



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2022

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/22/3302173

14 Bradford Road, Toddington LU5 6EQ

- 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 N Jarrett against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/22/00937/FULL, dated 7 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is first floor side extension and loft conversion with a new roof to the bay window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed side dormer and first-floor side extension on the character and appearance of the host house and streetscene.

Reasons

3. No.14 Bradford Road (No.14) is a two-storey semi-detached house with a hipped roof and front ground and first-floor bay window. To the side, is a single storey extension with porch which projects slightly forward of the main elevation of the house. It is proposed to extend at first floor the full width of this existing single storey extension, continuing the ridgeline of the existing hipped roof. Although set back from the single storey front elevation, behind the pitched roof, the proposed first-floor would nonetheless extend the building line of the main front elevation of No.14.
4. The Council's *Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (CBDG) (2014)* carries weight as a material consideration in decision making. The CBDG guidance is that side extensions (to semi-detached houses) should be set back from the front elevation by at least 300mm and the ridge height dropped to lower than the main ridge. By not providing a set back from the main front elevation, or a set down from the main ridgeline, the proposed extension would be in clear conflict with this guidance.
5. No.14 very slightly splays away from its non-attached neighbour at No.12 Bradford Road (No.12) and consequently the side extension would not result in a terracing effect whereby the spaciousness between houses is entirely lost.

However, it's design means that it would fail to be subordinate to the host house appearing a dominant addition, excessive in scale.

6. The CBDG guidance is also that semi-detached houses are normally designed as a matching pair and it is important that this character is not compromised by any new extension. I observed on my site visit that No.14's attached neighbour, at No.16 Bradford Road, also benefits from a single storey extension but this is set back from the front elevation with a gable to the road behind double gates. It has a recessed porch, with arch doorway, rather than the projecting porch extension seen at No.14. Therefore, save the hipped roof and two-storey bay, which provide some symmetry, the appearance of No.14 and No.16 is already quite different and they are no longer the type of matching pair the CBDG guidance seeks to protect. The proposed side extension would not result in a further loss of symmetry such that it would cause harm to the character of No.14 and No.16 as a pair.
7. To the side roofslope of the extended hipped roof, a dormer window is proposed to facilitate a sixth bedroom in the roofspace. The dormer itself has been designed with a hipped roof with its ridge just below the ridge of the main roof. It would be sited centrally within the roofplane, and notably offset from the front edge, but its depth of projection means that the cheeks of the dormer would be visible in the streetscene. Whilst views of these cheeks would be filtered to a degree during the summer months by the tree in the front garden of No.12, it would nonetheless add to the scale and prominence of the side extension, already found excessive.
8. I observed on my site visit that whilst there is some variation in style and type of housing on Bradford Road, the mix is not eclectic as described by the appellant, rather houses are traditional in appearance with either hipped or pitched roofs (some with small facing gables). I did not find side dormers (or indeed dormers at all) to be characteristic of the streetscene of this part of Bradford Road and the proposed side dormer would, therefore, be both a prominent and incongruous addition.
9. My attention has been drawn by the appellant to other examples of first-floor or two-storey side extensions and dormer windows. I do not have all of the relevant planning history of those cases before me, but, from the information available, the side extensions are either offset from the front elevation or down from the ridgeline (or both) of the host house, or the examples have a different context – so detached, or a corner plot. I find none of the examples to be directly comparable to the proposal before me, nor do they provide justification for the harm that would be caused in this case.
10. I therefore conclude on the main issue that the proposed first-floor side extension and side dormer would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host house and streetscene. Consequently, in addition to the conflict with the CBDG, the proposal would conflict with Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (2021) and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Together, these require developments, including extensions, to be of high quality design that enhance local distinctiveness and character.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has argued that rear and side facing dormers of a 'greater scale' and a hip to gable roof enlargement could be installed without planning permission by virtue of permitted development rights afforded to No.14. I have, however, been provided with no substantive evidence regarding the cubic content of the resulting roofspace or information to show whether the conditions of Schedule 2, Part 1, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order (2015) would or could be met. Therefore, this consideration carried limited weight in this case.

Conclusions

12. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Jones

INSPECTOR