



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 July 2025

By Terrence Kemmann-Lane JP DipTP FRTPI MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/W/25/3363985

Go Glass, 127 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, CB1 7BS

- 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 T Saunders, Go Glass Developments Ltd, against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02860/FUL.
 - The development proposed is part demolition of existing premises and the conversion into a single dwelling house along with the erection of 3 No. 1 bedroom dwellings to the rear accessed from Derby Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. There is no objection to the conversion of the frontage commercial unit into a 4 bedroom house. Therefore the main issues in this case relate to the proposed 3 single storey dwellings to the rear of the site: i) the effect of the proposal on the immediate setting of the site and the wider character and appearance of the area; ii) whether the proposed dwellings would provide satisfactory external living accommodation for future occupiers.

Reasons

3. The application site comprises a two storey end of terrace, Victorian style property which sits on a corner plot of Cherry Hinton Road (to the front) and Derby Road. The site is a commercial glass factory and has a substantial single storey outrigger to the rear and associated car parking. The application site is a transitional point from the properties that front Cherry Hinton Road to the smaller residential street of Derby Road, which is a cul-de-sac. Cherry Hinton Road serves as a local distributor, mainly residential in character with some commercial and community uses.
4. Apart from the Go Glass premises and parking area, Derby Road is a residential street. It is narrow, having some kerb-side parking on the eastern side (opposite the appeal site) where there is barely sufficient room for vehicles to pass on the western side of the carriageway. Most of the housing is on the west side of the street, in the form of a long terrace, with the houses having relatively long narrow rear gardens, and minimal space to the back edge of the footway. Towards the head of the cul-de-sac, on the eastern side, there are 6 semi-detached houses, the date inscribed on one of which indicates that the street was developed at the turn of

the 20th century. At the head of the street are 6 modern semi-detached houses. Opposite the northern end of the site is a single detached house (No.23) with a blank elevation facing across the road.

5. The appeal site is a long narrow strip which is similar to other properties fronting this side of Cherry Hinton Road. This is a highly sustainable location, being close to transport links with major bus routes along Cherry Hinton Road, as well as being in easy walking distance of Cambridge Railway Station. The site is also in walking and cycling distance of the City Centre and nearby local amenities. Along Cherry Hinton Road there are numerous facilities for locals with the majority occupying the ground floor. These include a café, hairdresser, takeaway, pharmacy, news agent and estate agent. Therefore there is no objection in principle to the appeal proposal: indeed there is support for housing development in such a location. In fact there are two separate Prior Approvals (References 24/01666/PRIOR and 24/02039/PRIOR), so that the site can be altered to a residential development.

The effect of the proposal on the immediate setting of the site and wider character and appearance of the area

6. Since Derby Road is narrow and the 3 single bedroom units are well away from the junction with Cherry Hinton Road, I consider that it is the character and appearance of Derby Road itself which is the main focus of this issue.
7. The 3 proposed units share the same layout, with the main northern part of each running from the Derby Road frontage to the back of the plot. This main section of the dwelling would have an entry hall, with the door opening from the side, with a cupboard, behind which would be a bathroom. To the back of these elements would be a kitchen and living/dining area. On the southern side there would be a bedroom accessed from the entrance hall, running across to the plot boundary. At the front of this bedroom part, would be a cycle store and an enclosure for bins. This bin store is shown to have doors opening onto the footway. At the rear of the bedroom would be a courtyard, providing the private open amenity space for the dwelling. The main part of each dwelling would have a pitched roof to the front, with the bedroom being flat roofed.
8. The street view would thus consist of 3 identical units, the main elements of which would be the pitched roof, an obscure glazed window to the bathroom and a full height window to the entrance hall. The front of the bedroom element, under the flat roof, would have 'hit and miss' brickwork in front of the window, and then what appears to be patterned brickwork. In front of this would be the vertical boarded doors to the bin store. Other features would include standing seam zinc covering to the pitched roof, brick on edge verge, aluminium composite windows in antique bronze and vertical timber cladding.
9. This amounts to a creative and ingenious modern design having a good outward appearance. However, its contribution would be interesting but cramped within the context of the very narrow street. Whilst the scale and idiom would, of itself, be acceptable, it would be at odds with the immediate streetscene. Novelty can be rewarding, but in this case would amount to an incongruous intrusion. For these reasons the proposal fails to comply with Policies 55, 56, 57 and 59 of the Cambridge Local Plan (2018).

Whether the proposed dwelling would provide satisfactory external living accommodation for future occupiers

10. The sole criticism of the accommodation in the 3 units relates to the external living spaces. There is a difference in the areas of the courtyards between the council and the appellant, the former suggesting that they measure some 9m², while the latter quote figures of around 12.5m². My own measurements from the drawing suggest that the figure is close to that provided by the appellant. Whatever the precise size, they would be surrounded by walls or fencing, which would need to be a minimum of 2m high for privacy. I note that the main section of the dwellings would have a flat roof area behind the pitched roof at the front.
11. These courtyards would be more in the form of an outside room than an open terrace, but would still be big enough for a table and chairs and planters to provide some visual delight. The lack of an agreeable outlook would be a shortcoming. On balance, in spite of the desirability of making effective use of land, I consider that the quality of the external living areas would be poor, and that this is a further reason for refusing planning permission.

Other matters

12. The delegated report accepts that the council can only identify 4.6 years of available housing land, leaving a shortfall of 0.4 years. In these circumstances, National Planning Policy Statement (NPPF) paragraph 11d is engaged: *"In the determination of applications this means ... granting permission unless: ... "any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination"*⁹. Footnote 9 makes clear which policies are the key policies.
13. Clearly the appeal site is in a sustainable location, as I have already noted. However, the appeal proposal does not make effective use of land in as much as the scheme is flawed in respect of being incongruous in the streetscene, and not achieving satisfactory dwellings due to the inadequate private open spaces. The proposal does not meet the requirement to secure well designed places. The extra 3 dwellings would not be satisfactory houses to contribute to the small housing land shortfall.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the proposed development would be so at odds with the immediate streetscene amounting to an incongruous intrusion. Furthermore, the quality of the external living areas would be poor. In spite of the need to consider the implications of NPPF paragraph 11 d) ii, the appeal will be dismissed.

Terrence Kemmann-Lane

INSPECTOR