



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 March 2024

by Martin H Seddon BSc MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 May 2024.

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/23/3333873

Carib, Harlington Road, Toddington, Dunstable, LU5 6HA

- 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 David Kaminski against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/23/00814/FULL, dated 3 March 2023, was refused by notice dated 5 September 2023.
 - The development is erection of pre-fabricated pebbledash concrete garage to front of existing building on front driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt,
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - if the development is inappropriate, whether harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Preliminary Matter

3. The development was completed prior to the application to the Council. I have taken this into account, but my decision is based on the submitted plans. The appellant has suggested that the garage is permitted development. It is however beyond the scope of this appeal to determine such matters. I have therefore determined the appeal as set before me. It will remain open to the appellant to seek a separate determination of lawfulness from the local planning authority.

Reasons

Whether the development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt

4. Paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Exceptions include the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The garage is a new building which occupies a previously open site. Its size, scale and visually prominent position in front of the dwelling have together eroded the openness of the Green Belt. The development does not therefore benefit from this, or any other exceptions set out in paragraph 154 of the Framework.
5. I therefore conclude that the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt and that it causes significant harm to the Green Belt's openness.

Effect on the character and appearance of the streetscene and surrounding area.

6. Carib is a single storey dwelling located at the end of a line of dwellings that stretches down Harlington Road, with dwellings also adjacent to the opposite side of the road. Harlington Road was developed later than the central core of Toddington and is characterised by modern ribbon development.
7. The garage is visible from Harlington Road against the backdrop of the dwelling with open countryside to the rear, and a field to its side with trees, separates the appeal site from the main built-up area of Toddington. The double garage is a large, prefabricated structure with a shallow pitched corrugated roof and areas of grey pebbledash finish. Its location forward of the house, white front doors and pale roof are visually conspicuous and intrusive. There is some low-level screening from immature evergreen shrubs alongside the side wall next to Harlington Road. There is also screen fencing next to the adjacent field. However, despite this, and its low-level siting, the garage and its roof are prominent in views when approached downhill from the edge of the older part of Toddington, after a bend in Harlington Road.
8. There are other outbuildings in the vicinity, including at a nearby cul-de-sac, but they generally are smaller in scale, or of a different design with less visually conspicuous external materials. Whilst screening from planting next to the garage will take time to mature, the scope for additional planting is limited, and it is likely that the garage would always appear prominent as a visually intrusive structure which detracts from the appearance of the area and is harmful to the street scene.
9. I conclude that the proposal is significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the streetscene and surrounding area. It therefore conflicts with Central Bedfordshire Local Plan Policy HQ1 which seeks to ensure that new development responds positively to its context and linked in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

Other considerations.

10. Whether or not other Green Belt land in the wider area will be allocated for development has no direct implications for the appeal before me.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

11. The garage constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt and causes significant harm to its openness. I attach substantial weight to the overall harm caused to the Green Belt.
12. In addition, the development harms the character and appearance of the area. I attach significant weight to this harm.
13. The combined weight of harm by reason of inappropriateness and other harm clearly outweighs the other considerations advanced in favour of the development. These other considerations do not therefore demonstrate the existence of the very special circumstances necessary to justify it. The development therefore conflicts with Central Bedfordshire Local Plan Policy SP4 which states that development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed in accordance with national policy.
14. The appeal scheme conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole, and there are no considerations which alter or outweigh this finding. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin H Seddon

INSPECTOR