



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2022

by K Ford MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/22/3307559

21 Wood Road, Harrold, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 7BS

- 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 Dina Malick against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00682/S73A, dated 22 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is part retrospective application for a single storey outbuilding and the erection of a replacement boundary fence.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a 2 storey semi-detached dwelling in a corner location at the entrance to a cul de sac on Wood Road. To the side of the dwelling an outbuilding has been erected and the boundary of the property is marked by a tall dark grey composite fence. The wider area is characterised by similarly styled houses but with notably lower boundary treatments comprising a mix of low brick walls, fencing and/ or vegetation. This, along with surrounding fields creates a semi-rural verdant character.
4. The outbuilding has a shallow pitch roof and has rendering similar to the main dwelling. The appearance is prominent in the street scene due to the position, scale and massing of the building and the difference in the roof pitch compared to the main dwelling. Together these features create an incongruous addition which the landscaping and proposed changes, including timber cladding, window amendments and black UPVC features would do little to ameliorate. Whilst the height of the building may not be significantly greater than what is allowed under permitted development rights, the overall scale, design and location would cause harm and given the size of the development it would not look like a garden outbuilding, as proffered by the appellants.
5. It is proposed that the existing composite fence be replaced with timber panels and reduced in height to some 2 metres with the existing panels closest to the front façade of the outbuilding being removed and replaced with a raised planter area. The position and height of the fence would mean visually it would stand out in stark contrast to other boundary treatments in the vicinity. Whilst

the proposed materials would be more acceptable than the existing fence, it's height would mean that it would still appear as a bulky feature, despite the removal of panels at the front of the site. Whilst it is not the case that no boundary treatment would be acceptable, I disagree with the appellant in their view that the visibility of any garden paraphernalia would be more harmful than the proposal.

6. The appellant says that there are numerous examples of tall fences on corner plots in Harrold which they reference in support of the scheme. They also refer to an appeal decision that was allowed. I did not witness any fences of the size or nature of that proposed in the immediate vicinity on my site visit. I do not know the circumstances in which the examples referenced by the appellant were erected. Nevertheless, they are in different locations where the circumstances will be invariably different and therefore not directly comparable to the case before me. Each case is determined on its own merits and my assessment is based on the information before me.
7. Irrespective of the absence of objections from neighbours and the Highways Authority, the development would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such it would conflict with Policies 28, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Local Plan 2030 which says development should be of high quality design, have a positive relationship with the surrounding area, integrating well and complementing the character of the area. It would also conflict with the objective of the Harrold Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2030 which requires new development to be in keeping with the existing character of the village and be sensitively designed taking opportunities to protect and improve the character and appearance, beauty and safety of the village.

Other Matters

8. The appellant has referenced that land opposite to the appeal site has been allocated for 8 new dwellings which they say will impact on the verdant character of the area. Whilst the development of what is currently a field will invariably impact on the character of the area, this does not make the proposed development acceptable. In any event, my assessment is based on the current information before me.
9. Whilst the appellant has indicated a willingness to make further amendments to the scheme, the appeal process is not the place to further a proposal.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons identified, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Ford

INSPECTOR