



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 April 2025

by **Andrew Dale BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 May 2025

Appeal Ref. APP/W2845/D/25/3361916

5 Rixon Close, Northampton NN3 3PF

- 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 Shanahan Hussain against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application ref. is 2024/5808/FULL.
 - The development proposed is: *"Two storey front & side extension, first floor rear & side extensions, single storey rear extension, garage & loft conversion including an increase in the dwellings (sic) roof height."*
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The relevant application number in the heading above is taken from the Council's decision notice and the appellant's planning appeal statement. The number given at the head of the appeal form is incorrect.
3. The description of the proposed works in the heading above is based on the one provided on the Council's decision notice. It is more precise than the one set out on the application form.
4. Planning permission was granted in August 2024 under ref. 2024/2352/FULL for single-storey front extension, 2-storey part single-storey rear extension, first floor side extension and loft conversion. This extant planning permission is an important material consideration which I have taken into account. The appellant is said to have been frustrated by having to reduce the original scheme in that application just to receive planning permission. The application the subject of this appeal apparently revisits that original scheme.
5. The appellant says that the planning officer only assessed the application with reference to the policies and guidance relating to extending a dwelling instead of on the basis of a new property. However, the Council cannot be criticised for that approach as the proposal was submitted as a *Householder Application for Planning Permission for works or extension to a dwelling*.

Main issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the locality.
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Reasons

7. Before some demolition work took place, no. 5 was a 2-storey detached house with an attached single-storey wing to the eastern side mainly given over to a garage. Although it is located centrally within a sizeable plot and set back from the road, the building is quite prominent within Rixon Close. This is because it is at the higher closed end of this cul-de-sac and some vegetation on the site has been removed.
8. The surrounding area is residential. Rixon Close is part of an estate developed during the 1980s/1990s. The Council considers that the variation in architecture, the mature landscaping and the spaciousness of the plots contribute positively to the area's sense of place, creating a pleasant and open environment. I see no reason to disagree. Even though Rixon Close contains large detached dwellings, the surrounding area's sense of greenery and spaciousness is very apparent.
9. The principle of extending the property is not at issue. However, the National Planning Policy Framework advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; so, development should add to the overall quality of the area and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. I consider that the appeal proposal is ill-judged in these respects.
10. Combined together in the scale and form presented and with a continuous and unbroken, near 1m higher main roof ridge line, the extensions would add substantial mass and bulk to all 4 elevations of the dwelling, with the net result that the property would appear engulfed in extensions.
11. The design approach taken would not successfully break up their mass, scale and bulk. This would represent poor design as the extensions would appear as substantial and unsympathetic additions which would fail to integrate well with the original form and appearance of the host dwelling. The extensions would not respect the form, shape, balance and proportions of the existing dwelling and the surrounding street scene. Extensions should be designed so that the main property is still the dominant building. In the appeal case, it would be very difficult to detect the original dwelling after the extensions had been built. Rather, it would be subsumed in extensions and the resulting building would appear to be excessively scaled in relation to the existing dwelling and its surroundings.
12. In addition to the main problems of design and scale, some aspects of the proposal would be architecturally ill-mannered and particularly unfortunate.
13. The very deep and wide 2-storey rear-projecting gabled extension would be far wider than the 2-storey core of the original dwelling and lack any obvious break in the wall plane along the deep western side elevation. Moreover, in terms of height, the rear and eastern side elevation drawings show this extension almost reaching the main roof ridge height whereas the western side elevation drawing has it lower.
14. The advanced 2-storey front extension would be virtually fully glazed across its front façade. It would be an overtly modern eye-catching feature that would appear

discordant in these surroundings and contribute to a window to wall relationship across the front elevation that departs too far from the established local character.

15. No street scene drawings have been presented but from my assessment of the plans and the approved scheme and from my observations at the site visit, the resulting building would also appear intrusive in the Rixon Close street scene on account of the roof height and width, bulk, lack of subservience to the original dwelling and proximity along the western flank to the boundary with no. 4. On that latter point, the 2-storey side extension there would severely disrupt the established street pattern by diminishing the gap between the 2 properties. This compressed built-up form would be accentuated by the angled alignment of the appeal property such that the gap on that side narrows towards the front of the property.
16. In all the above respects, the scheme eschews various general design principles within the Residential Extensions and Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which are aimed at ensuring that extensions and alterations respect the character of the building and the street scene. In particular, the appeal scheme would fall foul of the principles relating to design, scale, windows and doors and spacing.
17. The proposed external materials (red/brown bricks and brown concrete tiles) would be sympathetic to the dwelling and the locality. However, I consider that the Council's concerns about the proposal were justified as the enlargements would appear as prominent and insufficiently subservient additions to the host dwelling in public views from Rixon Close and in private views from both neighbouring houses. Their design, scale, form, mass and proportions in relation to the host building would be disrespectful of and inappropriate to the character, appearance and setting of the existing dwelling and the surroundings.
18. The 2-storey side extension at 4 Rixon Close is still set well off the side boundary with 5 Patterson Close which in turn is not built close to that common boundary. The extension is also partly hidden by the garage in the front garden of 4 Rixon Close. It has not had an adverse impact on either street scene. The house at 35 Edgemont Road is not part of the Rixon Close street scene, occupies a wider plot and I could not see any external manifestations of a loft conversion. It is not difficult to detect the original dwelling there given the notable changes in wall plane and height viewing across the width of the building. I saw nothing to justify what is proposed on the appeal site and it is an established planning principle that each case should be considered on its own merits.
19. The appellant says 6 and 7 Rixon Close were originally constructed as dwellings as large as the one proposed in this appeal. Both are indeed sizeable. However, a large part of no. 6 is set back in a wing at the rear which helps to break up the overall mass of the property. At no. 7, its northern wing next to the boundary with no. 6 is single storey and its 2-storey southern wing is set a reasonable distance away from the common boundary with no. 8. Moreover, generous amounts of mature landscaping are retained around most of the boundaries of those 2 houses which helps to create an attractive townscape despite the size of the buildings.
20. Drawing together the above, I find on the main issue that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the locality. Policy Q1 of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 expects development

to be designed to promote and contribute to good placemaking through high quality, beautiful and sustainable design which encourages the creation of a strong, locally distinctive sense of place by, amongst other things, responding to and enhancing locally distinctive townscape. The proposal would not meet the expectations of this policy.

21. The Council raised no objections in relation to neighbouring residential amenities, parking and highway safety. I see no reason to disagree on any of those matters and I note that only one letter of objection was received from a local resident. Still, my finding on the main issue is decisive to the outcome of this appeal. There is conflict with the development plan. The harm cannot be mitigated by the imposition of planning conditions and it is not outweighed by other material considerations.
22. This was not a planning application for a replacement dwelling or for the total redevelopment of the property and site. To the extent that might amount to a fallback if the property was rebuilt in the manner proposed in this appeal, it is unclear to what extent such a proposal would comply with the Council's policies on replacement dwellings, if they exist and it is by no means clear that it would receive planning permission. In any event, there is no extant planning permission in place for such a replacement scheme and, further to my comments in paragraph 5 above, I have considered the proposal as it was applied for in the application.
23. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR