



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 February 2022

By A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/22/3291356
29 Wentworth Drive BEDFORD MK41 8QA

- 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 Harris against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 21/02776/FUL, dated 18 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is front side and rear single and two storey extensions with attached sun lounge and cladding/render to new and existing elevations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed rear extension on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - whether the summer room extension would unacceptably harm the living conditions of neighbouring users at 4 Hailes Close

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. 29 Wentworth Drive (No.29) is a detached two-storey dwelling which shares the general form and appearance of dwellings in the adjoining streets including Hailes Close and Fountains Road, but is orientated to look outwards from that established residential area across Wentworth Drive to open space beyond.
4. The proposals include extensions to side, rear (single storey) and front (facing Wentworth Drive) which were the subject of approval in 2017. These works are not addressed by the reasons for refusal and appear to be under construction significantly changing the form and appearance of the host dwelling by the use of external finishing materials which contrast with the mid-twentieth-century domestic architectural language found in Hailes Close and other nearby streets. A key characteristic of those streets is consistency in materials used, fenestration and frontage alignment as well as the contribution to openness made by intervening gaps at first floor level.
5. The appellant acknowledges that the two-storey section of the rear extension would be within 1.0m of its rear boundary (side boundary of No.4) but points

to other variations from what is stated in design code E3 of the Residential Extensions New Dwellings and Small Infill Development 2000 (RENDSID) and states that the overall sense of spaciousness is not harmed.

6. When viewed from Wentworth Drive the different orientation of, and access to, No.29 creates a degree of visual separation from dwellings in Hailes Close such that it might appear to stand apart, visually unrelated to the housing behind. This is something which the previously-approved side-extension would also change as the flank wall of No.29 would sit forward of the general frontage line in Hailes Close. However, my observations of the street scene in Hailes Close are that the different built form, new elevational treatments and new facing materials proposed for the host building would significantly alter the perceived spatial relationships within the line of dwellings that include the appeal property and 1-4 Hailes Close. The separation between No.4 and the host dwelling would be sensitised by the contrasts between the properties and increase the significance of the existing gap with No.29 more than those between the others.
7. The appellant points to other gaps which are 'substandard' (less than 1.5m) however, the proposed upper storey rear extension and its proximity to No.4 would be more obtrusive than these examples as I have explained.
8. For that reason, the proposed rear upper-storey extension would appear to cramp the boundary and harm the character and appearance of the area. I therefore conclude the proposal would conflict with policies 29 (i)&(ii) and 30 (i)&(ii) of the adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (BBLP) which seek to ensure development is of high quality, recognising the character of, and retaining a positive relationship with, the surrounding area, looking to reinforce or retain local distinctiveness through high quality design.

Neighbouring Users

9. The appellant states that the proposed sun room extension would result in an increase of height of the structure at the boundary with No.4 Hailes Close of 0.6m. The eastern orientation of the garden and rear of No.4 limits the likelihood of shading or reduced access to daylight/sunlight from what is proposed. The position of habitable rooms and a generally open aspect available to users of the garden would lead to only minor change to the sense of enclosure, that being on its north side in any event. Consequently, I conclude there would not be an unacceptable impact on openness or overshadowing of the neighbouring garden from the proposed sun room and therefore that the proposal would not conflict with design code E7 of RENDSID or with policy 32 of the BBLP.
10. However, although I have found no conflict with the relevant policies of the development plan to justify the Council's first refusal reason this does not outweigh my conclusion as to the failure to achieve a high standard of design and, therefore, that the proposal does not accord with the development plan taken as a whole. Consequently, taking all matters into account and for the reasons given, the appeal cannot succeed.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR