



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2026

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/D/25/3372522

27 Porters Hill, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 5HP

- 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 and Mrs Piasecki against the decision of St Albans City and District Council.
 - The application Ref is 5/2025/0652.
 - The development proposed is 'single storey side, rear and front extension with roof lights, garage conversion, external material change from brickwork to render'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a 'single storey side, rear and front extension with roof lights, garage conversion, external material change from brickwork to render' at 27 Porters Hill, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 5HP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 5/2025/0652, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PL_01, PL_02 and PL_03.
 - 3) No development above ground level shall commence until details and specifications of the render to the external surfaces of the building as shown on plan no PL_02 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and specifications.

Main Issue

2. The Council has raised no objection to the garage conversion and change to external materials which are part of the appeal proposal, nor to the front and side elements of the single-storey extension. Based on my observations and the evidence before me, I see no reason to take a different view and am satisfied that these aspects of the development would be acceptable.
3. The main issue is therefore the effect of the single-storey rear extension on the living conditions of the occupiers of 29 Porters Hill in respect of whether or not it would be overbearing.

Reasons

4. The appeal site includes a two-storey semi-detached dwelling which has a conservatory to part of the rear elevation closest to the adjoining neighbour at

25 Porters Hill. Between the side of the dwelling and the boundary with 29 Porters Hill are single-storey flat-roofed projections which include a garage.

5. The rear extension now proposed would span the width of the appeal site to adjoin the boundaries with both neighbours at the rear of the dwelling. It would have a depth of around 3m along the boundary with No 25 which would accord with Policy 72 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 ('the LPR') insofar as it stipulates that single storey rear extensions 'shall not normally extend more than 3 metres rearward along a party boundary'.
6. Given however that the existing projections to the side of the dwelling closest to No 29 are set back relative to the main rear elevation, the extension would exceed 3m in depth along this boundary. No 29 itself is also set forward of the appeal dwelling so that the extension would project significantly more than 3m beyond the rear elevation of this neighbour.
7. Nevertheless, the wording of Policy 72 of the LPR is that extensions should 'not normally' extend more than 3m rearward along a party boundary. To my reading, this would appear to anticipate that there could be situations where a greater depth would be acceptable.
8. In this case, the extension would have a flat roof of comparatively modest height. I further saw that No 29 is at an appreciably higher land level than the appeal dwelling which would notably reduce the apparent height and therefore the overall bulk of the extension when viewed from this property. In addition, the main part of the neighbouring dwelling is set in significantly from the boundary with the appeal site beyond a single-storey side projection of its own. There are no habitable windows to the rear of the side projection, and the windows to the rear of the dwelling are further set in from the corner of the building. This relationship means that the extension would not be a prominent feature in the main outward aspect from the rear windows to No 29 and while it may be apparent in oblique views, I am satisfied that the separation would be sufficient to ensure that it would not be excessively dominant. It would also be perceived alongside only a modest proportion of the neighbouring rear garden such that it would not result in an undue impression of enclosure.
9. These factors in combination would significantly moderate the visual impact of the extension and I am satisfied that despite its depth along the boundary, it would not appear visually dominant or overbearing to occupiers of No 29. The Council also indicates that it would comply with guidance intended to ensure no harmful loss of light.
10. As a consequence, I find that the single-storey rear extension would not result in an unacceptable overbearing impact and I conclude that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of 29 Porters Hill. Having regard to the specific circumstances of the appeal site and proposal, I therefore find that there are material considerations which justify a departure from the general expectation within Policy 72 of the LPR that extensions should not normally extend more than 3m rearward along a party boundary. Furthermore, the proposal would accord with Policy 72 of the LPR insofar as it sets out that the light, privacy or amenity of adjoining property shall not be unacceptably harmed. It would also comply with requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework for sympathetic development and a high standard of amenity.

Conditions

11. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of certainty.
12. Given that the proposal includes alteration of the dwelling's external materials from brickwork to render, the condition suggested by the Council to require the materials to the external surface of the development to match those used in the existing building would be inappropriate. I have however imposed a condition to require further details of the render specification before it is installed which would be necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the building and area.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR