



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 May 2022

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19TH May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/22/3294684

17 Pearcey Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9LY

- 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 Raj against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02997/FUL, dated 5 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is single storey front, side and rear extensions, and a double storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey front, side and rear extensions, and a double storey side extension at 17 Pearcey Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 9LY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/02997/FUL, dated 5 November 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 following approved plans: 1721/P1 and 1721/P2.
 - 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.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and
 - the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to a sense of enclosure at 12 Darwin Road.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The locality comprises a variety of buildings including terraces. Some of the buildings are located very close to one another. They are of varied form with a mix of hipped and gabled roofs, but their walls are typically finished in render of differing hues, or brickwork.

4. The Council's Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments Supplementary Design Guidance 2000 ('SDG') states that proposals should consider the character of the streetscene, having regard to individual circumstances. It continues at E3 that a two storey extension should normally be sited at least 1.5 metres from a side boundary; and at E1 and E2 that extensions should reflect the basic shape and character of the host, and that in most situations they should 'step down and back' so as to appear secondary to the existing building.
5. This proposed two storey side extension would be just 1 metre from the boundary with 15 Pearcey Road, thus contrary to the advice in the SDG. However, it would be set well back relative to the front face of that property, and it would be finished in grey render in contrast to No 15's red masonry. This would ensure a clear distinction between the two buildings.
6. Whilst the two storey extension would not step down or step back relative to the host, on such a narrow extension to do so would result in an unduly awkward and complex appearance. The extension would respect the basic form and style of the host and it would be faced with matching materials. For all those reasons, and given the fairly diverse character of the area, this part of the scheme would not appear out of place, and it would not cause a harmful terracing effect.
7. The proposed single storey side extension would be prominently positioned on this corner plot, but would be a modestly proportioned structure with a limited height, and would be faced with matching materials, and finished with fenestration to respect the host. Its side elevation would be set back a similar distance from the highway compared to the two storey gabled projection in the attached property at 12 Darwin Road ('No 12').
8. For those reasons, whilst I did not observe similarly designed and positioned nearby extensions on my visit, this one would appear suitably subordinate to the host, and it would not stand out in the streetscene.
9. Summing up, whilst the scheme would not fully satisfy all the SDG's design criteria, having considered the particular circumstances here, it would not harm the character and appearance of the host or the area, and it would comply with its general thrust. The scheme would not conflict with Policies 28S, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (adopted 2020) ('LP') which in broad terms, and amongst other things, require development to promote local distinctiveness and to complement the character of the area.
10. It would also comply with the stance in the National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework') at paragraphs 126 and 130 which set out the need for good design which is sympathetic to local character.

Living conditions

11. No 12 has a ground floor window with an outlook across a pedestrian access and lawn towards the site of the proposed single storey side extension. However, although that extension would abut the boundary, it would have a limited mass due to its low height, its shallow depth and its catslide roof. Additionally, No 12's front door is set well in from the common boundary.

12. Consequently, I am satisfied that this part of the scheme would not cause a harmful impact on the living conditions at No 12 as a result of an overbearing sense of enclosure, or a 'tunnelling' effect.
13. On this issue, the scheme would not therefore conflict with the SDG's advice at E1, E3 and E7, and it would not conflict with the requirements in LP Policies 28S, 29 and 30 for development to consider, and have a positive relationship with, its context. Nor would it conflict with the Framework's stance on ensuring a high standard of amenity.

Conditions and Conclusion

14. For the above reasons, the scheme would not harm the character and appearance of the host property or the area, and it would not harmfully impact the living conditions at No 12. The appeal will therefore be allowed.
15. Turning to the matter of conditions, and having regard to the Framework's tests, I have imposed the standard time limit condition and, in the interests of certainty, a condition requiring that the development be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Additionally, to protect the character and appearance of the host property and the area, a matching materials condition is necessary.
16. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR