
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 March 2025 by T Morris BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 JUNE 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/24/3357831

Brackenbury, 29 High Street, Blunham, Bedford MK44 3NL

- 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 Mrs Kim Greener against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/24/02792/FULL.
 - The development proposed is first floor rear extension with balustrade balcony 3 x velux and 2 x flushglaze roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The description of development within the banner heading above is taken from the Council's decision notice rather than the original application form. However, confirmation has been provided that the change to the description was agreed by the Council and the Appellant. Furthermore, this is also the description that the Council used for consultation. Therefore, I am satisfied that no one would be prejudiced by the use of the revised description.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. Brackenbury, at 29 High Street in Blunham is a detached dwelling situated within a predominantly residential area. The area generally features dwellings of differing age and appearance. Brackenbury is setback from the High Street and features large front and rear gardens and some outbuildings. It has a traditional appearance with a main hipped roof with chimneys, brick elevations and an orderly window layout. It also has a single storey extension with a flat roof, a conservatory, a staggered brick wall and a spiral staircase to the rear, but these elements do not overly detract from what is an attractive dwelling overall. In that regard, with its general consistency in its design and materials, Brackenbury positively contributes to the character and appearance of the High Street and the surrounding area.

6. With regards to householder extensions, the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2023) (DG) states amongst other things that 'the existing building should not be dominated by the bulk, volume or character of the extension as the character of the existing building would be lost', that 'it is important that extensions should relate to the design of the original building with matching roof shapes and pitches' and that 'the size, positioning, style and materials of new windows and doors would generally match and compliment those of the existing dwelling in order to achieve a consistent appearance'.
7. However, as a result of the depth of the first-floor rear extension together with its contrasting design, the proposed development would erode the traditional character of Brackenbury. The rear facing roof gables, and the wide flat roof section of the extension would jar against the strong hipped roof form of the host dwelling. In terms of design, the expanse of render would contrast against the traditional brick appearance of Brackenbury, and this would emphasise the bulk and depth of the extension particularly when viewed from the dwellings either side. Furthermore, in terms of design, the size and the positioning of the windows and doors on the rear elevation would differentiate from the general appearance of the host property and this would further detract from its existing character. Although the extension is at the rear of the property, it would still be noticeable from several neighbouring properties and within small glimpses from the High Street. In any case, a lack of public visibility does not avoid the need to achieve good design. Indeed, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.
8. I also acknowledge that there is a variety of dwelling styles in the area including examples of flat roof developments, some of which I observed on my site visit. However, in this case, the mix of gable and flat roof sections would unacceptably contrast with the strong hipped roof form of Brackenbury. Consequently, the presence of varying roof forms in the surrounding area does not justify the harm that the proposed development would have to the host dwelling.
9. In summary, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. The proposal would conflict with Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2021), which requires that all development proposals are of the highest possible quality and respond positively to their context and that the size, scale, massing, materials and appearance relate well to the existing local surroundings and reinforce local distinctiveness.
10. For the same reasons, the proposal would conflict with the DG which states that poorly designed extensions to homes can harm the character and appearance of the area. It would also be contrary to the Framework which states that developments should add to the overall quality of the area and that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies.

Other Matters

11. I have had regard of the example provided at 49 Stoke Road in Linsdale (No 49). However, the evidence before me indicates that No 49 had an existing gable roof. Therefore, the gable roof of that extension relates well to that host dwelling, as is

illustrated within Figure 12 of the Appellant's statement. The flat roof section of that extension is also noticeably narrower than that proposed in the appeal scheme. Consequently, this example is not directly comparable, and it does not persuade me that the appeal proposal is acceptable which I have considered on its own individual planning merits. Furthermore, that decision pre-dates the current development plan and DG.

12. Reference is also made to the prospect of a 3-metre rear extension which the appellant states could be built under permitted development rights at the site. However, such an extension would be shallower in depth than the proposed extension and therefore it is not directly comparable. Furthermore, there are insufficient details before me of such a proposal in order to make a full comparison. For these reasons, I give this matter limited weight, and it does not justify the harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.
13. I also appreciate that the appellant has a desire to modernise the dwelling and to improve the living standards for occupiers. In addition, I acknowledge the lack of objections from the Parish Council, neighbouring properties and other consultees. However, these matters do not justify the harm of the proposed development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that would alter this finding. For these reasons, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

T Morris

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR