



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 June 2023

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/B0230/D/23/3319264
71 Stanton Road, Luton LU4 0BJ

- 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 J Raksina against the decision of Luton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 22/01256/FULHH dated 30 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2023.
 - The application is for erection of two storey front/side extension with addition of canopy at front, single storey rear extension and conversion of garage to habitable space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the Council's Decision Notice and differs from that used on the Application Form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the Council's Decision Notice that I feel more accurately describes the proposed development.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of neighbours.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached house occupying a generous plot within this area of mainly residential, suburban properties. I saw on my site visit that the property was formerly named after a farm and it may be possible that this building predates many of the other houses around it or was a rebuild of an earlier agricultural building. This contributes to some of the visual differences in the appeal property when compared to the other, more suburban and standard house types that predominate in the area.
5. The property is already something of a substantial building but its massing and scale are reduced through the use of double gable features and low eaves, as well as the asymmetry that appears to echo something of a more vernacular tradition. The generous front garden also allows the property to retain a setting of spaciousness that is relatively unique in the area. To the rear there are also

existing single storey, flat roof elements that are well set into the prevailing topography along with a swimming pool that was under a low shelter of sorts on my visit.

6. As mentioned above, most other properties in the area are of a more suburban character and generally front onto the streetscene with smaller gardens or driveways. Those houses to the south of the appeal property, along Toland Close, are set much closer to the street frontage and some properties face directly upon the long side elevation of the appeal house.
7. The proposal before me seeks to increase the size, scale and appearance of the property through both side, rear and front extensions in order to increase the living accommodation and bedrooms. The most notable changes would be to the side elevation adjacent to Toland Close where a full two storey extension would be created upon an area of side garden area. This would be echoed by the creation of two new gables to the property's frontage with a central porticoed doorway creating a much more 'polite' architectural form.
8. In assessing the impact of this proposal I am aware of the policies within the Luton Local Plan (LLP) that reflect the aspirations contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework). These generally seek to achieve good design and to ensure proposals respond well to the character and appearance of an area as well as respecting the amenities of neighbours.
9. The proposal before me, although offering a scheme that could physically be accommodated within the property curtilage, would introduce extensions that largely fail to accord with Policy LLP19 of the Luton Local Plan. This is principally due to two reasons. Firstly, the proposal would clearly dominate the existing property and considerably alter the character and appearance of the existing house. Where there is currently a building of asymmetry and vernacular inspired proportions, there would be, in its place, a much grander house that loses much of this subtlety and therefore causes some minor harm to the character of the streetscene.
10. Although this in itself would not lead me to conclude against this appeal, this harm is compounded through the introduction of what would be a large side extension to the south. I saw on my site visit that the front aspect from numbers 7 and 8 Toland Close are very much impacted on by the appeal site. Currently, however, due to the slight set down of the appeal site from the street and the intervening gap and foliage provided by this area of side garden, the existing house is not overly dominant, despite its windows being clearly visible.
11. However, the proposals within this scheme would significantly extend the amount of built form along this elevation and would introduce eight windows within around 13 metres of the front elevation of the properties on Toland Close. As a result of this I consider that the proposal would create a harmfully dominant impact upon both numbers 7 and 8 Toland Close and would create a harmful change to the streetscene here whereby the road is further enclosed to its detriment.
12. Although I consider that there would be ways to extend this property in a way that could potentially alleviate the impact upon the neighbours and the streetscene here, I find that the proposal before me would result in harm to

the character of the area and the amenities of those residents at numbers 7 and 8 Toland Close. As such the proposal before me would be contrary to Policies LLP19 and LLP25 of the Luton Local Plan and the aspirations for high quality design as advanced in The Framework.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has directed my attention to other examples nearby where sizeable extensions have been allowed in the past. I have however no information before me as to the precise reasons or background to these developments or the precise situations that gave rise to them. As such I cannot be certain that the circumstances are the same as the case before me and as such I can give these other examples only very limited weight.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

A Graham

INSPECTOR