



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 April 2025

by **Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/D/25/3359062

8 Warren Cottages, Narford Road, West Acre, Norfolk, PE32 1UG

- 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 Miss R Terrey against the decision of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01763/F.
 - The development proposed is a two storey and single storey extension to dwelling and erection of garage building with home office above.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposed development on:-
 - the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area;
 - the living conditions of the occupier/s of no 5 Warren Cottages in regard to light, privacy and outlook.

Preliminary matter

3. Since the Council's decision, the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 2021-2040 (LP) has been adopted which replaces the policies in the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan referred to in the decision notice. The parties have been given the opportunity to comment and I have been referred to the replacement policies by the Council.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. 6 Warren Cottages is a modestly sized end terrace cottage in one of two terraces of similar dwellings that were built as farm workers cottages on this quiet rural lane in open countryside. It occupies a large plot with a particularly extensive side garden. Although the end dwellings in the other terrace have both been extended to the side, those extensions are modest in size and scale and both terraces retain much of their original simple form and character.
5. The proposed development comprises a two storey extension to the side and rear to which a further single storey side and rear extension would be attached, replacing a small rear extension and a small lean-to porch at the side. The two

storey side extension would be only 300mm less than the width of the original cottage and as such its size and scale would be severely disproportionate. This would have an unbalancing effect on both the dwelling itself and the terrace as a whole, competing with and detracting from its symmetrical form, thereby harming both its character and appearance.

6. The additional single storey extension would exacerbate this and the considerable depth of that extension at almost 18m would be vastly out of scale with the existing dwelling whose depth is under 11m.
7. A triple garage with an office and store room above is proposed at the rear of the site to provide accommodation for the applicant and her partner's businesses. Its footprint would be greater than that of the existing cottage and at some 6.5m in height and despite its clipped gable ends, it would have some resemblance to a dormer bungalow. I noted at my visit that the end dwelling in the other terrace has an outbuilding sited in its front garden but that is significantly smaller in size and scale than this proposal. The appellant has referred to a previously approved garage of similar scale but I have no details of that and am unable to assess it in relation to this proposal. The appellant's statement includes an undated aerial image and she says that there were several garages and outbuildings on the site previously. Whilst I have insufficient evidence regarding the condition and appearance of the site previously, those buildings have now been removed and I have assessed this proposal on the basis of the current situation. The height, size and scale of the proposed garage would therefore be uncharacteristic of other domestic outbuildings in the lane and inappropriate for this site.
8. Given its siting to the rear of the dwelling and the proposed extensions, the proposed garage would not be clearly seen from the lane. The length of the single storey side extension would not be clearly seen either due to a high fence and gates that have been erected along the frontage of the site. However, that boundary treatment is currently subject to enforcement investigations and cannot be relied upon to screen this overly dominant scheme. In any case, the proposed single storey extension and garage would cause significant harm to the character of the dwelling, regardless of their visibility from the lane.
9. The appellant says that the previous garages and outbuildings on the site along with very tall hedges and unkempt trees meant that there were no views across the site from Narford Road to the farmland. She says that by virtue of removing the dilapidated buildings and unkempt hedges and trees, the openness of the site has increased to provide views from Narford Road to the farmland that were previously obscured and that by keeping the proposed extensions and garage to the northern side of the site, the openness and views will be retained.
10. However, the Council has not said that the proposal would harm the view of open countryside but that it would represent a dominating form of development that would change the open countryside setting and on the basis of what I have seen, I would agree.
11. I conclude then that, by reason of its size and scale, the proposal as a whole would significantly harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. As such, it would be contrary to development plan policies LP18 and LP21 in the LP which seek to ensure that new development responds to the context and character of places in terms of scale, height and massing.

Living conditions

12. The adjoining dwelling at no 5 Warren Cottages contains a bedroom window that would be some 3m (according to the plans) from the proposed two storey extension on the rear elevation. Although it would be sited to the south of that window, the plans also show that the extension would be outside a horizontal line of 45° from there on plan. Under my calculation, it would also be outside a vertical 45° angle on elevation. Therefore the impact of the extension in terms of any loss of sunlight or daylight to the neighbouring window is likely to be small. The two dwellings are sited at the same ground level and I have no sufficiently compelling evidence from the Council regarding why it considers that the proposal would be harmful in this respect.
13. The side boundary between the two properties does not follow a straight line and instead has a 'dog-leg' which means that the flat roof of the rear part of the proposed single storey extension would be in close proximity to the side boundary and the rear garden of no 5. As the plans show opening patio windows to the master bedroom that would have access to that roof, this would enable clear views from the roof into the neighbouring garden. Whilst an existing outbuilding in that garden would provide some screening, it would be possible to overlook both the neighbours' sitting out area adjacent to the rear wall of their house and the far end of their garden. However, there is already some overlooking from an existing bedroom window at the appeal dwelling. Moreover, the proposed windows would be some 8m from the side boundary and it is likely that if acceptable in all other respects, the proposal could be subject to a condition for balcony screening which would overcome this objection.
14. However, the proposed garage would be sited very close to the side boundary at the end of the garden and would be clearly seen from the end of the garden of no 5. Given its size and height, it would be unduly overbearing when seen from there and this would be a significant change from the existing situation in which that part of the site is currently undeveloped. This would severely harm the neighbours' outlook and would have a serious impact on their living conditions. This would be contrary to development plan policies LP18 and LP21 in the LP which together also seek to ensure that new developments are of a high quality design that considers the impact on neighbouring occupiers.

Other matter

15. The proposal would provide additional accommodation for the appellant's growing family and businesses but I am not persuaded that some of those needs could not be met by an alternative, less dominant scheme and this matter does not, therefore, override my findings above.

Conclusion

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

Sarah Colbourne

INSPECTOR