
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 November 2023

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16TH November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/23/3329569

31 Highlands Road, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire MK18 1PN

- 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 and Mrs P Sanders against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council – North Area (Aylesbury).
 - The application Ref 23/01280/APP, dated 24 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 17 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey central extension and one and half storey side extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. While the appellants have described the proposal as in the above heading the Council has referred to it as raising the roof with the addition of a first floor to form a one and a half storey dwelling, demolition of the conservatory and the erection of one and a half storey rear extensions with fenestration alterations. From my inspection of the plans, the Council's more fully describes the development sought. I have assessed the appeal scheme on that basis.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and the local area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow that faces Highlands Road within a predominantly residential area. It has a relatively wide front elevation facing the road compared to its depth into the good-sized plot. The walls are mainly brick with some sections that are vertically tiled. The main roof is tiled with a hipped end on one side and a gable on the other. The appeal dwelling stands within a line of single storey properties that address the same side of the road. The simple design, modest height, and mostly low-key presence of the existing bungalows within this row gives the street scene to which No 31 belongs a broad uniformity, which positively contributes to the character of the local area.
5. The proposal to enlarge and alter No 31 has been designed primarily to introduce a new first floor with a raised main ridgeline and a new central gable feature at the front flanked by 2 dormer extensions on each side. This

arrangement would introduce some visual interest to the front elevation, and it would maintain a sense of balance to the completed building. At the rear, the 3 new gables and the stepped building line to the finished dwelling would have a similar effect. The appeal property would be noticeably taller and far more substantial in-built form than the existing dwelling with new front and rear elevations that would alter its shape and general appearance. Nevertheless, when taken as a whole, the proposal would not be a disproportionate addition.

6. However, it is important to have regard to the context of the site. The appeal dwelling stands between smaller bungalows that are broadly similar in height. With their modest scale and proportions, low ridge heights, and uncluttered roof slopes, these neighbouring properties maintain a low profile and a modest presence in the street scene to which they belong. When seen from the road, the broadly consistent height and built form of this group, including No 31, and the bungalows further along the same side of Highlands Road establishes a distinctive pattern to existing development along the highway. Although there are 2-storey dwellings that vary in scale and design on the opposite side of Highlands Road to the site, it is within this row of similar dwellings that the finished dwelling would be visually 'read'.
7. In that context, the additional built form, increased height, wide front gable, and dormers of the building would set No 31 clearly apart from others within the same row and cause it to significantly gain prominence in the streetscape. When seen from the road, the completed dwelling would draw the eye because it would stand uncomfortably between smaller and lower bungalows. By unduly disrupting the well-established pattern of existing development along the same side of Highlands Road, the proposal would be discordant and obtrusive in the street scene and detrimental to the character of the local area.
8. The incongruence of the proposal would be visually accentuated by the general appearance of the finished dwelling. The submitted design has been conceived as a single homogenous entity with cream coloured painted render applied to all sides of the enlarged building. However, the singular use of render and introduction of dark-framed windows, as sought, would be at odds with most other buildings along Highlands Road. Whilst variation is a characteristic in the appearance of existing development in the local area, I saw that render is generally applied with restraint and fenestration tends towards subservience. The combined effects of the development would result in an overly prominent building with a stark, uncharacteristic, outward appearance and a ready focus where none currently exists along this section of Highlands Road.
9. On the main issue, I therefore conclude that the proposed development would materially harm the character and appearance of the local area. As such, it conflicts with Policy BE2 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan and the advice in Residential Extensions Design Guide. These policies and guidance broadly aim to ensure that new development respects and complements the scale and context of the site and its setting. It is also at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that development should be sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of the area.
10. Once complete, the proposal would provide valuable additional accommodation that would enable the appellants to work from home and look after their elderly relatives. While I am sympathetic to these matters, there is nothing before me to demonstrate that these outcomes can only be achieved by extending the

property in the manner proposed. These considerations do not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified.

11. An interested party raises additional concern about the effect of the proposal on privacy and the potential for noise and general disturbance especially during the construction phase. These are important matters and I have taken into account all the evidence. However, given my findings on the main issue, these are not matters that have been critical to my decision.

Conclusion

12. Overall, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the policies of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan.
13. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR