



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 July 2023

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/23/3322552

134 Aldbanks, Dunstable, Central Bedfordshire LU6 1AJ

- 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 Christopher Harvey against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/23/00562/FULL, dated 16 February 2023, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is to build a side extension to be 1.2m wide and 2 storeys to match the size of the original building which is 7.0m deep, there will be no windows facing the side, only front and rear, the roof will match the existing roof and construction is to be brick, similar to other properties in the street that have been repaired and the purpose is to enlarge the kitchen, provide a cloak room downstairs, extend the smallest bedroom and increase the size of the bathroom upstairs.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to build a side extension to be 1.2m wide and 2 storeys to match the size of the original building which is 7.0m deep, there will be no windows facing the side, only front and rear, the roof will match the existing roof and construction is to be brick, similar to other properties in the street that have been repaired and the purpose is to enlarge the kitchen, provide a cloak room downstairs, extend the smallest bedroom and increase the size of the bathroom upstairs in accordance with the terms of the application Ref CB/23/00562/FULL, dated 16 February 2023, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: DRG1 Rev 1, DRG2 Rev 1, DRG3 Rev 1, DRG4 and DRG5.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall be in accordance with the details set out on the application form.

Preliminary matter

2. The description of the proposed development listed above is a condensed version of that shown on the application form, leaving out some of the words which give supplementary information rather than describing the proposal.

Main issue

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

Reasons

4. 134 Aldbanks is a semi-detached system built, 2 storey, white painted house, on a street of similar houses and bungalows. Some of these have been improved, with rendered or brick faced walls replacing the pre-fabricated panels. The appellant indicates that he plans to carry out similar improvements, refacing the house with bricks. As part of this project he proposes to building a slender 2 storey extension to the side, to the full depth and height of the existing gable.
5. The Council is concerned that narrowing the gap between buildings would cause a terracing effect, giving the 2 pairs of semi-detached houses the appearance of a terrace, and that the extension would not be visually subservient to the main house. Its Central Bedfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (DG) advises that side extensions should maintain at least a 1 metre gap to the side boundary, should be set back at least 300mm at the front and should be lower than the main house. They should also respect the design of semi-detached houses as a matching pair.
6. In this case there is a clear need to improve the existing house, which was built in the post-war years as temporary housing. The appellant advises that the outer walls will need rebuilding, which creates an opportunity to upgrade the house's appearance as has been done elsewhere in the street.
7. Although the proposed extension would not be set back at the front or set down at roof level, it would seamlessly incorporate into the improved house. Due to its restricted width the extension would be a modest addition to the building that would not be at all remarkable in the street scene. The use of different facing materials would imbalance the pair of semi-detached houses more than the very narrow extension would, but this is a part of the natural evolution of these houses and in character with others in on the street. A significant visual gap would be retained so that there would still be views through the frontage and the houses would not be perceived as a terrace.
8. I conclude that the proposal would complement and not harm the character and appearance of the house and the local area. It accords with the shared aims of policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035, the DG and the National Planning Policy Framework, to secure high quality design that reinforces local distinctiveness.
9. I impose a condition specifying the relevant plans to provide certainty and another requiring the use of materials as proposed, to protect local character and appearance.

10. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR