
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2023

by Elaine Benson BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/23/3317116

Land to the rear of 25 West Road, Sandy SG19 1HB

- 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 Tristan Harrington-Smith against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/22/04258/FULL, dated 5 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is construction of new bungalow within plot to rear of existing house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. These are the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and its effect on the living conditions of future and neighbouring occupiers.

Reasons

3. The appeal site was formerly part of the rear garden of 25 West Road (No 25), which stands at the junction of West Road and South Road. The surrounding residential area contains two-storey houses and bungalows. The scale and height of the proposed single-storey dwelling would reflect those of the bungalows directly opposite. Buildings in this locality are set back behind front gardens and there are wide grass verges at the road junction facing the appeal site. These undeveloped areas lend the area an open character.
4. The footprint of the proposed bungalow would extend across the depth of the site and would result in uncharacteristic, hard development at the back of the pavement. The bungalow would be set behind the building line of the flank wall of the extended No 25 but would stand well forward of the front elevation of 2 South Road, its primary visual context. This unduly prominent siting would jar unacceptably with the open character of existing development.
5. The rear wall of the bungalow would also be tight to the boundary with 27 West Road (No 27). Consequently, there would be little space to its front and rear, leading to a cramped appearance. The proposed garden would be smaller than those surrounding the site and, uncharacteristically, would be at the side of the proposed bungalow. Furthermore, the garden dimensions do not comply with

the 10m depth recommended in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2014) (CBC DG).

6. When considered together, the foregoing factors amount to a form of development that would appear cramped within its site. Its plot size and shape would not reflect the pattern and grain of development in the locality.
7. The appellant refers to a bungalow erected at the rear of 43 West Road (No 43). This development was approved some years prior to the adoption of the current local plan and design guidance. But in any event, No 43, and the other examples provided by the appellant, are set back from their road frontages and appear to stand within more spacious plots than would the appeal proposal. Notwithstanding these factors, each planning application should be determined on its own individual merits, including taking account of its specific context, and assessed against the current relevant policies and standards. These examples do not therefore affect my conclusions.
8. I conclude that the proposal would constitute a cramped, unsympathetic form of development that would be out of character with the surrounding pattern and grain of development. It does not represent high quality layout and design and does not respond positively to its context. For these reasons the scheme is contrary to Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2021 (CBLP), the standards set out in the CBC DG and the design requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
9. Turning to the second main issue; it appears that the proposed internal floorspace is at the threshold of the National Space Standards and local design standards and therefore acceptable. However, this does not affect the conclusion that the building would be cramped within the site. Any overlooking of the proposed garden would be the same as when the land was part of the garden for No 25. Future occupiers would be aware of the size of the bungalow and the garden before taking up residence. I conclude that there would be no harm to the living conditions of future occupiers.
10. The proposed bungalow would extend for some distance along the garden boundary with No 27. As it would be single storey with a pitched roof sloping away from the boundary, it would not result in a loss of light to the neighbouring rear garden area, nor have an overbearing impact on the occupiers. I am unconvinced that the proposed roof lights would give rise to a perception of overlooking. I conclude that there would be no harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 27 in this regard. Whilst the Council is concerned about the size of the retained garden area for No 25, it is not part of the appeal site is not therefore before me in this appeal.
11. I conclude that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of future occupiers or those of neighbouring occupiers. Accordingly, there is no conflict with the aims of CBLP Policy HQ1 paragraph 11 and the CBC DG.

Overall conclusion

12. All other matters raised have been considered, including the planning objections made by local residents. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Elaine Benson INSPECTOR