



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 27 July 2021

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/21/3272562

65 Station Road, Woburn Sands MK17 8SH

- 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 Warren Kennedy against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/20/01625/FULL, dated 15 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing 1 storey building and erection of 2.5 storey classic car showroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 July 2021 (LP) was adopted since the Council's decision notice was issued. I have therefore made my determination having regard to the adopted LP rather than the former development plan policies cited in the Council's reasons for refusal of planning permission.
3. I have consulted the main parties regarding the updated National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) published in July 2021 and taken the comments into consideration in my assessment.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The area surrounding the appeal site in the vicinity of Station Road has a mix of residential and commercial properties and the buildings are generally single or two storey in height with a traditional style that gives the area a varied, pleasant and spacious feel. In addition, the two-storey pub which lies adjacent to the site has a historic character which along with its prominent position at the junction and wide footpath in front, provides a visual focal point for the area.
6. The existing building is sited along a similar building line to the pub whereas the two storey buildings adjacent to the site to the north are set a significant distance back from the pavement. While the building appears in need of some maintenance and has a form uncommon in the area, given its single storey

height, the existing building sits comfortably in its surroundings and provides a neutral contribution to the character of the area.

7. The proposed building would be two storeys high with a similar form, ridge height and first floor fenestration to the adjacent pub. However, the significantly increased massing of the proposed building together with its siting near the back of the pavement would greatly diminish the spacious aspect of the area that is currently provided by the modest scale of the existing building and open area at the back. While the proposal would not be sited directly adjacent to the buildings to the north, the increased massing would nevertheless appear dominant when viewed from the northern approach as well as from the south. Therefore, rather than providing a focal point, the scheme would visually compete with the historic pub which already provides a pleasant focus for the area.
8. Furthermore, while the proposed first floor would be stepped back from the rear, the proposed building would nevertheless occupy a larger extent of the site and would be significantly taller than existing and this would be visible from the street, thereby reducing the spacious character of the area. While the proposed fenestration and materials would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, this would not override the harm that would result from the much-increased scale and massing of the scheme in the proposed location.
9. Consequently, the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would conflict with LP Policy HQ1 which seeks, among other things that the size, scale and massing relate well to the existing local surroundings. It would also conflict with the Framework in this respect.

Other Matters

10. I acknowledge the evidence regarding the sustainability of the location and the efficient use of land. However, given the harm identified above, these matters have not altered my overall decision.
11. While the scheme would be visible from the rear of the property immediately behind the site, given the separation distance, the scheme would not result in undue harm to the privacy or outlook of the occupiers. The lack of harm with respect to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers does not carry weight in favour of the scheme.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and in the absence of material considerations to indicate otherwise, the appeal is dismissed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR