

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2020

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y0435/D/20/3252018
26 Aintree Close, Bletchley MK3 5LP

- 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 Kierran Groom against the decision of Milton Keynes Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03405/FUL, dated 18 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey front extension and detached outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey detached house, which at some point has had a two-storey side extension added. It sits at the head of a small courtyard off Aintree Close, alongside three other dwellings. No 27 immediately to the north mirrors the design of No 26, although it has not been extended. Two detached bungalows (Nos 25 and 28) face each other across the courtyard.
4. Most of the houses in Aintree Close and the neighbouring streets of Fontwell Drive and Blaydon Close are within semi-detached pairs, although a few are detached or arranged in short blocks of three dwellings. While there is some variety of house types within the estate there is a general consistency of design and detailing with common features such as small gable dormers giving the area a coherent character. Front projections accommodating porches, bay windows and, in the case of the appeal property and its neighbour at No 27, single garages, are generally small in scale.
5. The proposal is to erect a two-storey extension to the front of the dwelling. This would infill the corner between the original side elevation and the front wall line of the porch and garage, creating a new entrance hall and converting the garage to a family room. At first floor level, the extension would continue above the existing garage and across the full original width of No 26 to enlarge two bedrooms and provide new ensuite facilities.
6. The appellant suggests that with 27m² of new floorspace the extension would not represent a significant enlargement of the existing building. However, given its prominent position at the front of the dwelling, the bulk and massing of the

extension mean it would read as a substantial addition. It would give the appeal property a dominant appearance within the courtyard, an effect which would be exacerbated by the creation of a new principal front elevation much closer to the street than at present. The size, scale and orientation of the extension would put the appeal property at odds with the appearance of the neighbouring house at No 27 and the character of the wider area.

7. The appellant has drawn my attention to other cases within the estate where dwellings have been extended and garages converted to living rooms. At No 36 Aintree Close, a large side extension has been built, but this projects from the side elevation and the consistency of the front building line has been retained. Nos 29 and 30 Fontwell Drive have had garages in front projections converted, but neither has had a two-storey front extension akin to the current proposal. I saw on my site visit that where dwellings within the estate have been extended, this has generally been on side or rear elevations, and the consistency of front elevations has therefore largely been retained.
8. I do not know the circumstances in which the two-storey front extension to No 23 Blaydon Close came into being, but from what I saw on my site visit it is an unusual feature and illustrates the harm which an inappropriate extension can cause to the character and appearance of the area. Even so, it forms part of a semi-detached pair and its effect upon the street scene is mitigated slightly by its having continued the two-storey building line of its attached neighbour, something which would not apply here. None of the examples referred to therefore appears to be directly comparable to the proposal before me.
9. The appellant also wishes to erect a new detached outbuilding to the south of the main dwelling, to provide a garden room and storeroom. Subject to the approval of further details in respect of its appearance, the Council raised no concern about this element of the proposal, considering it acceptable in terms of its scale and siting. I agree, but this does not outweigh the harm which would arise from the development as a whole.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, and it would therefore conflict with Policies D1, D2 and D3 of the 2019 *Plan:MK 2016-2031* and Policy D2 of the 2019 *West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan*. Together these seek to ensure that the scale and design of development is sympathetic to local context and in keeping with the character and appearance of existing buildings and the surrounding area.

Other Matter

11. The appellant expressed concern in his appeal statement about how the Council handled the planning application. These are issues which the appellant would need to raise with the Council rather than matters for me to address in determining this appeal. I have reached my conclusion based on the planning merits of the proposal, and find that it causes harm as I have described.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector