

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2022

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/22/3296087

7 Park Lane, Henlow, SG16 6AT

- 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 S Holland against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/21/05569/FULL, dated 16 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion with rear dormer; and dormer to front on first floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

3. The property is situated towards the edge of Henlow Conservation Area which is characterised by the linear form of this historic settlement. The proposal would result in alterations to the front of the property, including a small dormer, roof lights and a glazed section of gable. No concerns have been raised with regard to these elements. The proposal would also result in a large box style dormer to the rear which would extend across almost the full width and height of the main roof slope.
 4. The large dormer would entirely dominate the rear facing roof slope. Its design would be at odds with the detailing and proportions of the house; and it would appear as a substantial and uncharacteristic new feature. Whilst some effort has been made to align the fenestration with that below, it would nevertheless appear as an incongruous addition that would detract from the proportions and appearance of this property. Given that it would extend across most of the roof, the side facing cheeks would be evident from either side of the property when in Park Lane. The frontage of the dormer would also be visible from Park Lane between buildings to the south; and from High Street, between buildings to the west. It would not be prominent in these views but it would nevertheless detract from the appearance of this property; represent poor design in this
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- context; and it would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
5. The appellant has made reference to other dormer windows within the settlement. The dormer at 6 Chestnut Farm was the subject of a lawful development certificate which indicates that the principle of its design was not considered by the council. The properties at 45 and 47 Meadow Walk are outside the conservation area. Images of other properties have been provided including 99A High Street and 4 The Maltings. Whilst these are in the conservation area, they represent entirely different design details to the appeal proposal. The other developments referred to are not similar to this proposal. I must consider this proposal on its own merits but in any event, there is nothing before me to suggest that that council has been inconsistent in its approach to development such as this in the conservation area. The lack of similar examples suggests the opposite.
 6. The proposal would be at odds with the design requirements of Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015 – 2035 (LP) which requires that all developments are of the highest possible quality and respond positively to their context. LP Policy HE3 advises that development proposals affecting heritage assets, including conservation areas, will be granted provided, amongst other matters, where possible they preserve, sustain and enhance the special character, significance, appearance and/or special architectural or historic interest of the asset in terms of scale, form, proportion, design, materials and the retention of features. The proposal would conflict with these requirements.
 7. With regard to the *National Planning Policy Framework*, the harm to the conservation area would be less than substantial. The *Framework* requires that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. There would be some limited public benefits from the economic activity associated with the construction works required; and there would be benefits with regard to investment in the existing housing stock generally. The public benefits would not however be sufficient to outweigh the harm that would result.
 8. The Central Bedfordshire Design Guide 2014 indicates that dormer windows will only be permitted where they can be inserted without damaging the character and appearance of the dwelling and the wider area; and advises that generally, dormers should take up no more than half the width of the house and should be centred on the windows below. It offers no support for the design proposed.
 9. The proposal would result in conflict with the development plan and the *Framework*. I must also have regard to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which imposes a duty requiring that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
 10. Whilst I have had regard to the matters put forward, including the benefits to the appellant's family, these considerations are not sufficient to outweigh my concerns. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR
