed extension.
10. The effect on general daylighting (light from the sky) would be less, as both windows would retain significant views to the sky. I nevertheless conclude that the proposal would unduly harm living conditions at No 52 due to overshadowing. The proposal also conflicts in this respect with JCS policy 8(e), the Framework and the SPG, which aim to avoid unacceptable impacts on the amenities of neighbouring properties, including through loss of light.

Other matters

11. I recognise the appellants' reasonable wish to improve their home and the efforts they have made to meet the Council's requirements. I note that there are no local objections to the scheme. The appellants refer to the potential to add another storey as permitted development¹. This would require prior approval by the Council, however, so is not shown to be a viable alternative at this stage. I give it very limited weight as a fall-back position. These points are not sufficient to outweigh my concerns in regard to the 2 main issues.

Conclusion

12. I find that the proposal conflicts with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR

¹ Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015 (as amended)