



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2025

by **S Simms BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/25/3364537

Land Adj 59 Manor Road, Barton-le-Clay, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK45 4NP

- 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 Roger Dance against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application ref. is CB/24/02896/FULL.
 - The development proposed is a new self build 3 bedroom bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address on the decision notice differs from those on the application and appeal forms. As that on the appeal form makes clear that the site is adjacent to and does not include 59 Manor Road, I have used that address.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area
 - biodiversity

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is part of the garden of a two-storey detached house. The plot has an irregular shape, roughly rectangular near the street, but then widening in an arc to one side before tapering to a point at the rear. The neighbouring house is also two-storey and sited about 3.5m from the front part of the plot, but its rear corner is less than a metre from the curved part of the boundary.
5. The street comprises detached and semi-detached dwellings in various styles on a building line of a least five metres, undulating up to 15 metres. Closer to the village centre, these are mainly two-storey, but a row of bungalows begins two plots from the site. Whilst some houses are closer to their side boundaries than others, this is typically because of attached garages or single-storey extensions, so that the sense and rhythm of the separations between buildings is retained.
6. The proposal would introduce a bungalow with a facing gable into what is one of the larger gaps between houses. Its scale and roof form would assist in creating some sense of separation, but the bungalow would still appear unusually close to

no.59, which, due to its scale, would also dominate it. This change in scale and the depth of the proposed set back would both be anomalous and interrupt the pattern of development on this side of the street.

7. Whilst the width of the front part of the plot leaves limited space for parking, the balance of soft and hard landscape would not, in my view, appear unusual in the context of the area and I consider the proposal acceptable in this respect.
8. I do not have full details of previous proposals, but understand that scale has been reduced, and separation increased slightly. The resulting proposal nonetheless still does not fit with the pattern of development, in which examples of closer spacing tend to occur between pairs of bungalows. In this case, an existing wide two-storey house would be sited close to the proposed bungalow.
9. Consequently, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2021), which seeks development of a scale appropriate to its context, having regard to the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2023) on maintaining gaps between buildings. I attach significant weight to this conflict with policy.

Biodiversity

10. The appellant states that the proposed bungalow would be subject to the self-build exemption from the requirement to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity, but the Council considers that insufficient information has been provided either to confirm that the exemption applies or that the net gain could be achieved, based in part on the advice of its housing officers.
11. To qualify for this exemption, appeals involving a self-build scheme should be accompanied by a planning obligation that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the legal definition, since securing it via a condition would fail to satisfy the tests in the Framework. In the absence of such an obligation, the exemption is not secured with any degree of certainty.
12. Without an exemption, the appellant must demonstrate that the biodiversity gain objective could be met. Whilst I note reference to planting and bird or bat boxes, no quantitative evidence has been provided. Consequently, the proposal would be both unlawful and fail to comply with policy EE2 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan (2021). I attach significant weight to these conflicts.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

S Simms

INSPECTOR