



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2024

by **S Lo LLB M.SRA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/24/3340196

51 Station Road, Langford, Biggleswade, Beds SG18 9PG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Istvan Shepherd against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/23/03025/FULL.
 - The development proposed is the replacement roof trusses to existing garage footprint with pitch change from 35 to 45 degrees to maximise solar collection to new panels. Extended canopy for dry storage under to rear of existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. During my site visit, I observed that the roof trusses appear to have been replaced, the roof area enlarged with a pitch change, and the outbuilding canopy extended to the rear. As these developments appear to have already taken place, I have determined the appeal on that basis.
3. An issue has been raised by third parties regarding the accuracy of the submitted plans. However, the Council have confirmed that the plans are to scale, and I have reviewed them against the works during my site visit. It is considered that the plans are sufficiently accurate for a determining this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site consists of an outbuilding that is not directly attached to the dwelling at 51 Station Road. This building does not appear to be suitable for vehicle storage because its frontage has been fitted with domestic doors and windows. It is situated in the corner of the hardstanding parking area in front of the main dwelling and is directly adjacent to an access road and Station Road.
6. The outbuilding's original design was typical of the surrounding area, where the street scene is characterised by pitched roofs aligned in an orderly fashion. The building pattern retains small open spaces by maintaining consistent boundary

gaps. These small gaps between buildings contribute to a strong rhythm and a spacious feel within the street scene. The roof shape of the appeal property previously followed this established design pattern, aligning with other similar buildings in the area to create a continuous and visually balanced development.

7. The development extended the canopy and increased the roof height by modifying the outbuilding's roof to a hipped design. Although there are some buildings in the area with hipped roofs, these structures are not outbuildings or located in front hardstanding areas, and therefore do not share similar design characteristics. In forming this view, I have taken into account my observations from the site visit and the photographs provided by the appellant, which depict dwellings rather than outbuildings. I am not persuaded that these buildings are comparable in terms of form or function to the development in question. As such, the development would appear out of place. The development also creates an undercroft storage space, which results in the roof abutting the adjacent access road. This enclosed storage area removes the small boundary gap that previously existed between the outbuilding and the access road. As a result, the visual and spatial separation is lost, diminishing the sense of openness and space in the area. Together, these changes disrupt the previously established balance and rhythm of the outbuilding and the surrounding development pattern.
8. The appeal site's close proximity to Station Road, combined with the lack of effective boundary treatment or screening, makes it highly visible from the public realm. While additional landscaping, such as planting a mature tree, could be implemented as a condition to soften the street view, the loss of the boundary gap and open space would still persist, significantly impacting the street scene.
9. Although there are minor differences, the cladding, brickwork, and tiles of the outbuilding are generally similar to those of other buildings in the area, including the existing dwelling. As such, they would not have a significantly harmful effect on the street scene.
10. I have considered the appellant's evidence regarding other developments in the surrounding area and have taken into account their potential influence on the character and appearance of the area, based on the information available to me. Nonetheless, I am not fully aware of the circumstances surrounding these other cases, and each scheme must be assessed and determined on its individual merits.
11. In conclusion, the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The size, scale and appearance of the development would not relate well to the existing local surroundings, contrary to Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2021). It would not be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment, contrary to Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
12. The Council's reason for refusal alleges conflict with Section 11 of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2023). However, my attention has not been drawn to any wording in this document that relates to this main issue. In any event, given my findings above and the available evidence, I am satisfied that the proposed development would harm the quality of design in the locality.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has referenced minutes from the Langford Parish Council meeting. While the parish council had no objection to the solar panel installation, they did express a concern that the alterations to the roof height, roof shape, and increased ground area were out of keeping with the new Station Road estate. Even though this was not a formal objection, it was also not a supportive response that is capable of justifying the development on its own. Therefore, this consideration does not outweigh the adverse impacts I have identified above.
14. The appellant has raised various issues regarding the conduct of the Council. However, these concerns did not materially affect my assessment of the planning merits or my decision. As such, any remaining issues will need to be addressed directly between the Council and the appellant
15. I have considered concerns regarding the safety of the works and the effect of building control in relation to the height of the outbuilding. However, these issues should be assessed against building regulations. Additionally, concerns about the ability of future occupiers to carry out future maintenance are civil matters. A concern was also raised about the description of the development, but I find it sufficiently accurate for determining the proposal. Therefore, these issues do not affect my findings on the main issue.

Conclusion

16. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Lo

INSPECTOR