



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 March 2022

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8TH April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/21/3287869

14 Meadhook Drive, Barton-Le-Clay MK45 4RH

- 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 Peter Young against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/21/02044/FULL, dated 6 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage and erection of part single part two storey side extension (resubmission of CB/21/00861/FULL).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing garage and erection of part single part two storey side extension (resubmission of CB/21/00861/FULL) at 14 Meadhook Drive, Barton-Le-Clay MK45 4RH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CB/21/02044/FULL, dated 6 May 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan: 21.003-01 Rev. 06.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) Before the development hereby permitted is occupied all on site vehicular areas shall be surfaced in a manner to the Local Planning Authority's approval so as to ensure satisfactory parking of vehicles outside highway limits. Arrangements shall be made for surface water from the site to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge into the highway.

Procedural Matter

2. The appellant's appeal submission includes an amended plan (ref. 21.003-01 Rev. 06) showing the removal of the parking space and retention of the existing landscaped area to the side of the appeal property. Having regard to the 'Wheatcroft' principles, as all parties have been consulted and provided with an opportunity to comments on this amendment, I consider that there

would be no prejudice to any party by considering the amended plan. I have determined the appeal on the basis accordingly.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling with a single storey garage attached at the side. It is located within a modern well-established residential cul-de-sac with a mixture of properties set back from the road behind front gardens/driveways with various landscaping areas interspersed between the properties within the housing estate. No. 14 Meadhook Drive being situated on a corner plot has even more expansive grounds, which add to the open and verdant character and appearance of the street scene.
5. The proposal would involve the demolition of the garage and erection of part single part two storey extension at the side. The proposed development, as originally submitted, showed the provision of 3 off-street parking spaces on the garden/landscaped areas to the front and side of the appeal property. Given the site's location, the proposed parking areas would only be visible over short distances when passing the site and would be seen in the context of the current varied architectural styles and character in the surrounding area.
6. I do, however, consider that the loss of the landscaped garden area to the side of the main house and the hard edged appearance of the proposed car hardstanding area would compromise the open and verdant character and appearance of the street scene. The landscaped garden area to the side of the appeal property currently contribute to the character and appearance in this location and assists in softening the impact of the blank side elevation of the main house. Its removal and replacement with the car hardstanding area would contribute to the overall scale of the proposed development, giving it particular prominence in relation to its surroundings. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Meadhook Drive.
7. I note the appellant's comments regarding the design and layout of the proposed development and the landscaping verges proposed around the car hardstanding areas. Whilst this would assist in integrating the proposal with the area, these aspects would not overcome the adverse effects outlined above. However, the appellant has indicated a willingness to retain the existing landscaped garden area to the side, as shown on the amended plan (ref. 21.003-01 Rev. 06), which I consider would address this issue.
8. Against this backdrop, the scale, form and design of the proposed extension and new parking area to the front of the property, as shown on the amended plan, would not appear significantly out of place or excessive in relation to the built form of the host property and the surrounding area. The modest overall scale and proportions of the proposed extension and the new parking area to the front would ensure the proposal would sit relatively unobtrusively against the built form of the main property. The proposal would therefore achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and as such would limit any significant adverse impacts on the street scene.

9. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be consistent with aims of Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2021 (LP) and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide 2014 (CBDG) which, amongst other things, require development proposals to be of the highest quality that that relate well to the existing local surroundings and enhance or reinforce the distinctiveness and character of the area. In addition, the proposal would accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that developments should seek to secure a high quality of design (paragraph 126) that are sympathetic to the local character (paragraph 130).

Other Matters

10. The proposed development, as shown on the amended plan (ref. 21.003-01 Rev. 06), would result in the provision of two off-street parking spaces across the frontage of the site. In terms of parking provision, the Council's Parking Standards set out in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide 2014 requires 3 off-street parking spaces to be provided for a four bedroom semi-detached house in this location, one of which can be provided on-street.
11. The residential road in the vicinity of the vehicular access from the site has footpath provision and street lighting. There are no parking restrictions outside the appeal site and at the time of my site visit, there were parking spaces available nearby, although this was obviously only a snapshot in time. In view of the modest scale of development, I consider that the extra demand for on-street parking generated by the development would be relatively small in the context of the overall supply and availability of parking in the area and would not be significantly materially different to the existing situation on the site.
12. In any event, the appeal site is located in a relatively sustainable location within easy walking distance of the local services and facilities and public transport services and as such provides a viable alternative to the use of the car. Therefore, I consider that the effect of the proposed development on highway safety is likely to be only marginal and certainly not severe, the test set by the Framework for preventing development on highway grounds¹.
13. I have considered the appellant's arguments regarding the fall-back position and the type of car hardstanding areas that can be built under General Permitted Development Rights. Whilst I have given these matters some weight, these material considerations do not outweigh the development plan conflicts, in particular with Policy HQ1 of the LP and the CBDG and does not set a precedent for such an inappropriate development in this location, as originally submitted, for the reasons set out above.
14. I have taken into the account the objections raised by a third party to the proposal including the impact on the character of the area, parking and highway safety. However, I have addressed the matters relating to the area's character and appearance, parking and highway safety in the issues above. I am satisfied that these matters would not result in a level of harm which would justify dismissal of the appeal and can be dealt with by planning conditions where appropriate.

¹ Paragraph 111 of the Framework

Conditions

15. Having regard to the Framework, and in particular paragraph 56, I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have specified the approved plan as this provides certainty. In order to protect the character and appearance of the area, I have imposed a condition requiring that the external surfaces match those of the existing property. A condition relating to the surfacing and drainage of the parking areas is necessary in the interest of highway safety.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR