



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2025

by **D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/W/25/3365337

12 Springfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 5LX

- 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 A Aslam against the decision of the of St Albans City and District Council.
 - The application Ref is 5/24/0843.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single storey rear and two storey side extensions with internal alterations to existing building to create five flats and construction of detached annexe, alterations to openings, front canopy roof, bin stores and cycle storage, associated parking and landscaping works.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The site visit was undertaken primarily on an unaccompanied basis albeit an occupier of the property facilitated access to the site. The description of development has been adopted from the appeal form because it clearly describes the proposal.

Main Issues

3. It is considered that the main issues are the effects of the proposed development on (a) the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area, and (b) the living standards of the future occupiers.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The proposed development includes the erection of a 2-storey side/rear extension to an already extended semi-detached dwelling. The existing property would be reconfigured to accommodate four 1-bedroom flats rather than the identified 6 existing bedsits. There would also be the erection of a single storey building with accommodation within the roofspace within the rear garden. The proposed building would provide more than typical accommodation associated with a domestic outbuilding because it would be occupied as a 2-bedroom dwelling. Accordingly, this element of the appeal has been assessed as a proposed dwelling.

5. Planning permission has previously been granted on appeal for the property's use as 4-flats but this was not implemented and the consent has expired. Further, other than some limited details about the type of accommodation proposed, no details about this previous scheme have been provided, including the nature and scale of the physical alterations to the property which were being proposed. For these reasons, very limited weight is given to the previous scheme in the assessment of this appeal.
6. The area surrounding the property is characterised by semi-detached dwellings some of which have been altered by the erection of extensions, including side and rear additions. From what could be observed, some dwellings possess small scale domestic outbuildings in their rear gardens but these are not readily visible from the road. Overall, although some alterations have occurred, the general form of the semi-detached dwellings fronting either side of the road has been retained and, together with their consistency of being sited away from the footways, they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the streetscene.
7. Although extended, the property shares these characteristics. However, because of its siting fronting the turning head there is a larger gap between the property and 13 Springfield Road when compared to the gaps between other pairs of semi-detached dwellings. This gap does afford a significant view into the rear garden of the property from the road. Some of the existing small-scale outbuildings can be seen. Also included in this view is the upper part of 51A Wingate Way which is a dwelling sited adjacent to the shared boundary with the property's rear garden.
8. The proposed 2-storey side/rear extension would extend further the existing 2-storey side addition to the property. Cumulatively, the scale of the existing and proposed extensions would not be subservient to the size of the original host property. Further, the proposed 2-storey extension would be a contrived design which would fail to reflect and respect the form and character of the host property and the other semi-detached dwellings. By reason of its scale and design, this element of the appeal scheme would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property. Further, the scale of the resulting property, in particular the overall width that would be seen from the road, would be detrimental to the contribution made by the host property to the character and appearance of the streetscene.
9. Around the turning head, the proposed dwelling would be seen from the road. Its design would be that of a dwelling rather than a typical domestic outbuilding of the type found within the rear gardens of neighbouring properties. This difference would be accentuated because of the proposed dwelling's overall height and scale.
10. Further, no examples of other dwellings being erected to the rear of the existing properties were observed during the site visit. 51A Wingate Way has a frontage to the road rather than being accessed via the curtilage of another property. For all these reasons, the proposed dwelling would represent a conspicuous and incongruous form of development which would fail to respect and reflect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the grain of the existing residential development fronting Springfield Road.
11. The appellant claims that the appeal scheme would represent an efficient use of urban land in an accessible location and would represent the type of development sought by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). It is also

claimed that the proposed development would also provide the types of homes which are in demand, albeit no specific evidence of this particular housing need has been provided.

12. However, the council's concerns about the curtilage of the property being overdeveloped are well founded because the layout indicates an extensive area which would be used for vehicle manoeuvring/parking and a small amenity area associated with the extended property. In addition to the erection of the proposed dwelling, the extensive manoeuvring/ parking area would result in a material change to the character and appearance of the rear garden which would not reflect the landscaped amenity spaces of neighbouring properties.
13. On this issue, it is concluded that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character of the host property and the surrounding area, and, as such, it would conflict with Policies 69, 70 and 72 of the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review (LP). Amongst other matters, these policies require extensions to be compatible with the host building and that the design of new housing development should have regard to its setting and the character of its surroundings. Further, proposals in general should have regard to the scale and character of their surroundings in terms of size and scale. The design requirements of these policies are consistent with good quality design sought for developments in Chapter 12 of the Framework.

Living Standards

14. The council has identified that there is the potential for vehicles to be parked adjacent to the front elevation of the proposed dwelling which includes a bedroom window. To address this concern the appellant has submitted an amended drawing with this appeal that includes a bay window which would be partially obscurely glazed. Although this amendment could address concerns about outlook, there would still be noise and disturbance associated with the manoeuvring of vehicles, the opening/closing of car doors and the starting of petrol/diesel engines. Such sources of noise and disturbance close to this window would have the potential to adversely affect the occupiers of the proposed bedroom, particularly at nighttime.
15. The opening serving the proposed dwelling's lounge would face towards a triangular shaped private amenity area. This area would be limited in size and would be enclosed, at least on one side, by the existing means of enclosure associated with the properties fronting Cell Barnes Lane and the side elevation of 51A Wingate Lane. There are also some substantial trees adjacent to the proposed amenity area.
16. The means of enclosure, the siting of No. 51A and the proximity of the trees would create a sense of enclosure and reduce the outlook and levels of sunlight and daylight reaching both the amenity area and the proposed lounge. When taken together with its size, shape and limited depth, the rear garden would not be a particularly useable amenity area for the future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. This is particularly the case whereby the proposed 2-bedroom dwelling might be occupied by children who would need a safe and usable space for outdoor play.
17. As identified by the appellant, the Framework does refer to refusing schemes which fail to make efficient use of land, subject to taking into account other national policies. In this context, when considering housing schemes, the Framework also refers to a flexible approach being adopted in applying policies or guidance relating

to daylight and sunlight where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site. This is subject to a caveat that the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards.

18. Although a flexible approach to sunlight and daylight could be taken in this case, acceptable living standards for future residents would not be achieved for the reasons given. Accordingly, it is concluded that the design of the proposed development would fail to provide satisfactory living standards for the future occupiers and, as such, it would conflict with LP Policies 69 and 70. In addition to high quality design being sought, these policies also refer to the size of a private garden reflecting the number of persons for which the dwelling has been designed, their likely range of activities and also local residential character. Securing a high standard of amenity for existing and future users is also referred to as a national policy requirement in the Framework.

Other Matters

19. The council has acknowledged that it cannot identify a 5-year supply of housing land and, as such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out at paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is a material consideration in the determination of this appeal. Other benefits associated with the proposed development include the provision of 6 homes and the creation of construction jobs.
20. However, no specific evidence of need for the proposed flats has been provided to demonstrate how the 6 small dwellings would meet a specific housing need. Further, the 6 proposed dwellings would make a limited contribution to meeting the housing land shortfall, particularly where the property already provides some residential accommodation. There would be only a small number of construction jobs created which would exist over a relatively short time period. Limited weight is given to all these matters in the determination of this appeal. The same weight is given to the appellant's claim associated with the efficient use of land because of the concerns about the over development of the site which have been identified.
21. Weighed against these other material considerations is the conflict with the relevant development plan policies and the Framework identifying that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. For the reasons given, the appeal scheme would not accord with this national design requirement and would also not achieve a high standard of amenity for future users. Significant weight is given to these matters.
22. Accordingly, it is judged that the adverse impacts of the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework when taken as a whole. It is therefore concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR