

---

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2025

by **P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 June 2025

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/J1535/D/25/3358338**

**Olivedale, Bournebridge Lane, Stapleford Abbots, Romford, RM4 1LT**

- 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 and Mrs Ridgewell against the decision of Epping Forest District Council.
  - The application Ref is EPF/1750/24.
  - The development proposed is described as 'demolition of existing roof/first floor and construction of new pitched roof first New decking to the rear including privacy screens.'
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matter

2. Subsequent to the refusal of permission for the proposed development the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in December 2024. Further minor amendments were published on 7 February 2025, containing corrections and a clarification. The wording of the relevant paragraphs of the new Framework are similar to that of the 2023 version. Therefore, I am satisfied that they do not affect the substantive matters of the appeal and that considering the development against the revised Framework without seeking further comments from the parties on it would not be prejudicial to their respective cases.

### Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
  - the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area; and the living conditions of occupiers of Brookside, with particular regard to privacy; and
  - whether the proposed development would lead to an unacceptable loss of adaptable housing, with regard to Development Plan policy.

### Reasons

#### *Character and appearance*

4. The appeal property is a detached hipped roofed bungalow with an attached double garage to the side and a rear extension that extends across the full width of the house and part of the garage. It is set back from the road behind a paved drive

and mature hedges along the front boundary which partially screen views of it. Nonetheless, from the road it appears as a modest bungalow of a similar scale to neighbouring properties, although I note that houses nearby have been extended, and elsewhere along Bournebridge Lane houses are a mix of size and designs.

5. Policy DM9 of the Epping Forest District Council Local Plan 2011-2033 (2023) (LP) requires that proposed extensions should, amongst other things, respect and or complement the form, setting, and detailing of the original building.
6. The proposed development would replace the existing flat roofed double garage with a 2 storey, pitched roof, side extension joined to a replacement roof which would be partly crowned with pitched sides and a flat top. Pitched roof gabled projections would extend slightly forward and to the rear of the main house.
7. None of the original form of the house would be discernible. Furthermore, the front projecting gable would dominate the front of the property and its replacement roof, because its eaves would be above those of the main house and its ridge would extend out from the top of the adjoining roof. Although significant gaps between properties are not a feature of the street scene, the side extension would close the gap at first floor level between the appeal property and its neighbour, Brookside, and significantly widen the frontage compared to neighbouring houses and thus appear out of character with them. Overall, I conclude on this main issue that the proposed development would neither respect or complement the form or setting of the original building and would thus conflict with Policy DM9 of the LP.

#### *Living conditions*

8. The rear floor level of the appeal property sits above the garden, which slopes down away from the house, and above the floor level of the neighbouring house, Brookside. An upper level of decking extends out from the living room with steps down to a lower tier, which extends out behind the kitchen and has steps down to the garden.
9. The proposed development would include replacing the decking which would extend across the full width of the property, bringing it closer to the boundary with Brookside, and at the same height and depth as the upper tier on the existing decking. High hedges close to the existing boundary fence currently screen views from the appeal property into Brookside's garden. Even if they were to be removed, the addition of 1.8 metre privacy screens along the side of the proposed decking closest to the boundary would, in my view, ensure that similar levels of privacy between the properties would remain. The proposal would therefore accord with Policy DM9 of the LP and the Framework which require development to protect neighbours' privacy.

#### *Adaptable housing*

10. Policy H1 of the LP seeks to prevent the loss of bungalows with the supporting text noting their ease of adaptation for people with accessibility requirements such as older people. According to the appellant, the existing bungalow does not currently meet Part M4 (2) Building Regulation Requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings, particularly relating to access to the main entrance, the staircase, internal door openings and internal steps into the garage and downstairs WC and shower, whereas the proposed development would meet those requirements.

11. However, I have no evidence that the ground floor and stairs could not be readily adapted to meet the above requirements. Moreover, dividing the living accommodation over 2 floors, by moving all the bedrooms and the main bathroom to the first floor, necessitating the use of stairs for access to the kitchen, living room and main entrance would clearly reduce accessibility which currently only requires the use of stairs to access 1 bedroom and an office.
12. I note that the LP glossary definition of a bungalow is a house with only one storey but allows for loft conversions enabling accommodation in the roof space, and that the council refer to the proposed development retaining a chalet bungalow appearance. However, in my view, replacing the roof and altering its profile to include a substantial crown element to accommodate 4 ensuite bedrooms, and adding gabled projections to the full height of the roof, exceed what might be considered a loft conversion and has effectively added another floor such that the building would no longer be a bungalow based on the council's definition. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy H1 of the LP.

### **Other Matter**

13. I have had regard to the examples of other developments approved by the council referred to by the appellant. The development at Midway was a replacement dwelling, rather than extensions to an existing house, and the neighbouring property to the north has a much wider frontage whereas the appeal proposal is between bungalows of a similar scale. The development at The Oak included a more modest side extension and front dormers which do not dominate the roof in the way that the proposed front gable would at the appeal property. It also reflected elements of the original house, such as the front bay window and window and door positions. Neither of the developments are therefore directly comparable with the appeal proposal. In any case, I have come to my own view regarding the proposed development rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.

### **Conclusion**

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*P D Sedgwick*

INSPECTOR