



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2025

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/25/3373933

53 Brackley Road, Towcester, West Northamptonshire, NN12 6DH

- 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 Keats against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2025/0601/FULL.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side extension and garage conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, the adjoining dwellings and the surrounding area, including the Towcester Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling faces but is set well back from Brackley Road, a built up thoroughfare and historically a main route through Towcester. It is one of a terrace of three dwellings. It lies a short distance outside the Towcester Conservation Area (CA). There is no material intervisibility between the CA and the appeal site but the appeal site is clearly visible from Brackley Road, when looking east towards and into the CA. The site's street frontage is dominated by a distinctive stone wall, topped with red tiles, which is a strong feature that makes an important contribution to the street scene and contributes positively to the setting of the CA. The appeal site can be seen from Brackley Road both through a window-like opening in, and above this wall.
4. the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that conservation areas are designated heritage assets. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed by alteration of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Statutory protection is provided by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that special regard/attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset, including its setting. Policy HE1 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan, 2011-2029 (LP), adopted 2020, and Policy BN5 of the West

Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (CS), adopted 2014 accord with the NPPF in respect of heritage assets.

5. The appeal dwelling is modern but adjoins an older building which was the former registry office. This was extended and converted into three dwellings following the grant of planning permission in 2018. The appeal dwelling lies at the eastern end of the terrace and forms the extension to the older building. It has been carefully designed to reflect the style and materials of the taller and more imposing adjoining central wing. Although it has a single storey front projection, which includes a single garage, this is modest in scale and set towards the eastern boundary so that, in the street scene, it does not obscure the majority of the front elevation.
6. The proposed extension would project from the side of the garage towards the street, so although it is described as a side extension it is in fact to the front of the host dwelling. Although single storey, it would be a substantial addition, projecting beyond the front elevation of the garage and in front of most of the façade of the dwelling. It would occupy most of the open garden land between the garage and the street and would be clearly seen from the street though the window-like opening and above the boundary wall.
7. The proposed extension, owing to its scale and forward projection would appear as a prominent and incongruous addition to the host dwelling and the adjoining terrace, obscuring and detracting from the attractive façade when viewed from Brackley Road. It would be at odds with the set back position of the terrace and many of the dwellings in this part of the street. Further, its proximity to the boundary wall, which would be obvious from the street, would degrade the strong line and setting of the wall which is currently seen with space around it, emphasising its form and significance. Moreover, when viewed from the west, along Brackley Road, the extension would intrude into views of the part stone side elevation of 51 Brackley Road.
8. When viewed from the courtyard in front of the terrace, and notwithstanding that the proposed extension would be seen behind a wall and gate, it would appear as a sizeable and inharmonious addition to the host dwelling in terms of siting, scale and design, all of which would be at variance with the original dwelling and the terrace as a whole. The wide gabled elevation would fail to reflect the proportions of the host dwelling and the large openings, which appear to be glazed in both the garage and extension, would be inconsistent with the fenestration in the façade of the original building. Moreover, the significant projection in front of the host dwelling would be wholly disproportionate and its conspicuous location would only serve to emphasise this.
9. Overall, I conclude on the main issue that the proposed extension would be an unsympathetic and discordant addition to the host dwelling that would, through its scale, design and siting, materially detract from the character and appearance of the appeal site, the adjoining terrace and the surrounding area. In consequence, it would conflict with Policies SS2 and SPD1 of the LP and Policy SA of the CS.
10. Taken together and amongst other things, these policies expect new development to be sustainable and in particular to show compatibility and integration with its surroundings, and distinctive local character in terms of amongst other things, scale, massing, siting form, design and details. Residential extensions are expected to incorporate good quality design which maintains or enhances the

character and appearance of the host building and the street scene. These requirements reflect the emphasis placed on good design in the NPPF which says that the creation of high quality buildings, which should be visually attractive, is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

11. In terms of the effect on the setting of the CA, I consider that the proposed extension would be visually intrusive and act as a moderate detractor when looking towards the CA from Brackley Road, particularly in respect of the effect on the boundary wall. Notwithstanding the distance between the appeal site and the CA, the eye is drawn towards it by the funnelling effect of the historic structures, including the wall and the buildings beyond, which are located close to the street, especially on the southern side. This creates a gateway or carriageway effect towards the historic town centre. I therefore find that the proposed development would fail to preserve the setting of the CA and would lead to a small but material harm to its significance. The effect on the significance of the heritage asset would be at the lower end of less than substantial within the meaning of Paragraph 214 of the NPPF.
12. The appellant disputes whether the proposed development would have an effect on the setting of the CA and points out that the original conversion and extension of the former registry office building was deemed not to do so. However, that development was set well back from Brackley Road, with the front garden of the appeal dwelling left as open land between the built development and the boundary wall. It is not therefore readily comparable with the appeal proposal. Moreover, at that time, the wall was identified as of “high value” in the context of the site overall, being deemed to be a non-designated heritage asset, and making a “significant and positive contribution to the street scene”. The extension now proposed would erode the value of the wall by placing significant built development close to it. This would materially detract from its open setting and hence its contribution to the street scene which, as reasoned above, forms an important historic route into the CA and may be considered as part of its setting.
13. Where less than substantial harm to a heritage asset is identified, the public benefits of the development must be weighed against that harm. The appellant suggests that public benefits would include the economic benefit of construction, including employment, and the provision of additional living space. However, the economic benefit would be very small and the additional living space would be a private benefit, limited to the appellant and his family. I therefore find that the public benefits of the development would be minor and would not outweigh the great weight that should, in accordance with the NPPF, be given to the conservation of the CA, including its setting.
14. In consequence, the proposed extension would conflict with LP Policy HE1 and CS Policy BN5. Taken together and amongst other things these expect the assessment of the significance of heritage assets and their settings so that development is designed to sustain and enhance that significance, including that of features which contribute to their character. However, LP Policy HE2 which is referred to in the Council’s refusal, relates to scheduled ancient monuments and archaeology and so is not relevant in this case.

15. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the proximity of a listed building which I agree would not be affected, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR