



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2025

by **C Walker BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/D/24/3355548

32 Raunds Road, Stanwick, Wellingborough, North Northamptonshire, NN9 6PP

- 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 Matt Willis against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is NE/24/00620/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Replacement house and garage roof with dormers. Internal alterations.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development was amended by the Council from that given on the planning application form. The appellant confirms they do not disagree with this change, and I have therefore determined the appeal on that basis.
3. On 12 December 2024, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (hereafter the Framework) was published and corrected on 7 February 2025. There is no need to invite further comments from the Council or the appellant on the revisions as there are no fundamental changes relevant to the appeal before me.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the development upon the
 - character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the wider area; and
 - protected trees.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a two-storey detached property in a generous sized plot on the northern side of Raunds Road. It is set alongside other predominantly two storey dwellings of varying designs with irregular set back distances from the roadside. The dwellings in the vicinity are generally arranged in a linear form facing towards the road. There are some forward projections visible in the street-scene, including two storey gabled projections at Numbers 40 and 46 Raunds Road and the single storey projecting garage at the appeal site, but these are not a defining characteristic of the area. The appeal property is the only one in the

locality that benefits from a garage set broadly perpendicular, forward of the dwellinghouse. There is an Austrian Pine tree located within the site frontage, between the garage and front boundary. Another tree lies within the frontage of the adjacent No. 30 Raunds Road. Both are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, and are distinctive, attractive natural features.

6. Raising the height of the garage roof would add considerable bulk and massing to this component of the host property. The resulting change to its architectural composition would raise the status of the currently subservient garage building relative to the main body of the house. These changes would harmfully undermine the predominantly linear forward-facing pattern of development.
7. Despite the appeal property being set back further from the road than its neighbours, the proposal would be prominent in the street scene. Due to its elongated form, this element would be a dominant forward projection compared to other such features in the street-scene that are far more modest in their projection.
8. This additional height and bulk, coupled with the introduction of the dormer windows above, which are not a feature prevalent in the locality, would be incongruous. The dormers proposed over the garage would be particularly jarring in the street-scene given that typically the main architectural features of dwellings along this stretch of the road front the highway. The overall result would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.
9. The Householder Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2020) (SPD) is referred to in the reason for refusal. Whilst no reference is made in the appeal submission as to which part it conflicts with, I note it states that front extensions should normally only be single storey, should not extend too far forwards or be too dominant. This guidance supports my findings in respect of the garage extension.
10. The appellant cites 'character changing' extensions to No. 36 Raunds Road as being relevant. However, the evidence suggests this property has benefitted from a two-storey side extension which is not directly comparable to the appeal before me. Therefore, it does not alter my conclusions on the harm in this instance.
11. The Council do not find harm with the increased height of the appeal dwelling or with the rear dormers. I see no reason to disagree. They do however cite harm from the placement of the two front dormers, as they say they would upset the balance of the dwellinghouse. I do not share this concern. The dormers are set above existing windows below and the fenestration is of a similar size, such that the balance would be maintained.
12. Nevertheless, the proposal runs counter to the Framework, in particular paragraph 135, which amongst other things, supports development that is sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and maintaining a strong sense of place.
13. Therefore, I find the proposal would be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and its consequential effects to the wider area. As such it would conflict with Policies 3 and 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (2016) (JCS) which amongst other things, seek to ensure development is sensitive to its setting and distinctive local character. I also find conflict with Policy EN11 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 2011-2031 (2021) (ENLP) which, amongst other things, requires development to

integrate positively with the surrounding area, create a continuity of street frontage in terms of appearance, layout, massing and scale as well as ensuring development does not detract from the character of the existing building and reflects local distinctiveness.

14. Policy 7 of the JCS is also cited in the refusal reason on the decision notice, but as this relates to community services and facilities, it is not determinative to this appeal. It follows that I find no conflict with it in respect of this main issue.

Protected trees

15. The Council contend that the development would cause undue pressure and impact on the health and survival of the protected trees, thereby causing further harm to the character of the area. Whilst the reason for refusal cites trees in a plural sense, no mention of harm to the neighbouring protected tree is made in the evidence. I therefore confine my consideration to the effect on the tree located within the grounds of the appeal site.
16. The Council assert that in order to accommodate the increased height of the garage, a crown lift is required to the Austrian Pine tree referred to as T1 in the Arboricultural Report (hereafter the Report) undertaken on behalf of Brightman Brothers dated 15 June 2024. However, the Report makes clear that this work is not necessary to facilitate the development, as the tree canopy would stand above the increased garage roof. In the absence of substantive evidence to show to the contrary, I have little basis to undermine the findings of the Report. Hence, on the evidence before me I find the development would not cause undue pressure on the health and survival of the pine tree.
17. In respect of the effect upon the protected trees, I do not find harm would arise. It follows there would be no conflict with national policy in the Framework that seeks to safeguard important trees. It is also the case that the proposal would accord with Policies 3 and 8 of the JCS and Policy EN11 of the ENLP in this regard, as they seek to retain features of landscape importance and ensure development relates well to the surrounding environment. Policy 7 of the JCS is not determinative in respect of impact on trees. Likewise, Policy OSP4 of the Stanwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031(2017) seeks to protect established and important trees from harm in the context of open spaces. As the appeal is an established residential development it does not constitute open space to which this policy applies.

Conclusion

18. Notwithstanding the lack of harm to the protected tree, I have identified there would be undue harm from the development to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, when considered as a whole, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations that indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

C Walker

INSPECTOR