
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2016

by Alex Hutson MATP CMLI MArborA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 21st September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y0435/D/16/315527

145 Whalley Drive, Bletchley MK3 6HX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Miss Helen Gibbons against the decision of Milton Keynes Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01413/FUL, dated 25 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is first floor and two storey front extension and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling located on the western side of Whalley Drive. The wider area is predominantly residential in character. Whilst there is some variation in dwelling types along Whalley Drive, including some other two storey dwellings, those dwellings in the vicinity of the appeal property along the western side of Whalley Drive typically comprise low level and small scale bungalows or chalet style bungalows. Where these dwellings display gable ends and rooms in their roofspace, they tend to incorporate low eaves which substantially reduce their overall scale, bulk and massing.
 4. Whilst the appeal property has a two storey element, a cat slide roof over its integrated garage creates a low roof profile in part which reduces its overall scale, bulk and massing. As a result, the appeal property, whilst not of any particular architectural merit, appears in keeping with the character of dwellings along this part of the western side of Whalley Drive and therefore positively contributes to the character and appearance of the streetscape and area in its current form.
 5. It is proposed to add a single storey rear extension to the appeal property. The Council's officer's report and decision notice indicate that the appearance
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of this element of the proposal is not a matter of contention for the main parties and no other parties have commented on this element of the proposal. I also consider that this element of the proposal would be an appropriate addition to the appeal property that would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

6. Turning to the remainder of the proposal, the front extensions would create two, two storey gable ends with a mono pitched roof in between. I acknowledge that this would provide symmetry to the appeal property and would not noticeably alter the prevailing building line along the western side of Whalley Drive. I also acknowledge that these elements of the proposal would be constructed from materials to match the materials of the appeal property.
7. Nevertheless, the proposed front extensions would substantially increase the scale, bulk and massing of the appeal property in a manner considerably out of keeping with the scale, bulk and massing of other nearby dwellings along this side of Whalley Drive. As a result, this element of the proposal would result in an incongruous form of development that would give rise to significant harm to the character and appearance of the streetscape and area.
8. My view on this is notwithstanding that a footpath which runs between the appeal property and No 147 provides a modest gap in the streetscape where Whalley Drive curves. Moreover, I observed that this gap, combined with the slight curve in Whalley Drive somewhat increases the prominence of the appeal property and would therefore increase the prominence of the substantial increase in its scale, bulk and massing as a result of the proposed front extensions.
9. The proposal would therefore be contrary to saved Policy D2- Design of Buildings, of the Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011 adopted 2005, which requires, amongst other things, development to be in scale with other buildings in the immediate vicinity, to relate well to and enhance the surrounding environment and in terms of extensions, not to detract from the character of the original building. This policy is consistent with the broad aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework that seeks planning to provide high quality design and to take account of the different roles and character of different areas.

Other matters

10. The appellant highlights a number of examples of other two storey dwellings in the area in support of their case. However, with the exception of 147 Whalley Drive, these examples are not located in the immediate context of the appeal property. In respect of No 147, whilst this dwelling incorporates a two storey rear extension, I observed that this dwelling maintains an overall low roof profile when viewed from along Whalley Drive. Consequently, I do not consider that these examples provide a helpful comparison to the proposal under consideration in this appeal and do not justify a planning consent in this instance.
11. The appellant sets out that the proposal would improve off street parking, would improve drainage, would be located within a sustainable location and would have no harmful effects on neighbour living conditions. Nevertheless, these positive aspects of the proposal would not, either individually or

cumulatively, outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Alex Hutson

INSPECTOR