



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2022

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/22/3300686

47 Station Road, Flitwick, Bedford, MK45 1JT

- 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 D Ward-Clarke against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/22/00693/FULL, dated 18 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is a new outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on:-
 - the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area;
 - the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers in regard to outlook.

Character and appearance

3. The development plan includes policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (adopted 2021) (LP) which seeks to ensure that all developments are of the highest possible quality and that their size, scale, massing, orientation, materials and appearance relate well to the existing local surroundings.
4. The appeal dwelling is a traditional semi-detached house with a driveway to the side on Station Road which, like many of its neighbours, has a long rear garden. That garden is well screened with tall evergreen trees along its rear boundary and on its western boundary by tall, mainly deciduous trees in the neighbouring garden. On its eastern boundary there is a fence but no significant tall planting alongside. There is a detached, single garage with a pitched roof of some 4m in height sited in the rear garden close to the house which would be demolished as part of this proposal. An existing, timber outbuilding which occupies most of the width of the end of the garden would also be demolished. The appellant's photos show that there are extensions, backland dwellings and outbuildings all of varying sizes in the wider, surrounding area. At my visit I saw that the surrounding gardens within view of the site are domestic in character, some with small scale outbuildings or

- sheds, some of which are sited close to dwellings and others sited at the end of gardens.
5. The proposed outbuilding would provide storage for the appellant's motor home as well as one bedroomed annexe accommodation. The appellant says that the annexe would provide accommodation for a dependent relative and it would form part of the same planning unit, sharing facilities with the existing dwelling. It is clear from the plans that the annexe would share parking and garden space with the main dwelling and I find no objection in regard to its use as an ancillary annexe.
 6. Four parking spaces would be created in place of the existing garage and a new driveway would be formed halfway down the garden between those parking spaces and the new outbuilding. The outbuilding would be L-shaped with a total length of some 17m, a maximum width of some 6.5m and a maximum height of 4m. The roof of the motor home storage area would be flat, whilst the annexe would have a mono-pitched roof. Materials would be dark grey weather board cladding with roof tiles to match the dwelling. A roller shutter door would provide access to the motor home storage area.
 7. Although the new building would replace the two existing buildings, it would have a significantly greater volume and mass by reason of its length and its high flat roof. I have noted that the height proposed is necessary to accommodate the appellant's motor home and that a roller shutter door is required for security. However, its size and scale would be disproportionate to the outbuildings in the immediately surrounding gardens and to the dwelling itself. Although the proposed external materials would be appropriate, its flat roof form and roller shutter door, together with its size and scale, would result in a building more akin to a commercial building rather than a residential outbuilding. I accept that most of the garden would remain turfed but the large area of hardstanding required for the parking and driveway would exacerbate the impact of the building. Whilst it would not be prominent when seen from Station Road due to its siting towards the end of the garden, I saw no other outbuildings of this scale in the immediate surroundings.
 8. I conclude, therefore, that the building would be at odds with the residential character and smaller scale outbuildings of the surrounding area. This would significantly harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area, contrary to development plan policy HQ1.

Living conditions

9. LP policy HQ1 also seeks to ensure that developments do not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon nearby existing or permitted uses, including impacts on amenity.
10. I saw at my site visit that, although not delineated as such on the plans, the adjoining garden along most of the western boundary of the appeal site belongs to no 43, a dwelling next door but one. The adjacent dwelling at no 45 has a much shorter rear garden and adjoins only a short length of the side boundary closer to the house. Although there is a fence and tall trees alongside and within the garden of no 43, there are some gaps between the trees which, in any case, are mostly deciduous and would not provide full screening from the appeal site throughout the year. Whilst that garden is very large and does not have sitting out areas in the lower part of the garden

closest to the proposed building, it contains two small outbuildings and is clearly used as a domestic garden. The considerable length, height and mass of the proposed building would therefore be apparent from that garden and its impact would be greater in winter. Given its proximity to the side boundary with no 43, its size, scale and commercial appearance would be unduly overbearing when seen from there.

11. The eastern boundary of the appeal site adjoins the large rear garden of no 49. The annexe area of the proposed building would be slightly further away from the boundary and would not be significantly greater in length than the existing outbuilding at the end of the garden and in this regard, would be acceptable in terms of its impact on no 49. I also accept that its lean-to roof may have slightly less impact than the gable end of the existing outbuilding. The bulkiest part of the building for the motor home storage area would be sited further away than the annexe from that boundary. However, the absence of any substantial evergreen planting along that boundary within the neighbour's garden and the substantial size of the motor home storage area would mean that it would be seen from that garden very clearly above the fence throughout the year. I noted that there too the garden is large and the sitting out area is closest to the house but there is a small outbuilding at the end of the garden and again it is clearly used as a domestic garden. Given the significant size, scale and commercial appearance of the proposed building, it would therefore appear unduly overbearing when seen from no 49 too.
12. I conclude then that the proposed outbuilding would cause significant harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers at nos 43 and 49 in terms of outlook, contrary to development plan policy HQ1.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed outbuilding would be contrary to the development plan and there are no material considerations that would outweigh this. The appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector