



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 20 December 2021

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/21/3273424

7 Caves Lane, Bedford, MK40 3DR

- 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 Marek Wodecki against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02879/FUL, dated 7 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension, front porch and loft conversion with two side dormers and increase to ridge height.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Construction on the rear extension was underway at the time of my site visit. I have determined the appeal accordingly.
3. I have taken the description of development from the appeal form for the sake of completeness as it includes reference to the front porch.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the area; and,
 - The effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, in particular of 9 Caves Lane

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The Caves Lane street scene comprises houses of varied appearance. Nos 7 and 9 are a mirrored pair, linked at ground floor by their garages. They are of a design type repeated in pairs or trios along Caves Lane, intermixed with other design types. Houses in the street scene are generally two storeys and of broadly similar height, with bungalows on corner plots.
6. The appeal proposal would significantly increase the height of the house, resulting in a markedly different pitch to the roof. While there is some variety in the height of houses in the street, this would significantly unbalance this pair of houses in a manner uncharacteristic of similar houses in Caves Lane. The increased height would result in the house appearing incongruous in the street

scene, with side dormers adding further to the mass of the building and its overall uncharacteristic appearance.

7. My attention has been drawn to a house on the opposite side of the road which is significantly taller than the neighbouring houses. However, that house is unique in the vicinity rather than part of a mirrored pair. Its height therefore carries limited weight in the determination of this appeal.
8. The house could be enlarged under permitted development with the addition of up to two additional storeys. However, such an enlargement would appear very different to the appeal proposal, and therefore this possibility also carries limited weight.
9. The height and appearance of the proposed enlarged house would overall cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policies 28S, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (the LP) and guidance in the supplementary planning document Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments (the SPD). Collectively these require that developments contribute positively to the area's character and identity and respect the context within which it will sit and advise that extensions harmonise with the street or setting.

Living conditions

10. The rear extension projects along the shared boundary with No 9, which has a window facing into its rear garden immediately adjacent to that boundary. The eaves of the extension sit just above the boundary fence, and the roof pitch of the extension is shallow. While the extension lies immediately to the south of No 9, on balance it is not so large that it would cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 9.
11. The appeal proposal therefore accords with the criteria of Policy 32 of the LP and guidance in the SPD that extensions not affect the daylight and sunlight enjoyed in neighbours' homes or have an overbearing effect on another property.

Conclusion

12. The appeal proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, although would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
13. There are no material considerations to indicate that this appeal be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, for the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR