



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 20 April 2021

by L Douglas BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/20/3263075

105 Wendover Drive, Bedford MK41 9QX

- 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 Ms Mariangela Russo against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01437/FUL, dated 7 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 26 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is a "side/rear first floor extension"
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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 building is a two storey semi-detached hipped roofed dwelling in a street scene where semi-detached pairs are, on the whole, evenly spaced, particularly at first floor level. The attractive and distinct sense of spaciousness derived from this separation is emphasised by pairs being set back from the road frontage.
4. There are existing additions to the appeal building across the ground floor. The proposals would sit above part of an existing side extension, set back from the frontage and slightly overlapping it at the rear. This arrangement would result not only in an extension which would erode the aforementioned sense of spaciousness but also appear awkward and contrived due to a considerably smaller and somewhat squeezed roof span and confused, almost bolted on appearance. This would jar obviously with the host building despite the use of matching materials. Due to the appeal building being set slightly closer to the highway than others to the west, views along its side elevation are more dominant in the street scene. Most of the proposed extension would therefore be visible from the highway, where it would be seen as a disruptive and discordant feature for the reasons I have given.
5. The appeal scheme would therefore harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policies 28S, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (2020) which require, amongst other things, development to contribute to good place making by requiring proposals to be of high quality design, promoting and enhancing local distinctiveness, and to have

a positive relationship with the surrounding area. Policy 30 explicitly states planning permission will not be granted for proposals that fail to improve the character and quality of an area.

6. Design Codes E1 and E3 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments' (2000) provide general advice on residential extensions, including their basic shape and scale. The advice is clear that extensions should not be out of character with the surrounding area. Both parties refer to the part of Design Code E3 which suggests a gap of at least 1.5 metres between side boundaries and two storey extensions should be observed in some cases. Although the proposed extension would be set in 1.5m from the boundary, for the reasons set out above its impact on the character and appearance of the area would remain harmful and contrary to the Development Plan.

Other Matters

7. There are examples of first floor side extensions of different sizes and designs in the surrounding area, but these are in the minority and are thus exceptions to the street scene's prevailing character. I am not therefore led to allowing the appeal for this reason. In addition, the evidence alludes to unattractive extensions which may not have planning permission or may be development permitted without the need to apply. However, this would not be sufficient to justify any further harm as it would arise in the manner I have described it.
8. The appellant has identified social, environmental and economic benefits associated with the proposed development, including improved quality and amount of living space and employment opportunities during the construction process. I would attach some weight to these matters but given they would amount to private benefits and be time limited respectively, they would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm and conflict with the development plan I have found, to which I ascribe significant weight.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Douglas

INSPECTOR