
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2017

by John L Gray DipArch MSc Registered Architect

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

Decision date: 20 January 2017

Appeal Ref. APP/K0235/D/16/3163563
27 Quantock Close, Bedford, MK41 9EW

- 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 Mrs Linda Wray against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application, ref. 16/02428/FUL, dated 23 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side extension and a single-storey rear extension.
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Decision: the appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

1. There are two main issues in the appeal, flowing from the reasons for refusal. The first is whether the proposed design would be appropriate in the street scene. The second is whether the proposal would be overbearing or cause a harmful loss of light for the occupiers of no. 26.

Reasons

2. The proposed single-storey rear extension would be about 4.0m deep. The lean-to roof would be around 3.6m high at the existing rear wall of the house, about 2.3m at its eaves. It would thus be a considerably more bulky presence than the existing 1.8m high boundary fence. The Council nevertheless concluded that, given the location to the north-east of no. 28 and its garden, the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of no. 28. There is no reason to disagree with that conclusion.

Design

3. Quantock Close is a cul-de-sac of 34 houses in semi-detached pairs, generally with garages or gates alongside each house. That gives the Close an open character, although the staggered building line at the head of the Close, where the road circles a large area of grass and trees, means that all of the gaps are not that evident when looking along the road from the south-west.
 4. No. 27 has a single-storey flat-roofed extension containing a garage and entrance hall which wraps round the corner of the building and thus gives nos. 27 and 28 an asymmetric appearance, although not one which is particularly incongruous in the street scene. The proposal would put a pitched roof over the projecting part of that extension, giving it an appearance much more in keeping with the general style of the house. On the other hand, the two-storeyed extension would be the full depth of the house and stand along the
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boundary with no. 26, logically so since that is the position of the existing garage wall, but nevertheless with a two-fold effect.

5. Firstly, it would substantially increase the bulk of the existing building, making it appear much larger than any of the semi-detached pairs and asymmetric in its appearance. Setting back the first floor of the extension, at least at the front of the house, might satisfactorily resolve the question of design – the semi-detached pair would still be asymmetric but the extension would be clearly subservient to the original house; it is unclear, however, that doing so by a visually appropriate distance would leave rooms of a size acceptable to the appellant. Secondly, being along the boundary with no. 26, which already has a two-storey side extension, it would mean the loss of the visual gap between the two houses. That gap would still be lost if the first floor of the extension were set back but it might be mitigated by the resultant varied building and ridge heights. As the proposal stands, however, both of these criticisms count against it.

Amenity impact

6. No. 27 stands well forward of no. 26, by around 5.0m. A two-storey extension along the common boundary for the full depth of the house could not help be somewhat overbearing for the occupiers of no. 26, especially as it would stand to the south-west and well forward of the house, restricting oblique daylight and afternoon sun. The effect would be limited in relation to the original house, the front door and windows all being over 3.0m away. Light to the bedroom window in the 2-storey extension would, however, be restricted by the extent and proximity of the flank wall of the proposed extension. This also counts against the proposal; and it is unclear that setting back the first floor of the extension by an appropriate distance, giving a reduced projection in front of no. 26 and also a reduced ridge height, could satisfactorily resolve the matter.

Conclusion

7. The application proposal conflicts with criteria i) and ix), on design and amenity respectively, of Policy BE30 saved from the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, as well as with saved Policy BE29, by virtue of running contrary to Design Codes E1 and E3 (on design) and E6 and E7 (on amenity) of the supplementary guidance on Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments, adopted in 2000. And it conflicts with criteria i)-iii) of Policy CP21 saved from the 2008 Core Strategy. There being no material considerations to weigh against that, the appeal must be dismissed.

John L Gray

Inspector