



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2025

by **Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/D/25/3364722

38 Highfield Road, Bourne End SL8 5BG

- 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 Makhan Singh Kang against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/05234/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as “Alteration of an existing outbuilding with reduced height at rear garden for use as a gym/play room (Retrospective)”.
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Preliminary matters

1. This appeal concerns an outbuilding that has been built without planning permission and the description of development on the application form indicates that it would be altered by lowering its height. It is acknowledged that this and other schemes have been an attempt to address the Council's concerns in respect of previous refusals. One of the past applications was recommended for approval but it is open to the Council to refuse applications in these circumstances. In any event, these matters do not, in themselves, confer acceptability and I must consider this appeal on its own merits.
2. The Appellant has indicated that ground levels would be reduced by 0.8 to 1.0 metres and that this could be secured by a condition. However, this has not been shown on the plans that were considered by the Council and would materially alter the proposed development. To decide the appeal on this basis would prejudice the interests of other parties that would not have the opportunity to comment. Consequently, it would not be appropriate to consider imposing such a condition.

Decision

3. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the streetscene and character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

5. The appeal concerns a semi-detached dwelling located on a corner plot at a bend in the road. The context of the proposal is the broadly north-south oriented part of Highfield Road on the eastern side. Properties to the south of the appeal site are characterised by street facing front elevations with that at no 38 having its side in

this position. The building line is fairly strongly defined and readily apparent when looking from the street.

6. The drawings before me do not show that any means of enclosure or boundary treatment would be erected next to the altered structure and on the application form it is indicated that no changes are to be made in this respect. I saw at my site visit that alongside the side garden boundary there is a fairly low brick wall with piers above that have fencing in between. The end elevation of the altered building would be next to a part of the site that is open, with no boundary treatment between it and the pavement. Between most of the side elevation of the proposed development and the hardstanding of the dwelling at no 36 is a relatively low fence with some netting behind it. The altered building would extend beyond the end of these towards the street.
7. The building would be relatively close to the footway being only a metre distant and project back 6.7m into the plot with a width of 4m. The height of the flat roof structure would be 2.5m next to the street and 2.2m closest to the dwelling. Given the height and position of the boundary features it would be readily visible from the street, especially when looking from the south. Rather than consisting of an appropriately clean and inoffensive design that complements the area, it would be unacceptably dominant, projecting incongruously forward of the established building line. These adverse effects would occur regardless of matters such as the mix of dwelling designs in the street and the spacious corner plot.
8. There is a previous planning permission at the appeal site that included an outbuilding. However, this was set back a noticeably greater distance from the street than the current proposal. In consequence, there would be an appreciably lesser visual impact from the approved scheme so that this matter lends no significant support to the appeal.
9. For the above reasons, it is concluded that the streetscene and the character and appearance of the locality would be harmed. In these circumstances there would be conflict with Wycombe District Local Plan, 2019, Policies DM35 and DM36 which, among other things, and taken together intend that development should achieve an attractive and high quality of design that respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It is indicated in the Householder Planning and Design Guidance, Supplementary Planning Document, 2020, that outbuildings can be visually harmful if not sited sympathetically as I have found in this case.
10. The Appellant suggests that the proposal would have a beneficial effect regarding matters such as the local economy, making more efficient use of land and meeting the needs of occupiers with improved accommodation. However, in this case these would be achieved at the unacceptable expense of the quality of the built environment. Acceptability in relation to matters that include living conditions, parking and flood risk are neutral factors that weigh neither for nor against the proposal.
11. Because of the harm that would arise and taking account of all other matters raised, it is determined that the appeal fails.

M Evans

INSPECTOR