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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2021 by Darren Ellis MPlan

**Decision by Chris Preston BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 16 September 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/21/3270411**

**9 Parsonage Close, Oakley, MK43 7TG**

- 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 and Mrs Walker against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 20/02469/FUL, dated 21 October 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 December 2020.
  - The development proposed is described as a rear single storey ground floor extension, re-roofing of existing conservatory, garage extension with ancillary family accommodation above, infill lobby between house and garage, new side elevation windows at ground floor level.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Procedural Matter

3. The Government published on 20 July 2021 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration in my decision-making, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

### Main Issue

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

### Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a detached two-storey modern dwelling, built in a distinctive style with mock-Tudor panelling, exposed timber and a Dutch Gable roof. The property has an existing rear conservatory, single-storey side
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extension and a detached double garage to the front. The site is located in a cul-de-sac on Parsonage Close. The dwellings in the street are all similar in appearance and many have detached garages to the front. The garages are of a distinctive design with Dutch Gabled roofs, to match the profile of the associated houses.

6. The estate has a carefully planned feel with dwellings set back from the street with open front gardens and grass verges running up to the edge of the carriageway. Those open front gardens, in addition to the centrally located public green space gives an open and spacious feel to the area. I recognise that the location of the garages throughout the estate provides a sense of enclosure immediately to the front of each dwelling. However, notwithstanding that, the wider estate retains a low-density character and the gardens and open spaces make a positive contribution in that respect, including the open space to the side of the existing garage which is clearly visible at the head of the cul-de-sac. I recognise that the space may not have been a deliberately planned part of the original scheme for the development but that does not diminish its contribution. Overall, the street has a cohesive appearance and rhythm which makes a significant contribution to the character of the area.
7. The proposal would see the existing garage roughly doubled in width, with the existing element converted into a utility room and gym and the extended section housing a new double garage and first floor habitable accommodation. The existing garages in the street are all single-storey double garages and therefore, due to its considerable width, height and massing, the proposed garage building would fail to reflect or complement the existing character of the street. The garage would be noticeably taller and more prominent than the adjacent garage which serves the neighbouring property. The elongated profile would be out of kilter with the carefully planned scale and pattern of garages within the estate which are of a consistent square footprint and the 'stepped' roof profile would contrast awkwardly against the symmetrical and distinctive Dutch Gable of the original garage.
8. In addition, the proposal would cause a significant reduction in the gap between the garage and the neighbouring garage which would result in an almost continuous built frontage between the dwelling at the appeal site and the neighbouring property. When combined with the significant scale of the extended garage that would reduce the sense of openness and result in an uncharacteristically cramped form of development when compared to the wider estate.
9. The proposed rear extension, alterations to the conservatory and infill lobby between the garage and main house would all be constructed in materials to match the existing dwelling and, in the case of the rear extension and conservatory, would not be visible from the street. I note that the Council has raised no objections to these elements of the proposal and from all I have seen and read I conclude that these elements would not detract from the character or appearance of the area.
10. Nevertheless, as the proposed extension to the garage would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area, the proposal would be contrary to policies 28, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan (January 2020) (LP), and policies DH1 and DH2 of the Oakley Neighbourhood Plan (March 2020) (NP). These policies all seek, amongst other things, to ensure

that development complements the character of the area, including with regards to scale, massing and height.

*Other Matters*

11. I understand appellant's desire to provide additional and enhanced habitable space and car parking space for their home. These private benefits of the proposal carry limited weight in favour of the scheme but do not outweigh the harm that has been identified.

**Conclusion**

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

*Darren Ellis*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

**Inspector's Decision**

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

*Chris Preston*

INSPECTOR