



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 September 2019 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Andrew Owen MA BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/19/3226635

78 Woodside Road, Woodside LU1 4DQ

- 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 Glen Eden against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/18/03510/FULL, dated 10 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2018.
 - The development proposed is a new detached double garage.
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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 Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and development plan policy; and
 - The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Whether the development would be inappropriate development

4. The appeal site, which lies in the Green Belt, consists of an area of hardstanding currently being used as parking. The site is adjacent to a detached bungalow at 78 Woodside Road and a former Public House which is now a dwelling. A public Right of Way runs in-between No. 78 and the site.
 5. The proposal would result in the creation of a detached 1.5 storey double garage with a pitched roof. The first floor would be used for storage and would feature windows facing the front and the rear as well as four roof lights.
 6. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they fall within the given list of exceptions. One exception is limited infilling in villages.
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7. The emerging Central Bedfordshire Council Submission Local Plan 2035 (the 'Local Plan') was submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2018 and is thus in the late stages of preparation. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF stipulates that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this regard, emerging policy SP4 is broadly consistent with the NPPF in that it allows for limited infill development within 'washed over' Green Belt settlements.
8. As, from their submissions, the parties agree Woodside is a village, the issue centres around whether the proposed development would constitute 'limited infilling'. The term 'limited infilling' is not defined in the NPPF, but the emerging Local Plan refers to infill development being small-scale development within a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage. Therefore it is a question of planning judgement, having regard to the nature and size of the development itself, the location of the site and its relationship to existing development adjacent to it, as to whether it would constitute 'limited infilling'. In my view, the site is clearly an open gap within a built-up frontage with dwellings on each side as well as to the rear so can be considered infill. I also find that the proposal for a single detached building of this size constitutes 'limited' development as it is relatively small-scale.
9. The Council refer to a separate appeal decision in which the Inspector found that 'limited infill' should, as also referred to in the Local Plan, complement the surrounding pattern of development. Though the garage would be set back slightly from the buildings to either side, I do not consider its position would render it inconsistent with the surrounding ribbon pattern of development.
10. On this basis the proposal would constitute limited infilling in the Green Belt, and I therefore find the proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would not conflict with the NPPF and emerging policy SP4 of the Local Plan, which both seek to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Character and appearance

11. The surrounding area is characterised by houses fronting the road and having either a front driveway or a garage directly attached. Most of the garages I observed along Woodside Road were either integrated within the structure of the dwellings or were small flat-roofed single garages attached to the side of the houses. The garages in the area were also subservient in size and bulk to their host dwellings.
12. With its height, bulk, pitched roof, fenestration, and detached siting, the proposed development would almost have the visual effect of a dwelling but would function as a double garage. It would not be subservient to the adjacent bungalow at No. 78 and would thus have a dominating effect. Furthermore, a standalone large double garage detached from its host dwelling would appear odd, although I acknowledge the proposed siting is dictated by the public Right of Way which abuts No. 78. Furthermore the proposed development would be excessively bulky and tall for its function. Although it reflects the neighbouring former public house, it fails to be architecturally aligned with the host dwelling with whom it has the functional relationship. I therefore find the proposal would appear incongruous on the street scene and this would detract from and harm the character and appearance of the area.

13. The proposed garage would therefore conflict with policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan and the NPPF which together seek to ensure new developments are well designed and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the surrounding area in which they lie. The lack of harm to the Green Belt does not outweigh this harm.

Other Matters

14. I note the appellant refers to the site as being previously developed. However, whilst I recognise the support for development on such land, I give little weight to this, particularly bearing in mind the existing development is just hardstanding and so, in my view, does not mitigate the harm to the character and appearance of the area set out above.

Recommendation

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

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR