
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 for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 26th October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/W/22/3297062

18-20 Woodfield Lane, Renhold, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK41 0LH

- 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 Cedarwood Projects Limited against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03195/FUL, dated 9 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing 2 no. bungalows and outbuilding and the erection of 2 no. 4 bedroom dwellings and 1 no. 2 bedroom bungalow and the creation of new accesses from the highway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. It is considered that the main issues are (a) the effects of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and (b) whether the proposed development would provide suitable arrangements for refuse and recycling collection.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The proposed development includes the demolition of a pair of semi-detached bungalows and within their spacious residential curtilages the erection of two 2-storey detached dwellings fronting the road and a bungalow to the rear. Reference is made by the appellant to the appeal scheme being an efficient use of previously developed land but the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) excludes some land in built-up areas, such as residential gardens, from the definition.
4. Although the appeal site is on the edge of Renhold and adjoined by open countryside, the proposed development would be visually and physically related to the built-up part of the settlement, specifically the primarily residential development which fronts Woodfield Lane. The streetscene along Woodfield Lane has a predominantly spacious and verdant character with properties, apart from the village hall, being set back from the road to the rear of landscaped front gardens and generally having noticeable gaps between dwellings.

5. Some development in depth has occurred along Woodfield Lane, including West Close and Nos. 14A and 14B. Other residential developments along the road have included infill plots. The evidence indicates that these other schemes predate the adoption of the extant Bedford Borough Local Plan (LP) and were potentially assessed against different development plan policies. However, these other schemes are part of the character and appearance of the built-up area in this part of Renhold.
6. The built-up area adjacent to the site includes variations in the sizes of the dwellings and their curtilages as is evident from the Ordnance Survey map and the observations made during the site visit. The appellant has indicated that the ratios between a dwelling's footprint and its curtilage varies between 13% and 34%. The footprint of the proposed dwellings is stated to be circa 22%. Although footprint coverage is a useful metric, the built form of the appeal scheme includes the dwellings, parking spaces and manoeuvring areas together with the relationship between the 3 proposed properties.
7. Development in depth associated with the proposed bungalow would not impact directly upon the character and appearance of the streetscene and would echo other residential schemes along Woodfield Lane. However, the proposed 2-storey dwellings would be significantly larger in terms of their footprint, floorspace and volume when compared to the existing bungalows. By reason of their bulk, these dwellings would be visually prominent within the streetscene despite being set back further from the road when compared to the existing bungalows and thereby possessing larger front gardens.
8. Rather than complementing or enhancing the character of the area, the appeal scheme would appear a cramped form of development causing a materially detrimental change to the spacious character and appearance of this edge of settlement site and the streetscene along Woodfield Lane. This loss of spaciousness and the overdevelopment of the site is articulated by the plot size, siting and footprint of the proposed bungalow to the rear of the site; the depth of the 2-storey dwellings' rear gardens relative to the size of their footprints; the close siting of these dwellings to one another and, as already identified, their visual prominent appearance within the streetscene.
9. On this issue it is concluded that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and, as such, there would be a conflict with LP Policies 28S, 29 and 30. Amongst other matters, these policies require development to have a positive relationship with the surrounding area, integrating well with and complementing the character of the area in which the development is located and taking the opportunities to enhance the character and quality of the area.

Refuse and Recycling Collection

10. The Council's *Technical Guidance: Waste and Recycling in New Developments* (the Guidance) reflects the requirements of the Building Regulations whereby occupiers should not need to carry refuse more than 30 metres to the bin storage area and such areas should be within 25 metres of any waste collection point. However, Building Regulations are separate from any planning requirement and the Guidance does allow, in exceptional circumstances, a collection point remote from a dwelling or dwellings.

11. The Council's Waste Services Manager raised no objection regarding the proposed 2-storey dwellings provided an unobstructed access pathway of at least 1.2 metre wide was provided to enable residents to wheel bins to/from the rear gardens to the collection point. For the proposed bungalow, the concern was that the future occupier would be required to drag any bins over 25 metres for collection.
12. As part of the appeal, the appellant has submitted a drawing identifying that bin storage and collection points could be provided in accordance with the distances specified in the Guidance. Although this is not a drawing which was part of the appeal application assessed by the Council, it does demonstrate that suitable arrangements for refuse and recycling collection could potentially be provided pursuant to a suitable condition without material changes to the layout of the scheme.
13. Subject to an appropriate condition, it is concluded that the proposed development could provide suitable arrangements for refuse and recycling collection and, as such, it would not conflict with LP Policies 29 and 32 of which, amongst other matters, require development to integrate functional needs such as refuse/recycling storage and collection points.

Conclusion

14. Although it has been assessed that the suitable arrangements for refuse and recycling collection could be provided, this issue is demonstrably and substantially outweighed by the unacceptable harm caused to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Accordingly, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR