



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/25/3361292
5 Clubtail Way, Northampton NN4 9ER

- 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 Raymond Smith against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application ref. is 2024/4575/FULL.
 - The development proposed is: Proposed two storey side extension, floor plan redesign and all associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. Paired with no. 3, the appeal property is a semi-detached, 3-storey town house on the western side of Clubtail Way, a short road of only 9 houses between its junctions with Mayfly Road and Dragonfly Way, within the relatively recent Pineham Village development. Almost directly opposite nos 3 and 5 in a similar central location on Clubtail Way are the semi-detached, 2-storey houses at nos 4 and 6. The 5 other dwellings are all detached 2-storey houses, including no. 7. The blank southern side gable of no. 7 abuts the northern side yard of the appeal property where the subject extension is proposed. As the dwellings stand close to the back of the footways, the buildings and the spaces between them are prominent in the street scene.
 4. In the compact modern residential layout found within Clubtail Way, the remaining gaps and the arrangement of spaces between the houses are important in maintaining a distinctive sense of place and make a positive contribution to the local character and appearance of the area. The value of the remaining gap between nos 5 and 7 is further enhanced as it marks a visual break between 2-storey and 3-storey developments and semi-detached and detached building types.
 5. The principle of extending the property and adapting it to meet the changing needs of the current occupants is not at issue. The house would be extended sideways over 2 storeys, with the ground floor acting as a carport. However, I consider that the
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extension would not sit comfortably within the space available; rather it would come exceedingly close to the blank southern side gable of no. 7, thus significantly diminishing the visual gap between nos 5 and 7. The plans show that a gap of only 0.15m would be left between the opposing gable ends. The scheme would also effectively continue the building line and eaves line set by no. 7 albeit at a slight angle. I am in little doubt that the development would be perceived to be shoehorned into the available space and give rise to a terracing effect.

6. I am prepared to accept that in itself the proposed extension would be physically and visually subservient in its overall scale in relation to the host dwelling, given its far lower ridge height, recessed front building line and comparatively moderate width across the frontage. However, it cannot be viewed just in isolation and I judge that these factors, the lower ridge height than that of no. 7, the use of matching materials and fenestration and the open space at ground floor level would be insufficient to avoid the creation of a prominent and visually damaging terracing effect within the street scene. The scheme would cause the different semi-detached and detached building types to become less visually distinct, a general loss of spaciousness and disruption to the prevailing pattern of development from an almost continuous bulk of building work along the frontage. All of this would harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surroundings.
7. The scheme eschews design criteria within the South Northamptonshire Design Guide. In particular, this says that the closing of gaps between buildings can affect the overall appearance of the street scene and that proposals for 2-storey side extensions will normally be resisted where they would result in a potential terracing effect. This is noted to be more problematic in modern estates where layouts and gaps are more consistent. Pineham Village would be one such estate. Setting the extension further away from the boundary would make a meaningful difference in the gap between the buildings. However, I am aware that the resultant width would be unlikely to provide adequate internal accommodation especially as the site narrows quite appreciably towards the front.
8. The appellant has submitted details of 3 allegedly comparable approved developments. All of them are a considerable distance away from the appeal site and it is an established planning principle that each case is considered on its own merits. Still, I note that space for a side entrance gate and passageway would be provided in the scheme at 46 Firsvie Drive, that the proposal at 16 Aynho Walk would extend a house that is already at the end of a terrace and has a single-storey wing on the same side and that even though the approved extension at 2 The Oaks would reach up to the side boundary, there is an access lane to the side (for a rear parking court) which provides for a wide gap to 3 The Oaks. The context for the appeal site is markedly different to these cases.
9. I find on the main issue that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the locality. Policy SPD1 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 seeks to ensure that residential extensions incorporate a good quality design which maintains or enhances the character and appearance of the building, street scene and surroundings, whilst Policy SS2 advocates a design-led approach to demonstrate compatibility and integration with the surroundings and the distinctive local character of the area. The proposal would not meet the expectations of these development plan policies.

10. I have studied the appellant's commentary upon the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). It is the case that most proposals to extend residential properties will reflect some of the aims of the Framework when read as a whole. However, good design is a cornerstone of the Framework and a key aspect of sustainable development. I consider that the appeal proposal is ill-judged in design terms and would not achieve a well-designed place.
11. I acknowledge that the appellant wishes to create valuable dining and utility spaces at first floor level whilst maintaining a functional ground floor space for parking. Whilst I give weight to these considerations, I have come to the view that they are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have described. 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. 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.
12. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should not succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR