



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 August 2022 by Darren Ellis MPlan

Decision by Chris Preston BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/21/3286998

18 Condor Drive, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 4DX

- 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 & Mrs Matthew & Tracy Barry against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/21/03336/FULL, dated 15 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is new roof to raise ridge and convert loft with front & rear facing dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal property consists of a two-storey detached dwelling. The street scene comprises a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced two- and three-storey buildings, built with similar materials but with a range of designs. The variety in house types helps to provide an attractive streetscape but there remains a sense of coherence on account of the fact that each house type is regularly repeated throughout the wider street scene. This provides the impression of a carefully planned estate and has resulted in an attractive residential environment. The house type at the appeal site is replicated on other corner plots, including the two identical dwellings on Condor Drive which frame the entrance to Puffin Place, a short distance away. The consistency in design and height is a notable feature of corner plots in the vicinity.
 5. Dormer windows are a common feature of the estate. Numerous properties, typically semi-detached or terraced dwellings, have small front dormers that are centrally positioned on the roof of each dwelling such that they do not dominate the roofslope.
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6. Due to the position and orientation of the property on a corner plot, the rear roofslope is highly visible and prominent in the street. The proposed rear dormer would be significantly larger than the existing dormers that are visible in the street. It would not be centrally positioned on the roofslope or in relation to the two proposed rooflights. The rear dormer would result in a top-heavy and excessively bulky appearance that would unbalance the appearance of the roof. The unsympathetic scale and appearance would be further emphasised as a result of the proposed increase in the height of the roof which would add to the prominence of the dormer and the overall bulk of the dwelling. This would erode the carefully planned consistency of corner plots along Condor Drive, to the detriment of the attractive and coherent design of the estate.
7. The front dormers would be of a comparable scale and design to existing front dormers in the street scene and would be largely aligned with the fenestration below such that they would not cause harm to the appearance of the dwelling or the surrounding area. However, notwithstanding the absence of harm in that respect, the proposed rear dormer and the increased roof height would be discordant with the appeal property and the street scene and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
8. The appellant states that a rear dormer could be permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). However, no drawings of a dormer that meets the requirements of permitted development have been submitted. Furthermore, the raising of the roof height would require full planning permission and it has not been demonstrated that sufficient headspace could be achieved without increasing the roof height. As such, it is not clear that a comparable development could be constructed and the suggested fall-back position does not add weight in favour of approving the appeal scheme.
9. The proposal therefore would conflict with Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (July 2021), which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that development is of the highest possible quality and that development proposals relate well to the existing local surroundings. The proposal would also fail to accord with the guidance of section 7 of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (September 2014), which seeks for dormer windows not to damage the character and appearance of the dwelling and wider area, and the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion and recommendation

10. There are no material considerations which indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal be dismissed.

Darren Ellis

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

12. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

Chris Preston

INSPECTOR