



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2024

by Mr C J Tivey BSc (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/24/3350774

8 Walducks Close, Stewkley, Buckinghamshire LU7 0JG

- 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 Demelza Halliwell against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref. is 24/01052/APP.
 - The development proposed is for a 2 storey extension to home. Proposals include the removal of the existing cat-slide roof and dormer window to improve the thermal insulation of the existing house, as well as the creation of a play room on the ground floor and home office on the first floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Since the planning application, the subject of this appeal was determined, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') has been published (12 December 2024). There have been no material changes to national planning policy in respect of householder proposals and therefore I considered that it was not necessary to refer back to the parties. I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a detached part one and a half, part two storey house within a residential cul-de-sac of properties which are largely of a similar design, albeit handed in some cases.
5. A number of houses have benefitted from single storey front lean-to extensions, however, in the main all of the dwellings within Walducks Close appear as originally constructed at first floor level, to the principal elevations at least.
6. I have had regard to the examples cited by the appellant of other two storey extensions that have been constructed within the wider locality, but each case must be assessed on its own merits; notwithstanding that 2 Walducks Close appears to have been originally designed in a different manner to all of the other houses within the close.
7. I note that the appellant had quite extensive communications with the Council's Planning Officer prior to the decision being made and I sympathise with her disappointment with the ultimate outcome of the planning application. I acknowledge that the Council's officer report makes reference to a 2022 version of the Vale of Aylesbury Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and that the most up-to-date document was adopted on 30 June 2023. There are a number of principles set out within that document with Principle DES56 requiring proposals to respond to the character of the area and immediate neighbourhood within which a property is located, with the character to be used as a starting point for design in terms of building form which should be simple and uncomplicated.

8. Furthermore, SPD Principle DES58 requires extensions to be subservient to the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling, stipulating that the original building should remain the dominant element of the property and the effect of any extension should not overwhelm the house from any given viewpoint; which I consider would not be the case with the proposals that are before me.
9. In addition, SPD Principle DES59 requires extensions to respond to the design of the original dwelling whilst SPD Principle DES61 highlights that the front elevation of a house is the most vulnerable to unsympathetic alterations and that only small additions which do not harm the quality or character of the building are likely to be acceptable; with it going on to state that front extensions will be resisted where they have a significant impact on the street scene or are damaging to the appearance of the dwelling. The proposal would not appear subservient in form and would completely remodel, and not in a positive way, the principal elevation of the subject dwelling.
10. Further, I consider that notwithstanding the articulation, both first floor elements of the front extension would not only dominate the host dwelling, but would also disrupt the visual rhythm found within the street by virtue of its overall design and scale. The appeal proposal conflicts with all of the above SPD principles and the resulting dwelling would give rise to an incongruous and unsympathetic addition, harmful to the character and appearance of area. I say this notwithstanding that the proposed materials would largely be sympathetic with, and that the footprint of the building would not be materially greater than, other extended dwellings in the close.
11. Some of the benefits associated with the proposal include an improvement to the energy efficiency of the dwelling, however it has not been demonstrated that the appeal proposal is the only means of achieving this and along with other cited benefits they do not outweigh the visual harm that would be caused.
12. Consequently, in addition to conflicting with the aforementioned principles set out within the SPD, the proposal also conflicts with Policy BE2 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan which states that all new development proposals should respect and complement a number of criteria, such as the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings, including the scale and context of the site and its setting, whilst having regard to the local distinctiveness and vernacular character of the locality, in terms of order, form, proportions, and architectural detail. I also find the proposal conflicts with Paragraph 135 of the Framework which requires developments to add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short-term but over the lifetime of the development and for them to be visually attractive as a result of good architecture thus being sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

Conclusion

13. Therefore, having regard to the above and all other matters raised by the appellant, I conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

C J Tivey INSPECTOR