



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2023

by Mrs Chris Pipe BA(Hons), DipTP, MTP, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/22/3311741

111 Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7QP

- 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 Neelam against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01078/FUL dated 14 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 26 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as One and two storey front, side and rear extensions, loft conversion with rear dormer, landscaping to front and rear gardens with parking and bin storage and subdivision to form 3 flats.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Amended plans were submitted during the application process which were not considered by the Council. The Appellant claims that the Council should have considered the amended plans. Whilst amending an application is not unusual during the determination process it is at the discretion of the Council as to whether they consider amendments to a scheme. I have therefore considered this appeal on the basis of the plans refused, as outlined on the decision notice.
3. The appeal was made on a householder appeal form, during the course of the appeal the process was changed to the correct procedure. Parties were informed of this change and given the opportunity to participate. No party would be prejudiced or caused any injustice by me proceeding with the appeal in light of this change in procedure.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the development on (i) the character and appearance of the area; and (ii) highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached property located in a mixed use area, the site is bounded by residential properties whilst commercial units are located adjacent. A car dealership is opposite the appeal site. The site fronts Woburn Road which at the time of my site visit was a busy highway.

6. The Council contend that the proposed development would lead to a car dominated frontage adjacent the public realm, they have not raised issue with the character and appearance of the proposal for any other aspect. From the information I have before me I do not disagree.
7. A number of properties in the area have off street parking areas to the front of the properties, however the majority retain some form of green space such as grass or landscaping. The car dealership opposite has a car park on the corner of Woburn Road and Postley Road.
8. The proposed development would remove amenity space from the appeal site however a hedge is proposed to be retained at the front of the property which would screen the proposed car parking to a degree. The creation of an area of hardstanding to accommodate cars would not be out of keeping with the surrounding area.
9. I conclude that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. There is conflict with Policies 28S, 29 and 30 of the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030 (2020) (the Local Plan) which seek amongst other things to ensure development is of high design quality and responds positively to the character and context of an area.

Highway Safety

10. A car parking layout has been provided in support of the proposal which details four car parking spaces and cycle parking. The proposal is to create 3 units, 2 x 1-bed units and 1 x 2-bed unit.
11. The Council's Parking Standards for Sustainable Communities: Design & Good Practice Guide (2014) sets out the minimum standards for car parking for residential properties. In this case there would be a requirement for 5 parking spaces. The proposed development does not comply with the standards.
12. As I have found that the proposed annotated room configuration of 2 x 1 bedroom units and 1 x 2 bedroom unit do not comply with the parking standards, there is no need for me to consider whether the home office in the proposed ground floor unit could be used as a bedroom.
13. Woburn Road is a busy highway, vehicles reversing onto the carriageway would have highway safety implications. A swept path analysis has been provided illustrating that vehicles can leave in a forward gear from the proposed parking spaces. Notwithstanding this there is no turning area proposed within the site which would allow vehicles unable to park to be able to do a three-point turn and leave in forward gear.
14. Due to the non-compliance with parking standards and lack of a turning area I conclude that the development would harm highway safety. There is conflict with Policy 31 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that developments do not have any significant adverse impact to the public highway.

Conclusion

15. I have found that the development would not harm the character and appearance of the area however this does not outweigh the harm I have identified in term of highway safety.
16. For the above reasons I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

C Pipe

INSPECTOR