The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2019 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by A U Ghafoor BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/19/3233978
27 The Glebe, Clapham, Bedford, Bedfordshire, United Kingdom MK41 6GB

- 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 Mr McCarthy Hopkins against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
- The application Ref: 19/00855/FUL, dated 15 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 July 2019.
- The development proposed is ground floor rear and side extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposed development upon: 1) the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene, and 2) the living conditions of existing and future occupiers of no. 27 having regard to amenity space.

Reasons for the Recommendation - *First main issue*

4. No. 27 is located within a modern estate and is a semi-detached property. It has a side garden whilst the neighbouring property has a driveway. The dwellings share a common symmetry. The street scene is a mix of terrace, semi-detached and detached dwellings. The estate is relatively modern and very few dwellings have been extended and altered. Nonetheless, the street includes similarly designed properties with a common external appearance, rhythm and settlement pattern. The dwellings are brick built and are either rendered or have exposed brick front elevations.

5. No. 27's garden is large and the proposal would extend the property 9.5 metres to the side and at its deepest it would be 11.7 m. The front elevation would be set back from the front elevation and it would replace the fencing to the side. However, the dwelling is set forward of a group of dwellings to the west. The extension would extend at an angle following the boundary of the garden away which would further exacerbate its bulk and scale. Due to the extent of the ground floor extension, it would appear disproportionately large and would significantly change the external appearance of the host building. The first floor of the host dwelling would appear out of proportion with the proposed ground floor. This would result in an extension that would not appear subordinate to the host dwelling.

6. While the proposed flat roof would potentially limit the extension's impact on the neighbours, it would cover a large expanse and appear unsympathetic. The development would unbalance the semi-detached dwellings and visually harm the external appearance of the host building, due to the design of the ground floor rear and side extension. Given the site's location, the extension would be visually prominent. Because of the layout of the plot in the street scene, the full width and depth of the extension would be visible from various viewpoints. The resultant development would effectively double the width of the house, it would upset the simple architectural style and rhythm of the street scene and appear out-of-keeping with the character of area.

7. Pulling all of the above points together, I find that the development proposed would have a visually harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene. Accordingly, the development would conflict with policy BE29, BE30 and BE37 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002 (LP) and CP21 of the Bedford Borough Council Development Plan Document Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan 2008 (CS).

Second main issue

8. The size of the garden would be reduced to about 78 square metres: built-form would cover one-third of the plot which would be contrary to the Residential Extensions Design Guidance (SPG) published in 2000. The evidence presented does not substantiate the claim that modern families require reduced amount of amenity space, and there is nothing to cast doubt over the validity of the SPG despite its age. There are parks available within walking distance of the site but occupiers would require use of the garden for domestic activities. Given the design of the proposed extension, the resultant amenity space would be disproportionately small for a five-bedroom dwelling. The development would result in a property with substandard garden, because of its size. The present occupants may find the space useable, but the significant reduction in overall size would undermine the garden's amenity value and potentially affect future occupants' living conditions.

9. The appellants maintain that 50% of the curtilage could be developed having regard to permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). But these outbuildings or structures would be subject to meeting physical tolerances and would be domestic in scale. Irrespective of the potential fall-back, the proposal would be plainly unacceptable given the overall design, scale and size of the proposed ground floor and side extension. The appellants seek to address personal family needs, but the development would remain long after these circumstances change. I therefore give these arguments limited weight. The proposal would have a detrimental effect upon existing and future occupiers' living conditions contrary to policy BE37 of the LP.

Conclusion and Recommendation

10. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I too agree and conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A U Ghafoor INSPECTOR