



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2026

by **S F Barnes MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/A1530/D/25/3375550

68 Northfield Gardens, Colchester, Essex CO4 9SS

- 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 Adam Wnuk against the decision of Colchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 251466.
 - The development proposed is a dormer loft conversion to rear roof slope with roof lights to front roof slope.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the:
 - character and appearance of the area; and
 - living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at 5 and 6 Rosewood Close, with particular regard to privacy and outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Northfield Gardens is characterised by 2-storey, detached and semi-detached properties generally with dual-pitch roof forms. As is the case with the appeal property, gable ends to the main roof are often prominent at the streetscene due to generous spacing between pairs and detached properties. In this part of the streetscene, roof slopes are largely unaltered.
4. The proposal would introduce a large rear dormer window occupying much of the host building's rear roofslope, a gable-end window and 2no. modestly sized rooflights to the main front slope. The Council has not raised issue with the gable-end window and I see no reason to reach a different conclusion given the similarity to the design of an existing window at this elevation.
5. The proposed rooflights would be subordinate features to the front roofslope given their limited size and depth of protrusion. These alterations would not therefore cause material harm to the appearance of the building or wider streetscene, notwithstanding the general uniformity of front roof slopes.
6. However, the dormer window would have a bulky box form and flat roof design and be only slightly offset from the edges of the roof. The resulting scale would dominate the rear roofslope, creating a top heavy appearance that would be discordant with the appearance of the host building. Despite intervening buildings

providing a degree of screening from wider views from the public domain, the side elevation of this addition would nonetheless be visible from outside of the site on Northfield Gardens and also when approaching it along Hurrell Down. The dormer window would be an obtrusive and detracting feature in these views given the prevailing character of unaltered pitches. This proposed dormer window would therefore result in harm to the character and appearance of the building and the streetscene.

7. I have been referred to examples of rear dormer window additions in the surrounding area, at 28 Pampas Close and at 9 and 11 Spindle Wood, which I was able to see at my visit. These all differ from the proposal as they are set further up from the eaves and are slightly smaller in scale overall. In any case, these limited examples are located some distance from the streetscene context in which the proposal would be seen. They do not form an established pattern in the area and as such their presence has not led me to an alternative conclusion on this issue.
8. Overall, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict with the relevant provisions of Policy SP7 of the Colchester Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 Section 1 (2021) ('LPS1') and Policies DM13 and DM15 of the Colchester Borough Local Plan 2017-2033 Section 2 (2022) ('LPS2'). Those policies, amongst other things, seek high standards of design and to ensure residential alterations and extensions are compatible in scale, appearance and character to the original dwelling.

Living conditions

9. 5 and 6 Rosewood Close (Nos 5 and 6) are bungalows set within garden plots. They have a back-to-back relationship to the appeal property and its rear garden. Along with the appeal property, several adjoining properties along Northfield Road surround the gardens of these properties and have first floor windows that allow a degree of overlooking to neighbouring rear gardens, including at Nos 5 and 6.
10. The proposal would introduce additional views from an elevated position into those gardens. However, having regard to the existing standards of privacy, I do not consider that the proposal would result in a material change in the relationship between these sites that is sufficient to justify withholding planning permission.
11. Concluding on this main issue, I find that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers at Nos 5 and 6, with particular regard to privacy and outlook. The proposal would comply with relevant provisions of Policy DM13 of the LPS2 which, amongst other things, seeks to avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on the privacy of neighbouring residential properties.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. I acknowledge the appellant's desire to provide greater usable accommodation at loft level. However, as this would be experienced largely as a private benefit it carries only limited weight in favour of the appeal.
13. Although I have found the proposal would not harm living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, this would be an expectation of any similar development. I note the absence of objection from neighbouring occupiers and any other grounds raised by the Council. However, these factors carry neutral weight in the planning balance.

14. For the reasons given, the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations that outweigh this conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S F Barnes

INSPECTOR