



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/M2840/D/25/3361420
6 Cleveland Avenue, Kettering NN16 9JG

- 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 Mrs Rita Dhaliwal against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
- The application ref. is NK/2024/0635.
- The development proposed is: First floor extension over existing garage and tiled canopy to the front elevation.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for first floor extension over existing garage and tiled canopy to the front elevation at 6 Cleveland Avenue, Kettering NN16 9JG in accordance with the terms of the application, ref. NK/2024/0635, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan; and Plan No. 24/10/1 titled Planning Application Drawing.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.

Main issue

2. The Council raised no objections to the tiled canopy to the front elevation. I see no reason to take a different view. The main issue is therefore the effect of the proposed first floor extension over the garage upon the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. In addition to the attractive areas of public open space and wide landscaped roadside verges, this section of Cleveland Avenue is mainly characterised by sizeable detached 2-storey houses which date from the 1980s. This includes 4 such houses (1 Blackberry Close and 6, 8 and 10 Cleveland Avenue) laid out in a row off a shared private drive that runs parallel to the main carriageway and is well separated from it by one of the landscaped verges.

4. That row of houses provides the immediate context for no. 6 which has a pronounced L-shaped ground floor plan. Its 2-storey section, which is covered by a fully hipped roof, is set back on the site behind a long single-storey, flat-roofed, forward-projecting wing that contains a garage in the front end and is aligned perpendicular to the main front elevation, the shared private drive and Cleveland Avenue. The proposal is to add a first floor above this forward-projecting wing by extending across with a predominantly hipped roof, the ridge lines of which would be set lower than the ridge over the main roof.
5. The principle of extending the property and adapting it to meet the changing needs of the current occupants is not at issue. Good design is, of course, a cornerstone of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council said that the massing and scale of the proposed development would result in an unacceptable incongruous and alien feature which would be out of character with the dwelling and the locality.
6. However, I consider that the starting point is how the elongated flat-roofed profile of the existing ground floor front-projecting wing is wholly at odds with the main hipped roof of the property. The depth of the projection is such that this unsatisfactory visual appearance is apparent to observers viewing the property on the approaches to the site along Cleveland Avenue, especially from the west.
7. The width and depth of the proposed first floor extension is determined by the footprint below. It is understandable that the appellant would wish to build above the existing flat roof in its entirety, rather than leave small and visually awkward sections of flat roof protruding just to arbitrarily moderate its massing and scale. Of great importance, in my view, is how the proposed addition would give rise to the single-storey, flat-roofed wing being better visually integrated with the host building.
8. The width of the extension across the front would be roughly half the 2-storey width of the host property. As the forward-projecting wing is slightly offset to one side, the original 2-storey front elevation would remain dominant in terms of its visible width and height. The resulting 2-storey advanced wing would be a notable feature but the immediate context displays a varied character and appearance and no regular 2-storey building line. The 2-storey components of the neighbouring houses stand well in front of the existing 2-storey front elevation of no. 6. The proposed development would simply reverse these relationships, by a similar degree. Moreover, the street width to the front of the dwelling, made up of the shared private drive, landscaped verge and main carriageway, is broad. As such, the massing and scale of the proposed development, helped by the inclusion of a hipped gable end, would be readily accommodated here and would not appear unduly prominent in the street scene, incongruous or out of character with the area.
9. The proposed extension, including the section that joins onto the original 2-storey roof, would be well executed in terms of its overall roof profile, style, form, spread and position set down from the main ridge. It would also respect the basic shape, proportions and size of the existing property.
10. The resulting 2-storey front wing would also complement the advanced bay at no. 8 and the roof shape and alignment of 1 Blackberry Close. The whole building would achieve a closer visual harmony with the nearby buildings on this street it is viewed against. The result overall would be a well-mannered and more aesthetically pleasing dwelling than the existing property.

11. The appellant points to 4 other properties at paragraph 5.3 of her appeal statement. I noted in particular the appeal decision in Appendix 1, allowing a front extension at 11 Malvern Close and I believe that reference should have been made to 6 Brecon Close, not 9 Brecon Close. Whilst these examples illustrate a variety of approaches to sizeable extensions at the front of nearby houses in this locality, it is an established planning principle that each case is considered on its own merits.
12. In the case before me, noting also the proposed use of matching facing materials and fenestration details, I consider that the proposed development as a whole would represent a visually attractive solution, exhibit a high standard of design, be sufficiently complementary, sympathetic and subordinate to the parent building and be respectful of the street scene along Cleveland Avenue.
13. I therefore conclude on the main issue that the proposed first floor extension over the garage would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling or its surroundings.
14. As the proposed scheme would be an example of good design and would respect the character and appearance of the dwelling and the locality, there would be no conflict with the place shaping principles in Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 which, amongst other things, expect development to create a distinctive local character by responding to the site's immediate and wider context and local character to create new streets, spaces and buildings which draw on the best of that local character without stifling innovation.
15. The appeal proposal would enhance the quality of life for the occupiers of no. 6 by providing additional accommodation. The Council, correctly in my view, did not identify an excessive loss of amenity for neighbouring properties for any reason.
16. Within their questionnaire, the Council suggested 3 conditions in the event of the appeal succeeding. In addition to a condition setting a time limit for the commencement of development, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the relevant approved drawings is necessary as this provides certainty. I have also imposed the Council's other suggested condition on materials to ensure that the proposed development would safeguard the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.
17. In the officer's report, it was said that the proposed first floor side window facing 8 Cleveland Avenue "...could be conditioned to be obscured glazed...". I see no necessity for such a condition, which was not referred to in the questionnaire, as this window would face towards the blank opposing gable and driveway of no. 8.
18. For the reasons given and having regard to all other matters raised, including the lack of objections from local residents, I conclude that this appeal should succeed.

Andrew Dale

INSPECTOR