



**North Northamptonshire Area Planning Committee (Corby)
21/10/2021**

Application Reference	NC/21/00216/DPA
Case Officer	Aadil Essa
Location	5 Winchilsea Drive, Gretton, Corby, NN17 3BT
Development	Single storey front and side extension; extension of existing balcony; Conversion of garage to habitable room; External alterations
Applicant	Mr D Benjamin
Agent	Martyn Reed
Ward	Weldon and Gretton
Overall Expiry Date	10/05/2021
Agreed Extension of Time	30/10/2021

Scheme of Delegation

This application is brought to committee because it falls outside of the Council's Scheme of Delegation due to the public interest received from neighbouring residents.

1. Recommendation

1.1. That planning permission be GRANTED.

2. The Proposal

- 2.1 The applicant seeks consent for a single storey front and side extension, extension of existing balcony and conversion of the existing garage to a habitable room with external alterations.
- 2.2 The proposed front extension would project beyond the main wall of the dwelling by approximately 1.5m in depth and approximately 8.5m in width.
- 2.3 The extension would be 'wedged' shape in its design with a flat roof with a maximum height of approximately 3m above ground level.
- 2.4 The balcony would extend further westwards, beyond an existing balcony by approximately 1.5m.

3. Site Description

- 3.1 The application site relates to a two-storey detached house located on the northern side of Winchilsea Drive in Gretton.
- 3.2 The house is set back from the main road with the front garden laid in a mixture of soft landscaping and hardstanding.
- 3.3 The property has an integral garage and a balcony at first floor level which is sited directly over the garage. There is an external staircase along the western flank wall which provides a means of access from the balcony leading to the rear garden.
- 3.4 There is a gradual change in garden levels due to the sloping nature of the area.
- 3.5 The neighbouring property to the west, No.4 Winchilsea Drive is a detached bungalow that is set on a lower natural ground level than the host property due to the sloping nature of Winchilsea Drive.
- 3.6 The adjacent detached dwelling to the east No.6 Winchilsea Drive is set significantly forward in its plot in relation to the application property.
- 3.7 The adjoining property to the north of the application site, No.5 Station Road, is sited broadly at right angles to the host dwelling, with its side elevation adjacent to the rear of the application site plot.
- 3.8 The site falls within the Gretton Conservation Area. The site does not fall within a high risk flood zone and the host property is not a listed building.

4. Relevant Planning History

None

5. Consultation Responses

A full copy of all comments received can be found on the Council's website via:

<https://publicaccess.corby.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

5.1 Conservation Officer-

Amended Plans - No objections based on the choice of materials, overall design, location and impact upon the character of the conservation area.

The design is simple and complements the design of the modern adjacent houses but remains subtle and subservient to the historic adjacent houses.

The proposed use of UPVC windows and doors is always at odds with the traditional character of a conservation area and its inclusion seeks to dilute the overall character of the area and should be avoided where possible, however

in this case the modern symmetrical design of the existing results in a more acceptable insertion and as such can be considered acceptable.

The proposed extension is a simple design, but as a result does not enhance or positively contribute to the conservation area. The proposed design *and choice of materials has a neutral impact on the conservation area.*

Head of Environmental Services-

Amended Plans - no objections to the proposal.

Original Plans - no objection and recommends a condition and an informative regarding the conversion of the garage to a bedroom relating to reporting unexpected contamination

5.2 Gretton Parish Council

Amended Plans – no objections

Original Plans – Objections received

5.3 Neighbours/Responses to Publicity

A total of 2 representations have been received in response to the original plans while a total of 3 objections have been received to the amended plans which can be summarised on the following grounds:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Detrimental impact on neighbouring amenities
- Character impact of proposed development
- Impact on views of the countryside

6. Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations

6.1 Statutory Duty

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations are considered to outweigh it.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on a decision maker to pay special attention to the need to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.2 Policy Context:

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

Section 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
National Design Guide (NDG) (2019)

- 6.4 North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2016)
Policy 2 – Historic Environment
Policy 8 - North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles

7. Evaluation

The key issues for consideration are:

- Principle of Development
- Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Highways matters

7.1 Principle of Development

- 7.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations are considered to outweigh it.
- 7.1.2 The Part 2 Local Plan (P2LP) for Corby was submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2019 and is currently undergoing independent examination. It should be noted that given the stage the Local Plan Part 2 has reached in its preparation; it is allocated more than moderate weight in the determination of the application.
- 7.1.3 Policy 1 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (NNJCS) 2016 outlines the presumption in favour of sustainable development that is contained within National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, and that the Local Planning Authorities should be taking a positive and proactive approach to applications as a result.
- 7.1.4 The proposed scheme is considered to be acceptable in principle as it would result in alteration of the existing dwellinghouse in a comprehensive form within the established context. However, the acceptability of the proposal will be further assessed against the impact upon the character and appearance of the area, neighbouring amenity and highway safety and access.

7.2 Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

- 7.2.1 Chapter 12 of NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It goes on to advise that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to make places better for people.
- 7.2.2 Furthermore, the NPPF suggests in paragraph 134 that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities

available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

- 7.2.3 Policy 8 of Joint Core Strategy states that development should respect and enhance local character by ensuring that it responds to its topography, wider context, the landscape setting and the local streetscape and local building material.
- 7.2.4 Finally, consistent with Policy 8 of the Core Strategy and the design-led approach advocated by the NPPF, the suitability of a development must be measured in part on its overall quality and function to ensure development is appropriately located and has regard to both the subject dwelling and the surrounding area.
- 7.2.5 The host property benefits from a substantially large forecourt and, as such, the proposed front and side extension would be set back significantly away from the main road. Importantly, the property features a substantial amount of mature hedging which largely screens the existing western flank wall of the dwellinghouse and would largely screen the proposed extension when viewed from the public realm. The extension would feature a 'wedged' shape design largely due to the nature of the subject site being of an irregular shape, and therefore the majority of the proposed side extension would not be viewed from a public vantage point along this section of Winchilsea Drive. Furthermore, the side extension would not appear out of scale as it would maintain an eaves height of approximately 3m above ground level and would not be excessively wide given that the host property and surrounding properties within close proximity are of varying sizes, designs and scale.
- 7.2.6 The front element of the extension would not project significantly forward beyond the existing front elevation and is considered to be modest in scale, both in terms of its overall height, depth and width and would be a limited addition to the host dwelling.
- 7.2.7 The application property has an existing first floor balcony above the existing garage which measures approximately 14sqm in area. The application seeks to extend the balcony to approximately 23sqm. The width of the balcony would increase by approximately 1.3m towards the western boundary. This would not result in a significant change in the circumstances that currently exist situate the site with respect to the character and appearance of the host property.
- 7.2.8 The proposal would involve the conversion of the garage to a room with the installation of a window to the front. This would not have a significant character impact. Furthermore, the conversion would incorporate matching brickwork and a replacement window that would be in keeping with the design, scale and proportion of existing windows of the host dwelling. Given that the proposed conversion would not depart from the footprint of the existing garage and the satisfactory modifications to the front elevation to facilitate the conversion, it is considered that the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the dwelling and area.
- 7.2.9 Given that the subject site is located within the Conservation Area of Gretton, significant importance should be given to the character and design of

proposed developments. The Conservation Officer has reviewed the design of the proposals and has no objections given the specific design proposed and the design of properties nearby.

7.2.10 As such, given these site-specific circumstances, it is considered that the proposed development by reason of its design, scale, sitting and bulk would integrate well with the existing property and adjacent properties and would therefore be acceptable in terms of design, scale and appearance.

7.2.11 In summary, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of scale, design and appearance and would be in accordance with the high-quality aspirations of the NPPF (2021), Policies 2 and 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2016).

7.3 Neighbouring Amenity

7.3.1 Policy 8 - North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles of the NNJCS demonstrates the necessity of protecting amenity by not resulting in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of future occupiers, neighbouring properties, or the wider area.

7.3.2 The proposed conversion of garage to habitable room would offer principal views of the public domain and would not therefore harm neighbouring amenity. The loss of the garage is considered acceptable as sufficient space in the front forecourt to accommodate car parking is still available.

7.3.3 The proposed extension would be largely screened away from the adjacent neighbouring property to the east No.6 Winchilsea Drive due to its siting along the western flank wall of the host dwelling and therefore there would be no material amenity impacts relating to the occupiers of No.6 from the resulting front and side extension. It is noted that objections have been received from the occupiers of No.6 due to the impact of the first-floor balcony extension that would result in loss of privacy and loss of views. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed extension of the first-floor balcony would project beyond the front elevation, it would not be a significant change in the existing circumstances. It is therefore considered that the impact of the extension to the existing first-floor balcony area would not result in significant harm on the amenities of the occupiers of this neighbouring property nor would it result in significant loss of views from the neighbouring property given that the height of the proposed balcony extension would remain the same.

7.3.4 The neighbouring property to the west No.4 Winchilsea Drive is sited significantly lower than the host property and the extension would be set approximately 1.3m away from the boundary adjoining No.4 which would provide some degree of mitigation to the neighbouring amenities with regards to overbearing impacts. Furthermore, any overbearing impact that may occur from the resulting extension would be further mitigated due to the intervening landscaping and boundary wall that exists along the western site boundary. Given these site-specific circumstances it is considered that the proposed front and side extension would not result in any amenity impact on the occupiers of this neighbouring property. Objections have been raised from the neighbouring occupiers at No.4 with respect to loss of amenity as a result of

the proposed extension of the first-floor balcony. In assessing this impact, the proposed balcony would extend approximately 1.5m beyond the existing balcony and would still be set approximately 1.3 away from the western boundary, such that it would not cause any undue harm on the residential amenities of No.4, particularly in relation to loss of privacy and overlooking. Given these circumstances, it is considered that the proposal would not compromise the residential amenities of the neighbouring occupiers of No.4 by means of overshadowing, loss of light, loss of outlook or loss of privacy.

7.3.5 No.5 Station Road is sited to the rear of the host property. An objection has been raised by the owners of this adjoining property with respect of loss of light and loss of privacy. Whilst it is acknowledged that the neighbouring property features first floor rear windows within the south facing gable wall which appear to serve habitable rooms, the element of the balcony that is proposed would be set back further away than the existing balcony and therefore any overlooking that would occur as a result of the new development would have a lesser impact than the existing situation. The balcony would also be set approximately 18m away from the rear first floor windows of the neighbouring property and as such this interface distance is considered to be acceptable such that it would not result in any undue harm on the residential amenities of No.5 Station Road.

7.3.6 In summary, given the modest scale and siting of the proposal and its relationship to neighbouring properties, it is considered that the proposal would not adversely impact upon the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers by means of overshadowing, loss of light, loss of outlook or loss of privacy.

7.4 Highways matters

7.4.1 Policy 8 - North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles of NNJCS demonstrates the necessity of making safe and pleasant streets and spaces by ensuring a satisfactory means of access and provision for parking, servicing, and manoeuvring in accordance with adopted standards.

7.4.2 Due to existing parking provisions on site, there are no highways implications because of the proposed development. The proposal will accord the above policy.

7.5 Other Matters

- The EHO has reviewed the proposal and has raised no objections to the proposed development subject to a condition relating to an event if unexpected contamination is to be found at the time of development.
- Noise impact – *The proposed development would not lead to significant changes that already exists which would result in an increase in noise to the detriment of neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, the Environmental Health Officer was consulted on this application and has raised no objections to the proposal.*
- Elevation would look oppressive – *Amenity concerns have been addressed under section 7 of the report.*

- The height of the balcony could reduce the value of the neighbouring property – *This is not a material planning consideration.*
- Overdevelopment of the site – *Character issues are addressed under section 7 of the report.*

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposal is acceptable in principle as it would provide a proportionate addition to the host dwelling. It is considered that the development proposed would harmonise with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, such that it would be in keeping with the character of the host dwelling and the local area which it forms. In drawing this conclusion regard has been had to the duty to pay special attention to the need to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 For all the reasons considered above and weighing up the policies of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2016) and other material considerations it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the conditions set out below:

10. Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this application.

Reason: As required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall conform in all aspects with the plans and details shown in the application as listed below, unless variations are agreed by the Local Planning Authority in order to discharge other conditions attached to this decision.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a suitable form of development in accordance with Policy 8 of the North Northampton Joint Core Strategy.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy 8 of the North Northampton Joint Core Strategy.

4. In the event that unexpected contamination is found at any time when carrying out the development hereby approved, it must be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development works at the site shall cease and an investigation and risk assessment undertaken to assess the nature and extent

of the unexpected contamination. A written report of the findings shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, together with a scheme to remediate, if required, prior to further development on site taking place. Only once written approval from the Local Planning Authority has been given shall development works recommence.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors,

11. Informatives

1. This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Land Contamination: Risk Management' (or any guidance revoking and replacing this guidance with or without modification). Further guidance on Contaminated Land Investigations can be found in the [Northants Contaminated Land Group Developers Guide](#).