



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2022

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/22/3296312

The Country Kennels, Wood End, Marston Moretaine MK43 0NZ

- 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 Matthew Sugars (Blenheim Realty (Herts) Limited) against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/21/03380/FUL, dated 16 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of an existing dwelling and outbuildings and the erection of a replacement dwelling and double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. It is considered that the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The proposed development includes the demolition of an existing bungalow and other single storey buildings previously used as boarding kennels and their replacement by a 2-storey dwelling which the appellant describes as having a design to reflect an extended Victorian farmhouse. A detached double garage, with a home office within the roofspace, is also proposed sited within the front garden.
4. Policy DC2 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (LP) refers to replacement dwellings in the countryside and includes criteria for the assessment of such proposals. Pursuant to this policy, planning permission has been granted for a 2-storey dwelling generally located on the same site as the appeal scheme (Ref CB/22/01073/FULL). This is a fallback position to which significant weight is given. However, the approved scheme includes a dwelling which is smaller in scale and bulk than the proposed dwelling and does not include a detached garage of the scale, siting and design as this appeal scheme.
5. In addition to the approved replacement dwelling, the Council has granted consent for the re-use of 2 of the larger retained buildings on the wider boarding kennel's site as a dwelling (Ref CB/21/03382/FULL). Prior approval for an extension of 8 metres in depth to the rear of the bungalow has also been approved by the Council (Ref CB/22/03154/GPDE) but, in circumstances where

- planning permission has been granted for a replacement dwelling, only modest weight has been given to this scheme as a fallback position.
6. The existing bungalow forms part of a group of isolated dwellings situated within the open countryside fronting a road providing access to a car park serving Marston Thrift which is a publicly accessible woodland. There is also a public right of way close to the site. The area surrounding these dwellings is predominantly characterised by verdant and open countryside, including the woodland to the rear of the appeal site and field boundaries. Although all the buildings within the site are in a poor condition and their removal would derive some visual benefit, because of their height and the screening by the surrounding vegetation they are not prominent features within the wider landscape.
 7. As a consequence of this proposed development, there would be no increase in the number of residential properties on the appeal site. The footprint of the proposed dwelling would be less than the totality of the buildings being demolished. However, the bulk, scale and height of the proposed dwelling would be materially greater than the existing bungalow. By reason of these differences, the appeal scheme would result in a disproportionately larger replacement dwelling when compared to the existing bungalow, even as proposed to be extended under prior approval. The scale and depth of the proposed 2-storey rear projection significantly contributes to this judgement.
 8. Included as part of the group dwellings within which the site is located, there are 2-storey properties but these are of a simple design and form when compared to the proposed replacement dwelling. Other dwellings within the group comprise bungalows albeit with accommodation within the roofspace. As identified by the appellant, within the wider area there are other 2-storey dwellings which have been extended but these do not form part of the local surroundings. However, they are not part of the predominant form, scale and pattern of development associated with this group of isolated dwellings within the open countryside. These considerations form part of the criteria referred to in LP Policies EE5 and HQ1 to deliver high quality development.
 9. By reason of scale, design and form, including the size of the rear projection and both the side additions to the main 2-storey element, the proposed replacement dwelling would fail to be sympathetic to the setting of the site as part of the isolated group of dwellings within the countryside and it would not reinforce local distinctiveness. This unacceptable harm would be accentuated by the scale, design, external materials and siting of the proposed double garage which would be a prominent feature within the streetscene along the road and which would detract from the open and verdant character and appearance of the surrounding countryside. The existing garage is of a modest size and located to the side of the bungalow. Although larger in footprint, the stable block sited forward of the bungalow is of a design and choice of external materials which are more appropriate within a countryside location and visually less prominent than the proposed garage.
 10. As claimed by the appellant, the demolition of the range of single storey buildings spread across the appeal site, the removal of associated areas of hardstanding and the additional planting of vegetation would result in an overall improvement in the unkempt appearance of the site. However, these improvements could equally be achieved by the implementation of the

approved scheme. Further, the proposed dwelling would be of a larger scale than the approved scheme and, as such, would have a greater visual impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding open and verdant countryside. From the available evidence, it also appears that some buildings to be demolished and removal of some hardstanding could be achieved through the residential re-use of the retained kennel buildings.

11. Accordingly, the matters claimed by the appellant in favour of the appeal scheme are judged not to outweigh the unacceptable harm which has been identified. For the reasons given, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed because the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and, as such, it would conflict with LP Policies DS2, HQ1 and EE5.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR