



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 January 2025

by **A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 February 2025

Appeal Reference: APP/K0235/D/24/3354999

6 Chiltern Avenue Bedford MK41 9EQ

- 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 and Mrs Neghina against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01298/FUL
 - The development proposed is extensions to front sides and rear including raising the roof to form a chalet style bungalow, modifications include associated internal alterations and to include integral garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development upon:
 - the character and appearance of the area and
 - highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is located on the corner of two residential roads within an established residential area populated by housing from the middle decades of the twentieth century. The area around the appeal site is characterised by a consistency of built form apparent in the materials palette and moderate roof pitch related to the general use of brown concrete interlocking tiles. The presence of rooflights indicate some roof voids in nearby houses have been converted, unobtrusively, to provide additional accommodation but roof extensions and dormers are almost wholly absent around the site and most houses retain the white gable boards which are emblematic of such housing. Whilst the appellant points to differences in other locations, such as the corner of Chiltern Avenue and Penland Rise, these are at some distance from the site. Overall, considering the date of construction, the area immediately surrounding the appeal site has retained a notably consistent character and appearance.

4. The proposal is described as extending an existing single storey house, or bungalow. However little of the original external fabric would remain apparent¹. The result would appear in the street scene as a seemingly new, or replacement, one-and-a-half storey dwelling including bedroom accommodation within a new large roof. The design would include a prominent glazed porch, semi-hipped gables and several dormer windows, which are features not present in nearby bungalow development, and the roof would be arranged at a slightly steeper pitch but clad in an artificial slate material.
5. The Council refers to their design guidance for Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Development (RENSID) at Codes E1, E2 and E3. Guidance as to extensions is of little relevance when, as here, the works proposed would be so comprehensive as to be tantamount to a replacement dwelling. In that regard, however, N1 of RENSID, emphasises² the importance of a 'design concept that harmonises with the street and setting in terms of basic shape, character and scale'.
6. The appeal site (No.6) and the similar bungalow (No.8) on the opposite corner of the junction with Pentland Rise are arranged symmetrically with a parallel but different orientation to the paired bungalows beyond them on either side. The existing bungalow is inset from the side boundary by a planted side garden with a greening effect that frames, with No.8, the entrance to Pentland Rise, the proposal would infill that space to a height of some 6 metres to within 1.2m of its side boundary with Pentland Rise.
7. Residential areas which have no statutory protection may be expected to accommodate change and the Council's design guidance for extensions presumes as much. However what is proposed in this case would significantly unbalance the original, and largely intact, development layout by introducing built form of a size which conflicts with the open layout currently found and by an appearance that would poorly associate with context that is articulated by simple block shaped buildings. Nor have I been persuaded that the proposal is of high quality design so as to outweigh those factors. Given the consistency of the surroundings that I have identified, I consider the proposal would be harmful and, by its prominence, unacceptably detract from the settled suburban character of the area.
8. I therefore find that the proposed development would conflict with Policy 28S (i) and (ii); Policy 29 (i) and (ii); and Policy 30 (i) and (ii) of Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (BBLP) which seek that design should respect context and that development should positively contribute to townscape.

Highway Safety

9. The existing bungalow sits behind a notably deep area of grass which appears to be part of the highway. The driveway access to the appeal site crosses this grassed area and allows opportunity for occasional parking in addition to on-site provision. Users of the driveway would have good visibility and reversing onto the road would not, of itself, create a significant hazard to users. The Council refer to a parking provision of 3 vehicles however the submitted plans do not show how these vehicles could leave in forward gear. The plans indicate this would not be possible due to the reduced depth of frontage which would limit manoeuvring within the site.

¹ Parts of the original rear elevation only

² At the commencing paragraph in relation to new dwellings

Whilst reversing across the footway, which lies immediately in front of the appeal site entrance, is not an uncommon manoeuvre it is nevertheless a potentially hazardous activity that requires great care to be taken. In addition, the parking of vehicles on the access drive would increase the complexity of manoeuvring to allow other vehicles to enter or leave and, therefore, potentially generate a related risk.

Conclusion

10. As to highway safety I consider there would be a degree of conflict with Policy 31 (i) of the BBLP due to concerns about parking and manoeuvring. Whilst this does not attract significant weight in the circumstances described, I have determined that development proposed would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area, a matter which should attract significant weight. Consequently the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and therefore, for the reasons given and taking all matters raised into account, the appeal cannot succeed.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR