



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2022

by M Ollerenshaw BSc(Hons) MTPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/22/3298493

26 Lea Road, Ampthill, Bedford MK45 2PT

- 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 Mrs Bradbury against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/22/01064/FULL, dated 9 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is new dwelling and new vehicular access to existing house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site address used in the banner heading above is taken from the appeal form which is more precise than that given on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development proposed on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site relates to a two storey detached dwelling and its associated domestic curtilage located on the corner of Lea Road and Chestnut Close. The rear garden runs parallel with Chestnut Close and there is an open aspect here due to the generous size of the rear garden and its position on a curve in the road. The rear garden includes a driveway which gives access to a detached garage at the rear of the plot.
5. The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by two storey semi-detached properties, though they are also some detached and terraced houses. Properties are generally laid out in a linear fashion and set back from the road with front gardens and driveways. This contributes positively to a spacious and harmonious appearance.
6. The proposed development comprises of a two storey detached dwelling which would front Chestnut Close. The front of the proposed dwelling would be positioned notably closer to the highway than the properties on the opposite side of Chestnut Close to the north and would result in the loss of the open character on this corner of the road. It would project forward towards the highway due to its position in the bend in the road and create an uncharacteristic sense of enclosure. 26 Lea Road presents a relatively narrow

gable end to Chestnut Close and relates more to Lea Road. It is not comparable to the appeal proposal.

7. Whilst the proposal would have a smaller footprint than the surrounding existing semi-detached properties, it would not reflect the prevailing open and spacious character of this part of Chestnut Close. The position of the proposal on the bend and its orientation means that it would not relate well to the properties to the south of Chestnut Close which are arranged in linear fashion.
8. Whilst there is a less open character to the southern part of Chestnut Close, due to its orientation and position on the bend the proposal would be viewed largely in the context of the more spacious part of Chestnut Close to the north, where properties are set back a comfortable distance from the road.
9. The proposal would be highly prominent within the street scene of Chestnut Close and it would also be partially visible from Lea Road. From these vantage points the siting of the proposed dwelling would result in an incongruous addition. Unlike other properties on Chestnut Close, the proposed dwelling would be detached, but in its general design and materials it would be broadly reflective of properties in the surrounding area. However, the siting of the proposal would fail to reflect the pattern of development in the area and would be harmful to the established street scene.
10. The appellant refers to a number of existing residential properties situated on corner plots or close to the highway and other developments which have been approved elsewhere in the area. Although I do not have the full details of these other developments before me, I do not consider that the appeal scheme would be comparable to the other developments because they have a different context. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed dwelling would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2021) and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2014) which, amongst other things, require high quality development that responds positively to its context. The proposal would also conflict with paragraphs 126 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which, amongst other things, seek high quality development that is sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

12. Interested parties have raised other concerns in relation to the effect of the proposal on highway safety, parking provision and the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, particularly in relation to privacy. The Council have not raised objections to the proposal on these grounds and I have no reason to disagree with that assessment based on the evidence before me and my observations on site. However, the absence of harm in relation to these matters is neutral rather than weighing positively in favour of the proposal.
13. The appellant argues that the development proposed would make better use of land and utilise previously developed land. However, in the manner proposed this would be at the expense of the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would offer potential benefits in terms of providing a new dwelling to the Council's housing stock in an accessible location. The scheme would also have economic benefits through employment opportunities

created during the construction phase of the development and spending in the local area by future occupants. However, the weight attributable to these matters is limited given the modest scale of the development proposed and would be outweighed by my findings as to the harm which would be caused.

Conclusion

14. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that I should take a different decision other than in accordance with this. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Offerenshaw

INSPECTOR