



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2024

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11TH July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/24/3342811

Rowan, Greenfield Road, Pulloxhill, Central Bedfordshire, MK45 5EY

- 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 A Fahy against Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref CB/23/04010/FULL.
 - The development proposed is two storey front, second floor side extensions and detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the host dwelling and character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey, detached, dwelling which is oriented side on to Greenfield Road (with what presents as the front elevation with the main entrance/porch facing towards the garden and driveway and which is labelled as such on the plans that are before me) – a side elevation (where the gym currently is located) faces towards Greenfield Road. The host dwelling is set back from the road but despite this I found the dwelling to be visible in clear views from Greenfield Road despite the boundary features. In particular, due to the topography of the site, I found the site visible when approaching, down bank (from the southeast), level with the Business Park entrance. I found the dwelling to be readily visible within the street scene but, whilst large, it is visible as a character appropriate dwelling in a semi-rural setting.
4. The proposal would result in a side extension over the existing gym (but noting that this extension closest to the road would add further floor space at ground floor to the front of the existing gym area for a tv/playroom), a first-floor extension over the existing garden room (with a flat roof extension forward of this connecting to a two-storey front extension gable end). Cumulatively the proposed extensions would be significant, and I find that they would fail to respect the existing design, and scale, of the host dwelling. The two-storey front extension would dominate the dwelling and, within clear views from the street scene and entrance to the property, the dwelling would be essentially unrecognisable.
5. I do not find that the screening to the site's eastern boundary, or the presence of a tree (plate 7) is substantial enough to obscure views but even if I had

agreed with this statement, it should be kept in mind that character and appearance are separate matters. Even if I had found the proposal to have acceptable impact upon the appearance of the area, as a result of limited visibility, this would still leave the impact to the character of the host dwelling itself which would be consumed by the combined, dominating, proposals that are before me. The appellant acknowledges that the roof of the dwelling is visible (plate 6) which means changes at roof level, and the gable end of the two-storey front extension, would be visible from these viewpoints. Whilst it is noted these are from an elevated position I still found, from my site visit, that such views were available as noted above from the entrance to the Business Park.

6. The existing dwelling, as noted by the appellant, is already generously sized/of substantial scale as a four-bedroom dwelling. It is noted that the host dwelling is within a substantial plot and that, in the context of that plot, the proposals would not necessarily amount to over development but that is not the basis for refusal or the main issues with this appeal. To add extensions at the scale and massing shown, to an already large dwelling, demonstrates the significance of the proposals which cannot be said to be respectful or sympathetic as presented. The proposals would be in no way visually subordinate to or proportionate to the host dwelling as a result of bulk, scale and massing and I find that this would notably detract from the original character and appearance of the dwelling.
7. The floor plate/footprint may be largely followed in basic terms, but I do not find that a consideration of this is sufficient alone in considering the impact of the proposals which would add notable additional volume, and floor area, cumulatively as well as at first floor level. The set down, and set back, of the side elevation closest to the road would be minimal in the area most visually prominent within the street scene where it would bring two storey development closer to the road. The front gable ridge height would be of limited difference to the existing ridge height and of insufficient difference to be considered subservient viewed from the road. The porch does not assist in a transition of built form from the amenity space to the front of the host dwelling.
8. The appellant contends that the Council have misapplied/interpreted the design guide as a result of the orientation of the appeal site. Paragraph 11.21 of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide 2023 (the design guide) is simple in its objective and guidance – that the existing building should not be dominated by the bulk, volume or character of the extension as the character of the existing building could be lost. For the reasons I have set out the proposal is not consistent with this objective regardless of the consideration of figure 311 in that document. I note the appellant's reference to the Technical Guidance (for Permitted Development) (8.22 of their statement) in relation to the definition of the principal elevation of a dwelling but in this case, this is of limited relevance to the assessment of the proposal before me in overarching terms due to cumulative bulk, scale and massing. In addition, for the avoidance of doubt, the plans of the proposals that are submitted are clearly labelled in terms of front, side and rear elevations respectively and the development description refers to the two-storey extension as a two-storey front extension (taken from the original application form).
9. The proposed garage would be sited forward of the principal elevation (whichever way the principal elevation is determined as discussed above) and

due to the site orientation, between the side elevation of the host dwelling and the road itself. Whilst acknowledged to propose a lower ridge height of the main dwelling the outbuilding would be one and a half storeys, with external stairs and log store, accommodating a home office over the garaging itself. At time of my site visit I found limited examples of detached garages of the nature which is before me. The appellant has noted other garages including that at Cherry Tree House (to the north), however, from the information before me I do not find the site context or general visibility to be the same as the proposal before me due to being behind extensive tree coverage as well as set further back from the road. The example in plate 8 is not of the same scale.

10. The outbuilding has been designed, as described by the appellant, with a barn like appearance and the scale (taking to account the proposed extensions to the host dwelling itself) would likely be subservient in volumetric terms. Despite this its location and scale would be visually intrusive and detract from the dwelling itself largely as a result of scale and location combined. The proposed garage would be notable in views from the street scene over the walls and through the gates when looking towards the south. Combined I find that the extensions, and garage, would detract from the original character and appearance of the property and would be unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the street scene as a result of visual intrusiveness.
11. I acknowledge that there has been genuine effort on the part of the appellant to consider the site, however, for the reasons set out I do not find that the overall scale of the proposals is appropriate to the host dwelling. The submissions make reference to the needs of the appellant; however, such needs are not expanded upon. I note that there are no technical objections received in response to the proposal nor third party objections (with the exception of the Parish Council), however, a lack of objection is a neutral consideration. The proposal is not one to be considered within the context of a tilted balance and it falls to consider the proposal against the Local Plan as the starting point for determination. Whilst the principle of extensions is noted to be acceptable proposals still need to be appropriate for the host dwelling taking into account Local Plan policy and other relevant material considerations and guidance and in this case, I do not find that there are material considerations that outweigh the issues which I have found.
12. The proposal would be contrary to Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2021 Policy HQ1 which seeks to ensure high quality design where size, scale, massing and appearance relate well to existing local surroundings and Flitton, Greenfield and Pulloxhill Neighbourhood Plan 2021 Policy D1 which seeks to ensure that development is appropriate in scale. The proposal would also be contrary to the overarching objectives of the design guide which seeks to ensure that the existing building should not be dominated by the bulk, volume or character of the extension, avoid impact to the street scene, ensure that garages do not dominate the house or be intrusive in the street scene and respect the character of the street scene.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has referenced application CB/23/00551/FULL (The Chalet) but limited information has been provided (such as a full set of approved plans and the Council's decision and delegated report) to enable an understanding as to the decision made in that case. The only information I have is a front and side

elevation, existing and proposed, which does not make it possible to fully consider the overall implications of that case. Each case must be considered on its own merit but based upon the image provided it appears that The Chalet was of a more modest scale than the immediately adjacent dwellings which likely meant a larger dwelling would not have been out of character as well as leaving some of the original elevation recognisable within the street scene.

14. I note objection from the Parish Council; however, I have dealt with the matters raised within those comments within the main body of this decision letter.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR