
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2020

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/20/3250133

24 Plummers Lane, Haynes, Bedfordshire MK45 3PL

- 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 Paul Capon against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/20/00204/FULL, dated 21 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is two storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host property.

Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises of a detached two storey thatched cottage with a single storey flat roofed extension at the side. It is set back elevated above the road in a mature landscaped plot and is located in a small linear cluster of detached residential properties running along the western side of Plummers Lane within an open rural countryside setting.
4. The proposal would involve the construction of a two storey L-shaped extension that would project out beyond the existing single storey side extension. A linked two storey attachment would be provided to the original cottage that would be set back and stepped down below the ridge of the main house. The external finish would be predominantly render and black horizontal timber boarding with a pitched tiled roof with dormer windows.
5. Although the proposed extension would not appear overlarge, relative to the overall plot size, the scale and form of the proposed extension would nevertheless still be a significant addition relative to the main property. Whilst it would be set back and stepped down, the proposed scale and form of the extension combined with the awkward design and bulkiness of the pitched tiled roof over the extension would appear very much at odds with the traditional form and appearance of the host building.

6. The consequential harm would not in my view be sufficiently resolved by the limited effect of the proposed extension on the street scene. In any case, the proposal would be visible over short distances along Plummers Lane and from the surrounding properties. I therefore consider that the proposal, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would fail to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and would detract from the architectural integrity of the host property. As such, I consider that the proposed extension would result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that would cause unacceptable harm to the host property.
7. I have considered the appellant's arguments that the design and layout of the proposed extension have been carefully considered and redesigned in order to provide an innovative design solution to the development of the site that would minimise any impacts on the host building and the area and to take into account the Council's pre-application advice. However, whilst the use of traditional materials, landscaping and boundary treatment would assist in integrating the proposal with the host property and the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above.
8. I note the appellant's comments regarding the context provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) for good design and the great weight given to outstanding or innovative design, but I find that the proposal does not achieve the standards the Framework seeks. I also note the appellant's desire to create an extension to meet their requirements and the needs of modern living. However, such circumstances are not a material consideration to which I can attach significant weight in making this decision.
9. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property. It would conflict with Policies CS14 and DM3 of the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2009 and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide 2014. These policies and guidance seek, amongst other things, to ensure all proposals for new development, including extensions, will be of the highest quality design that would be appropriate in scale and design to the character and appearance of the existing property, their setting, respects its local context and contributes positively to the local distinctiveness of the area. In addition, it would not accord with the aims of the Framework that seeks to secure developments of a high quality of design (paragraph 124); that will add to the overall quality of the area and are sympathetic to the local character (paragraph 127).

Other Matters

10. I note the arguments between the main parties regarding the status of the host property as a non-designated heritage asset. From my observation during my site visit, I noted the special character and architectural merit of the host property with its thatched roof, small casement windows and distinctive features. If I were to conclude that the appeal building is a non-designated heritage asset, I consider that the appeal scheme, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would have negative material impact and there are insufficient public benefits arising from this proposal to offset the identified harm.
11. However, the Council has provided little substantive evidence to support the status of the host property as a non-designated heritage asset. In the absence

of any convincing evidence to the contrary regarding its status, I attach only limited weight to this matter in making this decision.

12. I have considered the appellant's comments regarding the family's personal circumstances and the benefits to the family arising from the proposed additional accommodation to provide care and assistance to the appellant's relatives and the weight attributed to the Equality Act 2010. I have considerable sympathy for the appellant's circumstances. However, there is insufficient justification for both the scale of the extension proposed and the evidence to demonstrate the attempts to accommodate the relatives needs elsewhere.
13. The courts have generally taken the view that planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. Although personal circumstances can sometimes justify a personal or temporary permission, that would not be appropriate here where a permanent structure is intended. As such these are matters to which I can attach only moderate weight in making this decision.
14. I have noted the other developments drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the proposed contemporary style extensions permitted elsewhere have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme. On the basis of the limited evidence provided I am not convinced that the circumstances are compellingly similar to the appeal proposal. As a consequence, whilst I have taken these other examples into account, they do not materially alter my conclusions on the appeal proposal.
15. I have noted the issues raised by the appellant regarding the way in which the application was processed by the Council. However, these are a material consideration to which I can attach only limited weight in making this decision.
16. I have considered the various benefits put forward by the appellant that the proposal would bring, including the high energy efficiency design, effective use of land, contributing to the local economy through additional building work and increased Council tax receipts and providing additional accommodation for their relatives close by to offer support and assistance. While I have given them some weight, these modest benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified. For all these reasons, there are no other material considerations to outweigh the development plan conflicts identified.

Conclusion

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

David Troy

INSPECTOR