
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2020 by Scott Britnell MSc FdA

Decision by Kenneth Stone BSc(Hons) DIPTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/D/19/3240029

3 Rixon Close, George Green, Wexham SL3 6RH

- 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 Adam Wheatcroft against the decision of South Bucks District Council
 - The application Ref PL/19/2843/FA, dated 15 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 11 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is first floor front and side extension.
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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.

Procedural Matters

3. The description of development in the header banner above has been taken from the Council's decision notice, as no description is given in the application form. The appellant has not disputed this description and so I have assessed the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this matter is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a cluster style property located on the eastern side of Rixon Close. The property is located mainly to the rear of No.3 Rixon Close and benefits from a single storey garage to the side which has been converted to additional habitable accommodation. This is linked to a garage which the Council advise adjoins No.1 Rixon Close, but which the appellant indicates belongs to No.4. The proposal is to erect a first floor side extension above the converted garage space.
6. Rixon Close consists predominantly of two storey residential buildings with single storey garages. The majority of these are not attached to the host dwelling. Due to the layout of the road and the general built form, there is a

- pleasant sense of openness within Rixon Close and spaciousness between buildings, which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the streetscene and area.
7. The drawings indicate that the proposal would extend up to the boundary with the neighbouring garage. This would significantly reduce the existing gap between the buildings to the detriment of the spaciousness that currently exists and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the streetscene and the area. The reduced gap would significantly compromise the spaciousness provided by this element of the street scene irrespective of whether the space above the adjoining garage were to be developed in the future.
 8. Should a development above the adjoining garage be proposed in the future the Council are concerned that in association with this proposal it would lead to a terracing effect. However, there is no evidence before me that such a development is proposed. Further, as the information submitted indicates that the garage is associated with No 4, but is not physically connected to that property, it is unlikely that the occupants of that dwelling would seek to erect an extension above it. I am also mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits. Consequently, on the evidence before me, I do not consider that the proposal would result in a terracing effect. Further, the potential for an extension to be erected above the neighbouring garage is unlikely given the current arrangements. However, this does not overcome the harm identified.
 9. The appellant has referred me to an example of a similar extension within the estate. This, however, relates to properties located at the end of a cul-de-sac whereby there is space to the side of the dwellings. Consequently, this example is viewed in a different context to the appeal site and does not justify the unacceptable development proposed.
 10. In conclusion, the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the streetscene and area. There would be conflict with Policies EP3 and H11 of the South Bucks District Local Plan Written Statement Adopted March 1999, Consolidated September 2007 and February 2011 (LP), and Policy CP8 of the South Bucks Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document Adopted February 2011. These seek, among other things, to ensure that the retention and provision of space between buildings should respect the scale of spaces in the locality and that the layout of development and the siting of buildings should make positive use of the intrinsic qualities and features of the site including views into or out of the site. They also seek to ensure that extensions would not have an adverse impact on the character or amenities of the locality in general and that all new development must be of a high standard of design and make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

11. The appeal site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt, wherein Paragraph 143 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Council have assessed the proposal against Policies GB1 and GB10 of the LP. GB10 establishes a limit for the extension of dwellings within the Green Belt, above which proposals are likely to be unacceptable. The Framework is less prescriptive than this policy and does not provide such limits. Having regard to

its scale and the form of the proposal I am satisfied that it does not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. This is consistent with the Council's conclusions in this regard. However, this does not outweigh the harm that I have identified above.

12. I am satisfied that in terms of the design and form of the proposal and its relationship with the host dwelling, that it is acceptable. The proposal would feature a gabled end to match the host building and the ridge would be set down from that of the main roof. The drawing also indicates that matching roof tiles and brickwork would be used. I note in this regard that the appellant considers that the proposal would improve the appearance of the dwelling. However, this is only one aspect of the proposal and while it weighs in its favour, it does not overcome the harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene and area through the reduction of the gap between the appeal property and the adjacent building.
13. I have considered the appellant's comments that the proposal would provide much needed family space, that if set in from the boundary as required by the Council, that the room that would be created would become non-habitable and that the proposal would require the installation of significant steel work. While I appreciate that these are important issues for the appellant, I afford them limited weight. They would provide principally private benefits for the appellant and would not overcome the harm identified.
14. I have taken account of these other matters; however, they do not outweigh the harm that would arise to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Scott Britnell

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.

Kenneth Stone

INSPECTOR