



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2025

by **J Somers BSocSci (Planning) MA (HEC) MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/25/3371723

36 Briar Hill Walk, Northampton NN4 8LN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Antonella Mitchell against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application reference is 2025/0791/FULL.
 - The development proposed is described on the Application Form as a 'New dormer on front slope of roof and two new velux windows.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dormer window upon the existing building and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

3. Briar Hill Walk appears to have been constructed as part of a residential housing estate of the early-mid twentieth century. Typical of developments of this time, dwellings have a more functional appearance and there is a very planned appearance with dwellings having similar front and side setbacks with front gardens and gaps between dwellings which allow views to the tops of trees in rear gardens. Briar Hill Walk contains predominantly two storey semi-detached dwellings with dominant characteristics such as large coaxial chimney stacks, brick and render, with large bow and canted bay windows, with hipped roof forms. Whilst there have been some uncharacteristic extensions such as half hip and hip to gable roof extensions and the paving over of front gardens, the dwellings still retain a functional and uncluttered character and appearance with the glimpses of vegetation providing some of the positive characteristics and distinctiveness of the locality.
4. The appeal site is located at the end of the cul-de-sac and is in a prominent location directly in line with the cul-de-sac. The appeal dwelling is single storey and detached so vegetation to the rear is much more visible within the street scene. The appeal dwelling appears to have been constructed later than the estate and has characteristics more of the mid-late twentieth century, however still retains a functional appearance with simple hipped roof with forward gabled projection with tall chimney stacks and contributes to the positive qualities of local character and distinctiveness in the locality. Whilst the appeal dwelling would appear to be constructed later than the semi-detached dwellings, I don't find the dwelling to be

'architecturally distinct' from those surrounding as commented in the Appellant's Statement of Case (SoC). Whilst it is single storey compared to those surrounding, it still exhibits the simple and functional design cues of its surroundings and seeks to blend in with the earlier surrounding development rather than stand out.

5. In undertaking extensions to dwellings, the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 (LP) Policy Q1 is a design led policy that seeks that a number of principles are adhered to such as responding to local character and townscape, good placemaking, enhancing legibility, character and local distinctiveness, amongst others. This policy is also supported by the Northampton Residential Extensions and Alterations Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which gives further design principles and guidance to the design policies. There are guidance principles around ensuring that extensions are subservient and not visually dominant, with care needed with regards to dormer windows and roof lights where they are located to the front of a dwelling. In such instances there is emphasis on vertical alignment and how the windows relate to and complement the existing dwelling and roof form amongst others. I note that West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Policy SA is mentioned in the reason for refusal which is a strategic policy around the presumption in favour of sustainable development which runs through all planning decisions.
6. The proposed dormer window to the front of the appeal dwelling would be an alien feature in this location which introduces clutter to the roof of the dwelling which has a very functional design that has an absence of roof alterations which is part of the positive character and appearance of the area. None of the properties in the immediate locality contain such elements. In this particular circumstance the proposal would over-complicate and dominate the simple and functional form of the roof and be at odds with the positive qualities of local distinctiveness found within this street scene.
7. I can appreciate that the Appellant has sought to reduce the size and change the design to accommodate the Council's requests, however the dormer window is quite large, its positioning does not align vertically to other windows, and is placed in a haphazard way which would result in a cluttered and discordant feature. I note discussion on how comparable the window is to an example shown in the SPD, however whilst the overall design might be similar, the context is not. The SPD example is a much larger dwelling where the dormer is more proportionate and vertically aligned with the dwelling, which is not the case here. The proposed dormer window would have a material impact upon the inherent positive elements of character and distinctiveness of the existing dwelling and found within this particular street scene.
8. Consequently, the scheme would not reinforce the qualities of local character and distinctiveness and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the building and the greater locality. This would be contrary to LP Policy Q1 and JCS Policy SA as described previously.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

J Somers

INSPECTOR