



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2023

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 18 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/23/3315847

67 Bedford Road, Barton Le Clay, Bedfordshire MK45 4LL

- 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 Gill against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/22/04257/FULL, dated 17 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a first floor garage extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. It is considered that the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The proposed development includes the erection of first floor extension, with a pitched roof, above a detached flat roof garage which is within the front garden of a detached 2-storey dwelling. The proposed first floor accommodation would enable the appellant to work from home reflecting the *National Design Guide's* recognition that remote working is one way of adapting to changing needs.
4. However, the *National Design Guide* also refers to well-designed new development responding positively to the features of the site and its surrounding context beyond the site boundary. This approach is echoed in Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (LP) where, amongst other matters, development proposals should take account of opportunities to enhance or reinforce the local distinctiveness of the area and create a sense of place, and be of a size, scale, massing, orientation, materials and appearance that relates well to the existing local surroundings and reinforces local distinctiveness.
5. The host dwelling and garage are set well back from Bedford Road and they are surrounded by mainly 2-storey residential properties. From what could be observed during the site visit, other outbuildings within the surrounding area comprise garages and smaller timber sheds. There were no 2-storey outbuildings of the type proposed by the appeal scheme.
6. The Council has not raised any objections to the proposed development failing to preserve the character and appearance of the Barton Conservation Area.

Further, and in exercising its statutory duty, the Council has not identified that the appeal scheme would fail to preserve the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. There are no reasons to disagree with the Council's assessments and the proposed development would not cause harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets.

7. From Bedford Road the view towards the proposed development is generally confined to a narrow corridor between 2 dwellings and along the vehicular access to the host dwelling. The roof of the enlarged garage would be visible but it would not be so conspicuous so as to cause any material harm to this streetscene. From Bedford Road the appeal scheme would not conflict with the guidance contained in the *Central Bedfordshire Design Guide* concerning garages not being intrusive in the streetscene.
8. The boundary fence between the garden of 69 Bedford Road and the footway along Nicholls Close has been removed and there are open views of the existing garage from this road. With the benefit of the photographs provided by the appellant, these open views are acknowledged to be unrepresentative of what might be the more traditional streetscene along this road.
9. However, because of its height and scale the appeal scheme would still be seen above any replacement boundary of a similar height as the one removed and would be an intrusive feature in the streetscene along Nicholls Close. The first floor and roof of the resulting garage would clearly be seen for a greater length along Nicholls Close than the 10-metres claimed by the appellant. It would represent an incongruous and visually conspicuous form of development which would not relate well to the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area, including other outbuildings which are of a smaller size. Although the enlarged garage would retain the same footprint and possess lower ridge and eaves heights, the scale of the appeal scheme would visually compete with the host dwelling, including when viewed from adjacent gardens.
10. Reference is made by the appellant to a first floor garage extension within Bedford Borough. However, this scheme has been assessed against the policies and guidance of this neighbouring Council and, although the drawing and decision notice have been provided, there is no information concerning the context of this other scheme, including photographs from surrounding roads. This other decision also pre-dates the *National Design Guide*. Only limited weight is given to this other scheme in the determination of this appeal.
11. A condition to introduce landscaping within the curtilage of the host dwelling has been suggested by the appellant to assist with screening the proposed development. However, the standard timescale for the maintenance of landscaping is 5-years and there can be no certainty that any planting would be retained after this period.
12. Accordingly, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed because the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and, as such, it would conflict with LP Policy HQ1.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR