



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: 10th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/22/3290820
8 Waltham Close, BEDFORD MK41 8DL

- 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 Allen against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 21/02682/FUL, dated 6 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is two storey rear extension, first floor side extension and front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed side extension;
 - on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - on living conditions of neighbouring users

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Waltham Close is a quiet cul-de-sac of large detached houses which, in their original form, would have been of identical design and layout. Although there have been some rear extensions and minor front additions, the spacing of dwellings originally generated by intervening flat-roofed garage and side accesses remains a strong feature in the street scene. This is due to the absence of two-storey side extensions over (or in place of) garages in the street scene.
4. In addition to rear extensions which would have little impact on the street scene, the proposal would involve the infilling to the boundary between the host dwelling and No.9 with a two-storey side extension. Although this side extension would sit behind the garage area and so well back from the façade, the transverse roof pitches employed in the design are alien to the host building form; this employs familiar mid-twentieth-century domestic architectural language of well-defined rectangular roof surfaces without intersecting ridges, valleys or hips. Low-pitch sloping roof surfaces combined with flat roofing to secondary parts (garage, porch) allowed crisp details at eaves and verges and, importantly, at the boundary.

5. The proposal fails to address the boundary with appropriate details such as box eaves found in the host building. The curtailed eaves on the boundary line would be visually discordant, presenting an unbalanced appearance which would be emphasised by the unnecessary false pitch on the garage and the hipped porch. The combination of transverse pitch roof to the side extension and seemingly unresolved eaves details arising from the decision to build on the boundary would significantly undermine the austere simplicity of the original building form which is an important characteristic of the street scene.
6. Taken together, the relevant policies of the adopted Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (BBLP) 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. The appellant suggests that the original dwellings are characterised by 'overly slack roof pitches' and are of little architectural merit. Even if that were the case, the original buildings have a recognisable character which policy expects decisions to address positively.
7. The appellant also suggests that the public realm experience does not include spaces between the dwellings except when 'directly' in front of the flat-roofed garages. Even if these views are limited, the experience in the public realm is about movement through, and perceptions of, the enclosing environment. These dwellings present authentically as discrete two-storey elements in their largely original form, the perception of which would be diminished by physical changes which fail to appreciate the architectural language of the original building. Indirect factors also affect that perception such as the awareness of sunlight shining through the gaps onto flank walls.
8. Overall I conclude that the design of the proposed extension would conflict with Policies 28S(i)&(ii), 29(i)&(ii) and 30(i) of the BBLP and with design codes E1, E2 and E3 of the Residential Extensions New Dwellings and Small Infill Development 2000 (RENDSID) by failing to meet the aspirations of the development plan appearing in these documents for high quality design and that extensions should complement the character of the area.

Neighbouring Users

9. The recent rear extension of No.9 Waltham Close has changed the relationship between the host property and its neighbour. The proposed extension would still extend further to the rear than its neighbour but not significantly so and would therefore, be much less prominent in the outlook from the garden area of No.9 than would previously have been the case.
10. The proposed extension would occupy the shared boundary at a height of two storeys and tightly enclose the side access corridor of No.9. However, the garden of this property is of a good size with, importantly, a southerly and relatively open aspect which would not be affected except at the margins by the proximity and height of the proposed extension.
11. The impact of the proposal on the side access corridor would be significant due to overbearing effect of the proposed wall height along a section of the shared boundary, however this would attract little weight in the overall consideration as the corridor, by its nature, contributes little to the value of outdoor amenity.

12. I therefore conclude that the proposed extension would not unacceptably harm the amenity value of outdoor space at 9 Waltham Close and therefore that there would be no conflict with Policies 30(ii) or 32(iv) of the BBLP or with design codes E7 of RENDSID.
13. However, although I have found no conflict with the relevant policies of the development plan to justify the Council's second refusal reason this does not outweigh my conclusion as to the failure to achieve a high standard of design and, therefore, 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