



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2025

by Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/W/24/3356547

2 Waltham Drive, Elstow, Bedford MK42 9GB

- 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 & Mrs Paul against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00735/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side and rear extensions including relocation of boundary to north and change of use of land to residential, relocation of natural screening to front and enlargement of driveway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development above has been taken from the Council's decision notice, rather than the application form, as it outlines all the relevant elements of the proposal.
3. The Council's reason for refusal refers specifically to the relocation of the boundary to the north of the appeal site. The other elements of the proposal have been found acceptable. Thus, I have considered the disputed element of the appeal scheme in my assessment below.
4. Since the application was determined, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. However, as any policies that are material to this decision have not fundamentally changed, I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced any party. I have had regard to the latest version of the Framework in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site relates to a detached property located on a corner plot, at the junction of Abbey Fields with Waltham Drive. Abbey Fields, for a considerable section, separates the green area to the north from the residential dwellings to the south. The dwellings are set away from the road, behind a green verge, hedgerow and trees, which soften their appearance and contribute to the verdant character of the street scene. This hedgerow extends across the side boundary of the appeal site and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

7. The relocation of the boundary to the north of the appeal site would involve the removal of a considerable length of the existing mature hedgerow to accommodate the proposed side extension and to expand the garden area to the rear. The appellants indicate that approximately 1 metre would be necessary for the extension itself, followed by anything between 1.3 metres and 2.4 metres towards the rear of the property.
8. The loss of the greenery to the side of the appeal property would disrupt the established mature form of landscaping. Its replacement, albeit partially, would increase the prominence of the dwelling within the street scene and cause further harm to the character and appearance of the area. Whilst the appellants indicate that an additional hedgerow could be planted to the front, I find that the trees that would be retained and the proposed hedgerow would not be sufficient to mitigate the harmful effect of the development, particularly as the additional front hedgerow would not fulfil the role of the existing hedgerow on Abbey Fields and would not soften the appearance of the dwelling when viewed from Abbey Fields.
9. Consequently, the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it is contrary to Policies 28S, 29, 30, and 40 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (LP) (adopted in 2020), which collectively require developments to, amongst other things, integrate well with and complement the character of the area. LP Policy 39 relates to the retention of trees. The appellants indicate that the existing two trees would be retained. As such, there would not be conflict with the requirements of this policy.

Other Matters

10. The appellants have drawn my attention to several appeal decisions¹, which concerned developments within the same residential estate. I do not have full details of those cases. However, from the evidence before me, the appeal scheme is not directly comparable with them, particularly due to the differences in the street context, landscaping, and scale of development. Nonetheless, I have considered the proposal based on its own merits and site-specific circumstances.
11. I have considered the submitted representations, and I note that one of them supports the development. Nevertheless, this does not alter my findings above.
12. The appellants referred to the elements of the proposal that were found acceptable by the Council and how planning permission could be granted for part of the development. I find that the elements of the proposal are closely intertwined and given the plans before me, I am not convinced that this is a case where it would be appropriate to use my powers under section 79 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) to issue a split decision.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Andreea Spataru

INSPECTOR

¹ Appeal refs: APP/K0235/D/24/3336759, APP/K0235/D/24/3346353, APP/K0235/D/24/3352541.