



## Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 9 November 2020

**by Mr Andrew Smith BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 17 November 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/20/3258660**

**1 Endeavour Close, Lower Stondon SG16 6JR**

- 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 David Kilbey against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
  - The application Ref CB/20/01522/FULL, dated 8 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 31 July 2020.
  - The development proposed is installation of Drop Kerb and Hard Standing to front of property.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matter

2. The Pre-Submission version of the emerging Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (the CBLP) was submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2018. There is nothing before me to indicate that the CBLP is currently at a stage that should attract anything more than limited weight. I shall consider the appeal on this basis.

### Main Issue

3. The effect upon the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

4. Station Road (the road) provides the main route through the village of Lower Stondon. Notwithstanding the numerous properties it provides access to, the road often sits alongside grassed verges, hedgerows and other planted features. Built form can typically be observed to be setback, which further emphasises the road's green and semi-rural character and appearance.
5. The appeal property itself makes up part of a consistently positioned linear row of properties that face the road and that are typically set behind an established laurel hedgerow (the hedgerow) and grassed verge, which are features that contribute in no small part to the road's identified character and appearance.
6. The hedgerow only stretches a part of the appeal property's road frontage. Indeed, in the approximate location of where the proposed dropped kerb and newly intended vehicular access would be installed, I observed a short stretch of wire mesh fencing to instead be in place. Thus, only a small part of the hedgerow would need to be removed as part of the scheme. The intended replacement/compensatory hedgerow planting would take time to properly

establish and would, for the most part, be positioned behind a neighbouring substation and/or existing timber boundary treatment which would limit its visual influence. Nevertheless, I do not take issue per se with the small extent of unprotected hedgerow that is intended to be removed.

7. However, the proposed vehicular crossover would result in the fragmentation of an established soft green verge that is, for a notable length, unfettered by any dropped kerb or access point. Indeed, the row of Endeavour Close properties that incorporates the appeal property is routinely served by double garages and parking areas to the rear and by vehicle-free soft landscaped front garden areas. The proposal, by providing a second vehicular access to the property, would be at odds with this established rhythm of development and would have a harmful urbanising influence. Indeed, the proposal would lead to glimpsed views materialising from the road of a significant expanse of new hardstanding intended for vehicular parking.
8. I acknowledge that there are many vehicular access points in place along the road when taken and considered as a whole, including an access situated close by to the north. However, these can typically be observed to provide the sole access to properties (on either a shared or individual basis) and to exist in proximity to plentiful stretches of street frontage that is either open or well planted. Indeed, of greatest relevance here is the generous stretch of continuous grassed verge that abuts the linear row of properties that contains the appeal property and that would be compromised by this proposal.
9. I have noted concerns that the scheme could set a precedent for other properties within the same row seeking to apply for dropped kerbs/crossovers. However, for the avoidance of doubt, it is my responsibility to consider only the appeal proposal that is before me based upon its own individual merits.
10. For the above reasons, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and conflicts with Policy DM3 of the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (November 2009) in so far as this policy requires that all proposals for new development will contribute positively to creating a sense of place and respect local distinctiveness through design and use of materials.

### **Other Matters**

11. Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) promotes the effective use of land, the space intended to be hard surfaced currently offers a functional private garden space at a residential property that is already served by dedicated off-street parking. Also, upon inspection, I observed that potential visitor parking opportunities already exist within the Close and wider local area, which would limit the extent of any potential benefit of the scheme in this regard. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise.

### **Conclusion**

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

*Andrew Smith*

INSPECTOR