



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2025

by **K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/25/3368892

11 Vine Close, Stapleford, Cambridgeshire, CB22 5BZ

- 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 Simon Byrne against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00619/HFUL.
 - The development proposed is a part single storey and part two storey side and front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Simon Byrne against South Cambridgeshire District Council and this is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Vine Close.

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling is a 1970s detached house on a generous corner plot. It is set within a well-established street of similarly aged, detached dwellings. Although a number of different designs are seen, they form a cohesive development characterised by mainly pale buff and red brickwork with some cladding in various colours under pitched, tiled roofs. Owing to its corner location and position on the plot, the appeal dwelling is clearly visible in the street scene. Vegetation on the boundary between No 11 and its neighbour to the south provides some screening at ground level but this is limited. Moreover, it is unclear whether the appellant has control over this vegetation, which in any case is not protected and so could be removed, increasing the visibility of the dwelling in the street.
5. The proposed single storey extension would have a flat roof and would wrap round the front and side of the dwelling. The Council does not object to the proposed side extension, located beyond the original side wall of the house and I agree that, owing to its screening from the street and significant use of glazing, it would be an acceptable addition. I shall therefore restrict my further consideration to the front section of the proposed extension, including the first floor element.

6. The proposed front extension would project in front of the shallower, western end of the house and would be a similar depth to it. At first floor it would project to be in line with the deeper section of the original house. In addition, a further flat roofed projection would extend out over the single storey extension to accommodate a new staircase.
7. At ground floor the significant footprint of the extension, together with the blocky flat-roofed design, relatively high eaves, limited openings and prominent location on the frontage would make it a bulky, and unsympathetic addition. The appellant draws my attention to other single storey front extensions nearby. However, these have been designed to integrate with the host dwellings and appear subservient to them. I do not therefore find them comparable with the appeal proposal.
8. At first floor the depth of the western end of the house would be increased. However, this would be a modest increase and, since it would align with the existing main front façade, would appear proportionate and would integrate with the dwelling. I therefore find it acceptable.
9. Nevertheless, the proposed “box window” which would project noticeably further over the single storey front extension, under an almost flat roof, and overlap with the main front façade would appear as an awkward and incongruous element. I accept that its purpose is to accommodate a new staircase but its disjointed appearance and juxtaposition with the original main façade would make it a jarring feature in a prominent position on the main façade.
10. The appellant draws my attention to other first floor extensions and windows which, he suggests, would be comparable. However, the first floor extensions that I saw were well integrated with the host dwellings, particularly at roof level. Moreover, I do not consider that the feature first floor windows in No 10 and other similar dwellings, which appear to be original, bear any noticeable similarity to the proposed boxy extension.
11. In terms of materials palette, I agree with the appellant that there is noticeable variety in the street, including examples of contemporary materials and cladding. Moreover, the host dwelling would be capable of accepting a more contemporary treatment and I am satisfied that, subject to detailed approval, the use of a contrasting range of materials would not be inconsistent with the street scene or incompatible with the host dwelling. Nevertheless, this would not overcome the harm that would be caused to the host dwelling and the street scene of Vine Close by the proposed front extension which I find to be incompatible in terms of scale and design with the surrounding area.
12. It is concluded on the main issue that although the single storey side extension would be acceptable, owing to its scale, design and prominent location in the street scene, the front extension would have a materially detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Vine Close. In consequence, it would conflict with Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (LP), adopted 2018. Amongst other things, this expects new development to be of a high quality such that it preserves the character of the local area through a coherent, place responsive design that responds to local context and respects local distinctiveness. Specifically, it should be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design and proportions.

13. The appellant raises a number of issues in support of the proposed development. Firstly, it is suggested that advice was taken from the Council and acted on in order to overcome concerns in respect of an earlier design and to reduce the prominence of the proposed extensions. However, whilst changes may have been made, they have not overcome the identified harms.
14. Secondly, it is pointed out that the footprint of the extended dwelling would occupy only about 23% of the plot. However, since the extensions would be to the front and the bulk of the plot is to the side and rear of the dwelling and not apparent from the street, this would do little to overcome the harm caused by the scale of the proposed extensions in a prominent frontage location.
15. Thirdly, the appellant sets out a summary of extensions that, he suggests, could be undertaken under permitted development rights and argues that they are not dissimilar in scale and potentially larger than the proposed extensions. However, since they would be to the side and rear of the dwelling and predominantly hidden from the street, I do not consider them to be comparable with the proposed front additions.
16. It is further suggested that other similar or more substantial extensions have been permitted nearby or the proposed extension reflects original design in the area. However, the examples given are either of more modest and better integrated front extensions or larger rear extensions which have a different relationship with the host dwelling and little or no effect on the street scene. They do not, therefore, set a precedent for the proposed front extension.
17. Finally, the appellant argues that the design and siting of the extensions has been chosen to enhance the sustainability of the dwelling and improve its resilience to climate change. Whilst this is welcome it would not overcome or outweigh the identified harm to character and appearance. I therefore afford it limited weight.
18. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the presence of a protected tree in the rear garden, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR