



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Planning Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 31st May 2011
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2011/0195: Two storey and single storey front extensions and single storey rear extension at 50 Abington Park Crescent

WARD: Park

APPLICANT: Mr Lee Romang
AGENT: Mr David Coles

REFERRED BY: Cllr Jane Duncan
REASON: Concerned that the envisaged large balcony would be inappropriate to the ambience and style of the surrounding area.

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to conditions and for the following reason:

The proposed development, by reason of its scale, siting and design, would have no adverse impact on the streetscene or on the amenities of existing neighbouring residents. The proposal would thereby comply with policies E20 and H18 of the Northampton Local Plan.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 Two storey front extension, single storey front and rear extensions, enlarged balcony to front.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Detached house within a street of varying property styles, fronting onto Abington Park.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 N/2010/0965 Two storey front and single storey rear extensions, enlargement of existing balcony to front and removal of conservatory to rear refused 23-12-2010.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 National Policies:

PPS 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

5.3 Northampton Borough Local Plan

E20 – New Development

E26 - Conservation Areas

E19 – Implementing Development

H6 - Housing Development within Primarily Residential Areas

H7 - Housing Development Outside Primarily Residential Areas

H10 - Backland Development

H18 - Extensions

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Residential Extensions Design Guide

6. CONSULTATIONS / REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 Letters of objection received from the neighbouring occupiers at **22a, 49 & 51 Abington Park Crescent and 1 Bridgewater Drive** making the following points:

- The proposal will completely alter the appearance of the property which fronts on to Abington Park.
- The proposed size of the glass extension at the front of the property is such that it will destroy the balance with existing adjoining properties.
- From the plans it is clear that the proposed new area is approximately 50% larger than the current internal leisure area of the house and as such would seem to provide the equivalent of an additional room rather than a more traditional balcony space as is evident in six other properties on the Crescent.
- Should these planned extensions be approved, they would set a precedent for other properties to undergo similar massive enlargements which run counter to the concept of the Conservation area.

- The Conservation area focuses on the Park itself and surrounding buildings; whilst this property is not included, clearly the cohesion of the buildings on the periphery of the Park are of concern as they have an impact on the environs of the Park itself
- I oppose this application on the grounds that although this is not technically in a conservation area it does overlook and can be seen from the conservation area.
- The proposed application and the plans I have seen are in my opinion not in keeping with style and nature of Abington park crescent.
- This new application N12011/0195 falsely claims “the revised scheme provides a significant reduction in the extension to the front and successfully addresses the concerns with the previous application”
- I will now elaborate and demonstrate factually that the “significant reduction” is grossly misleading in respect to the degree of overshadowing and unless, the rules have changed, the basis for refusal remains substantially the same, if not greater.
- The application states the extension is 2.1 metres, but it conveniently omits to mention that this is at ground level and in fact the extension is 4.2 meters at first floor level and a staggering 7.1 meters at roof top level — all solid brick and roof tile.
- From all four of my north facing windows facing this extension I can currently see daylight, views, and the greenery of the park — visual benefits that influenced our decision 33 years ago to buy the property and which we have enjoyed ever since. The extension, even in its marginally modified version, will virtually obliterate all of the views and restrict us only to indirect daylight reflected off the brick wall —walking into each of the four rooms will be like walking into cupboards.
- The issue of habitable versus non-habitable rooms has been raised but is irrelevant since the saved Policy HIS of the Northampton Local Plan (which forms one of the bases for determining applications) does not distinguish between them, as confirmed in the Case Officer’s Report supporting the refusal.
- Our view to the north is currently of a glazed conservatory extending 25 metres with a glazed hip roof. The proposed extension extends 5.0 metres, is of solid brick construction with a solid gable-ended tiled pitched roof and with an overall height of 4.2 metres — some 80% higher than the front of the existing conservatory and again of solid brick and roof tile construction.
- The combined effect of the front and rear extensions to increase the total solid silhouette visible from my side from an existing 47 square metres to a total of 99 square metres - more than double. Emerging from our back door to access either front or rear gardens will be akin to walking alongside a high factory wall in an industrial estate — hardly appropriate for a property in a prestigious area and certainly not one which we expected when we purchased the

property having, and important to us the 'open' aspect of a detached house not overshadowed by neighbouring properties.

- The current balcony covers approximately 14 square metres and is accessed for a pair of French doors and fronted by a tasteful ornamental steel balustrade. The current occupant uses it as a limited entertainment area but it has nevertheless been the subject of some noise complaints from neighbours in the past and extending late into the early hours.
- The proposed balcony will cover 20+ square metres, be accessed from the open-plan interior living area through folding doors extending the full width of the balcony and fronted with a glazed balustrade. It is difficult to imagine that its purpose is other than as an outdoor entertaining area.
- Such a balcony would not look out of place in the daytime as an outdoor seating area on a veranda above a seaside café. At right time it would not be out of place as an open-air balcony above a nightclub entrance with its attendant noise issue.
- There are very few houses on Abington Park Crescent with balconies, all small and discreet and fronted with tasteful steel or wooden balustrades and none large enough for any sort of entertaining. The proposed balcony will be totally out of character with other properties and certainly totally inappropriate in a prestigious residential area surrounding, and visible from the preservation area, namely Abington Park.
- Finally, this application again includes a large (3m x 1.6m) frosted glass privacy screen at the far end of the balcony. But such a screen was specifically rejected following the refusal of the first application as representing a "significantly visually intrusive out-of-character with and harmful to the appearance of the existing building and also represent a visually bulky and overshadowing feature" So why include it now?
- An application for a broadly similar front extension was rejected in December last year on the grounds that the bulk and design which included a first floor balcony would result in significant overlooking and overshadowing of my family home at No 51. Amended plans submitted at that time which included a glazed screen at the side of the proposed balcony nearest to my home were adjudged by the Council to continue to "represent a significantly visually intrusive (sic) out of character with and harmful to the appearance of the existing building and would represent a bulky and overshadowing feature, as it would in its entirety be forward of the front line of No 51".
- The current application remains visually intrusive, is visually bulky and in its entirety forward of the front line of my home at No 51. The reduction in the scale of the extension is minimal. As explained above, there is nothing new about the proposal to build a glass screen to the balcony. Contrary to the claims made by the applicant, the design of the extension does not relate well to the site and it most certainly does not respect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

- It remains the case that from my front lounge and front bedroom I will mostly see a brick wall and above it a large sheet of frosted glass jutting out well beyond the front of my home. This will limit the vistas of the park opposite and interfere with sunlight from the south east and south.
- I do not believe that the minor modifications proposed by the applicant represent a significant change from his previous application. I hope you will not conclude that you should give planning consent on the grounds that you believe the new proposal is not quite as bad as the previous one which you rightly rejected.

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main issues to consider are the impact on the streetscene and on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- 7.2 In terms of the streetscene impact, as the street comprises properties of varying design, it is considered that this particular house, as altered, would not appear out of place within the streetscene. The road curves at this point and the building as extended would follow this line, so the building would not appear out of place due to projecting forward in the street scene.
- 7.3 An enlarged balcony forms part of the proposal. There is an existing balcony at the property and several other properties within the street also have balconies overlooking the park, albeit generally smaller than the one proposed. It is considered that the balcony as proposed is generally in keeping with the house and that no adverse impact on the streetscene would result.
- 7.4 As regards the impact on adjoining occupiers, the neighbour at no. 49 Abington Park Crescent has a number of side facing windows that would be overshadowed by this extension. Whilst these are not considered habitable rooms there was a concern in respect of the previous application, which was refused, that so many windows would have been affected. The proposed projection of the extension has now been reduced and whilst the amendment is moderate it is considered that this is sufficient to allow an adequate level of light to these windows and given that they are not habitable rooms it is considered that this issue alone is not sufficient to justify a refusal.
- 7.5 The previous application was refused in part due to the external staircase to the rear of the building, which would have served the first floor living room at the rear and would have lead to significant overlooking of neighbouring gardens, in particular no. 51. This element has been removed from the proposals and there would not now be any greater overlooking from the rear than could occur from the existing windows.

- 7.6 The proposed front balcony would be forward of the main front living room window of no. 51. The previous application was refused in part due to concerns over the privacy of this neighbour, as it would have been possible to see into the neighbouring living room from the enlarged balcony. The amended proposal now includes obscured glazed panels in this area that would screen potential overlooking to this neighbouring house. There were some concerns that this would, in turn, lead to overshadowing of the window however it is considered that the applicants have demonstrated that there would be a sufficient separation between this and the neighbouring property. A condition is recommended requiring that full details of the structure of the screen are submitted prior to the commencement of work for approval by the Council. Discussions with Building Control have indicated that the screen can be provided if constructed integrally to the building.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed extension would have no undue adverse impact on the street scene or on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

9. CONDITIONS

(1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(2) The external walls and roof of the extension shall be constructed with materials of the same type, texture and colour as the external walls and roof of the existing building.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that the development will harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy E20 of the Northampton Local Plan.

(3) Prior to the commencement of any work on site full details of the proposed privacy screen to the balcony hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The screen shall be installed in full accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that form for the lifetime of the development hereby approved.

Reason - To safeguard the privacy of adjoining properties in accordance with Policy H18 of the Northampton Local Plan.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 N/2011/0195 & N/2010/0965

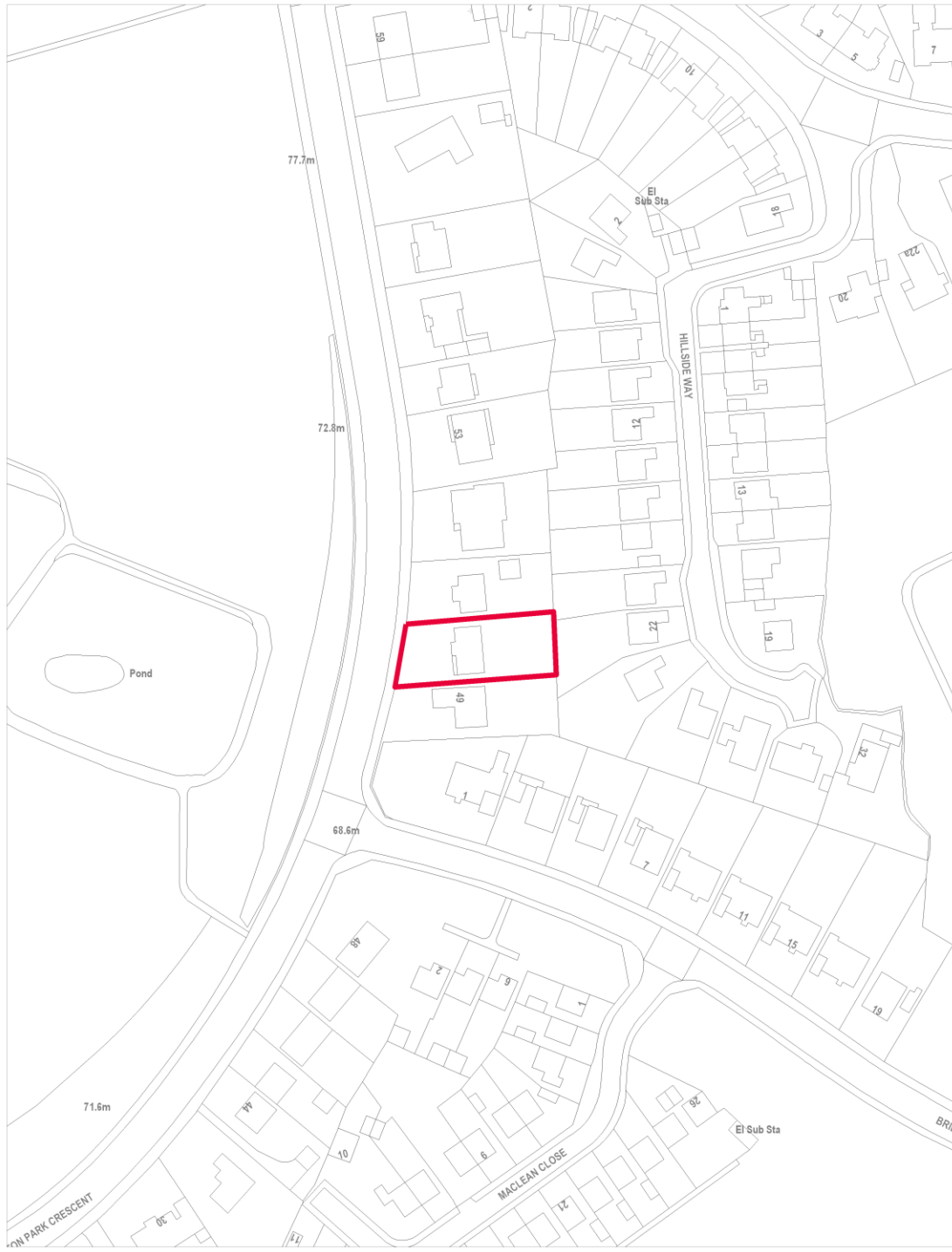
11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

Position:	Name/Signature:	Date:
Author:	A Holden	19/05/11
Development Control Manager Agreed:	G Jones	19/05/11



Name: SW
 Date: 19th May 2011
 Scale: 1:1250
 Dept: PLANNING
 Project: SITE LOCATION PLAN

Title
50 ABINGTON PARK CRESCENT

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