



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2025

by A Hickey MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3365619

Toll Gate Cottage, Northampton Road, Grafton Regis NN12 7SP

- 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 R Sygrove against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/0800/FULL.
 - The development proposed is change of use from access road to form part of the residential curtilage (C3 use class), double storey extension of dwelling [external access only] and erection of security fencing.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the header is taken from the Council's decision notice. It is slightly different to that on the application form, but it more concisely describes the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the proposal would involve the creation of a separate residential unit.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is located adjacent to the busy A508 that runs to the west of the appeal site. The appeal site is separated from the A508 by an access road that terminates adjacent to the host dwelling and a thin verdant strip of land, which means the appeal property is highly visible on this section of the road. With the exception of the nearby kennels business, there is a limited amount of built form in the immediate area, with the site bounded by fields and hedges.
5. The appeal property is a modestly sized stone and slate-built dwelling house with gable and catslide roof elements, including a front roof dormer. As a result of the different roof elements and positioning of windows the host dwelling does not have

a cohesive appearance, but this does not detract from its pleasing rural appearance.

6. Existing boundary treatments include timber fencing and a small stone section of wall. The access road adjacent the house appears to be used for parking by the occupiers of the host dwelling. As such, whilst there is a mix of features across the wider appeal site, including the kennels, access road and host dwelling, they still result in the immediate area having a countryside character which assimilates into the wider rural setting.
7. The proposed extension would be positioned on the existing access road and include extending the garden area of the property. This would have the effect of bringing the established built form beyond the existing property boundary. The introduction of built form in this part of the access road would not appear harmfully intrusive given this area is partially enclosed by shrubs and hedging to the rear whilst set slightly lower than the adjacent road.
8. However, even though matching materials are proposed, the design of the extension with a matching ridge height would not be sufficiently subservient to the host building, contrary to the aims of the South Northamptonshire Design Guide. The proposed extension with the introduction of an external staircase would be apparent in the street scene due to its design, scale, bulk, and massing. The extension and staircase together would unbalance the host property and would be a dominant and incongruous feature that would look harmfully out of place.
9. The appeal scheme would also see the introduction of a 1.8m high mesh security fence along the western boundary. Whilst its green colour would reduce its prominence, a fence of this type and length would result in an uncharacteristic feature that detracts from the rural area to the detriment of this countryside setting. This harm would not be overcome by the existing hedging and shrubs, which are patchy or missing in places.
10. For the reasons above, the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, including the Special Landscape Area. It would be contrary to Policies SS2 and SDP1 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan (SNLP) and Policy S10 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (WNJLP). These seek, among other things, a design-led approach for new development to demonstrate compatibility and integration with the surrounding context, which protects, conserves, and enhances the natural and built environment.

Separate residential unit

11. The proposal would see the creation of a fourth bedroom with an ensuite above a new garage (annexe). Access to the room would be from an external stair to be erected on the flank wall. The Council are concerned that, as the proposal would only have an external access on the extension, which would be outside the boundary wall this would lead to the creation of an independent residential unit.
12. The appeal scheme was submitted to the Council and validated as a full application for planning permission. Nonetheless, the application form clearly states the proposal does not include the gain, loss or change of use of residential units.

13. Moreover, as indicated on the submitted plans, the proposed development would not contain all facilities required for independent occupation, since a kitchen would not be provided. This layout would not encourage the use of the accommodation independently of the host dwelling and would therefore ensure that the annexe would have a connection to the primary activities of its host. There would be, therefore, a functional link between the proposed annexe and the main dwelling.
14. There would be areas of outdoor space to the front, side and rear of the annexe. However, these areas are not shown as separate areas between the annexe and host dwelling. As such, the future occupants of the annexe would likely share the garden space with the host dwelling. As such, a physical link between the annexe and host dwelling would also be retained.
15. As noted above, a separate independent dwelling is not sought as part of the appeal proposal, and this is reflected in the description of development applied for. In any event, the use of the annexe as an independent dwelling would require planning permission in its own right, and the merits of such a proposal would be considered at that time.
16. In view of the above, the proposal would not involve the creation of a separate residential unit. The scheme would therefore accord with Policy SS2 of the SNLP, which, amongst other matters, seeks new development to demonstrate compatibility and integration with its surroundings.

Other Matters

17. The appeal scheme has sought to address the reasons for the refusal of a previous planning application on the site. I have also taken into consideration the correspondence between the main parties. However, I have determined the development on its own merits and found harm for the reasons set out above.

Conclusion

18. Whilst I have found that the proposal would not result in the creation of a separate residential unit this does not outweigh the harm arising from the proposal as set out above and the conflict with the development plan as a whole. Accordingly, for the reasons given above I dismiss the appeal.

A Hickey

INSPECTOR