
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2025

by **D Ellis MPlan MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/25/3366443

2 West End Lane, Potton, Central Bedfordshire SG19 2RD

- 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 Allan Overton against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/24/00923/FULL.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing single storey side extension and formation of replacement two-storey side extension and new detached two-storey dwelling, along with associated relocated car parking/hardstanding and new soft landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. For the reason for the appeal on the appeal form, the appellant has ticked the box for 'Failed to give notice of its decision within the appropriate period (usually 8 weeks) on an application for permission or approval'. Whilst the date of the decision was more than 8 weeks after the date of the declaration on the application form, a decision was nonetheless made by the Council and the appellant provided a copy of the Decision Notice with their appeal submission. I have therefore proceeded on the basis that this is an appeal against the refusal of planning permission.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area;
 - The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with particular regards to privacy and light;
 - Whether the proposed development would provide adequate living conditions for existing and future occupiers, with particular regards to the provision of private garden space;
 - The effect of the proposal on highway safety, with particular regards to whether the proposal provides a suitable access; and
 - Whether the proposal would achieve an appropriate biodiversity net gain.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site consists of a semi-detached dwelling on a wide plot in a residential area. West End Lane comprises a mix of two-storey semi-detached dwellings and detached bungalows. The properties in and immediately adjacent to the street are of a simple, traditional appearance with gable roofs. This consistency of design features contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
5. Unlike the existing single-storey extension, the proposed two-storey extension would be set back from the front elevation. However, it have a width greater than that of the existing house which would significantly unbalance the pair of semi-detached dwellings. Furthermore, the extension would have a half-hipped roof and the eaves level would be significantly lower, giving the appearance of a one-and-a-half-storey extension, and would over-sail the ground floor. These elements would be out of keeping with the surrounding properties and, overall, the proposed extension would not respect the modest appearance of the host dwelling.
6. The proposed dwelling would have a contemporary appearance with the first floor projecting further forwards than the ground floor. The dwelling would also have differing roof pitches on the rear roofslope and noticeably smaller first floor windows compared to the surrounding properties. As such the proposed dwelling would jar with the surrounding properties and would not integrate successfully into the street scene.
7. Whilst the area to the side of the side of the existing dwelling currently provides a degree of openness to the street scene, the gaps to either side of the proposed dwelling would be comparable to the gaps between Nos 2-16 West End Lane. Furthermore, the appeal site is close to the junction of West End Lane and Everton Road, and both sides of the junction are grassed open areas. Overall the proposal would not have a cramped appearance and would not cause a significant reduction in openness.
8. Nevertheless, for the reasons given above the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy HQ1 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (2021) (LP) and Policy HO-1 of the Potton Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2035 (2019) (NP), insofar as they require development to respond positively to their context and for the scale, massing, and appearance of a development to relate well to the existing local surroundings and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Living conditions of neighbouring residents

9. Paragraph 11.9.1 of the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (2023) (CBDG) states that to ensure visual privacy, a minimum of 20 metres distance between the first-floor level of one two-storey property and the rear of another two-storey property facing it will be required. There is currently a separation of less than 20m between the existing two-storey dwelling and Nos 20 and 20A Everton Road to the rear.
10. However, the first-floor rooflights of the proposed extension would be slightly closer to Nos 20 and 20A. As these rooflights would serve a bedroom, this would result in additional overlooking of the rear windows and garden areas of Nos 20 and 20A. Should these windows be obscure-glazed to prevent any overlooking,

this would leave the bedroom with one small unobscured rooflight to the front, which would be unlikely to provide adequate outlook for the users of the bedroom.

11. The rear elevation of the proposed dwelling would not directly face Nos 20 or 20A. Furthermore, the proposed first-floor rear window would serve a bathroom and would be obscure-glazed, while one rear rooflight would serve a stairwell and the other would be a high-level rooflight for Bedroom 3 and would only allow views of the sky. As such the proposed dwelling would not cause any significant loss of privacy to Nos 20 and 20A.
12. The Sun Path Studies show that the proposal would cause a small increase in overshadowing of the garden areas of Nos 20 and 20A, however this would occur when the sun is getting lower in the sky towards the end of the day. As such the proposal would not result in a significant increase in overshadowing of Nos 20 and 20A.
13. However, the proposal would cause significant harm to the occupiers of Nos 20 and 20A through increased overlooking. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with LP Policy HQ1 insofar as it requires development not to cause an unacceptable adverse impact upon nearby existing uses, including impacts on privacy.

Living conditions of future occupiers

14. Section 11.10 of the CBDG states that the garden of a three-bedroom dwelling should have minimum area of 60 square metres and a minimum depth of 12 metres. The gardens of both the existing and proposed dwellings would have a depth of approximately 6.5 metres, and the garden areas would be 58 square metres and 56 square metres respectively. However, the gardens would contain wildflower beds, a hedgerow and two trees, the retention of which would be secured by condition so that these elements can count towards the biodiversity net gain of the scheme.
15. As such, the amount of useable garden would be significantly less than 60 square metres for both gardens. The modest size of the gardens would unlikely be of a sufficient size for everyday use when typical garden paraphernalia and associated uses for a three-bedroom house are taken into account.
16. For these reasons, the proposal would fail to provide adequate private garden space for the existing and future occupiers. The proposal would therefore conflict with LP Policy HQ1 insofar as it requires development to not cause an unacceptable adverse impact upon nearby existing or permitted uses including impacts on amenity, and ensuring healthy lifestyles are promoted through the design and layout of the development.

Highway safety

17. The proposal includes driveways for two cars to the front of each property. However, no drawings have been provided showing that the appropriate visibility splays can be achieved.
18. Furthermore, West End Lane is a narrow road with no pavement. On-street parking is possible in most places, including opposite the appeal site, although this severely narrows the road. The submitted vehicle tracking diagrams show that in most scenarios a car manoeuvring off a driveway would get extremely close to

either a car parked on the street or an adjacent car parked on the driveway. Furthermore, in some cases a car would leave the driveway and would be facing away from the junction with Everton Road, so either the driver would have to perform another manoeuvre to turn around in a narrow road or reverse onto Everton Road, which would increase the risk of a collision.

19. For these reasons, the proposal would not create a suitable access and would cause harm to highway safety. The proposal would therefore be contrary to LP Policies T2 and T3, insofar as they require development to not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and to provide safe and convenient access.

Biodiversity net gain

20. The proposal would result in a net gain of 11.56% in habitat units and 14.63% in hedgerow units. The Council asserts that a previous tree has not been included in the biodiversity metric. However, I have no substantive details of this tree before me, including its location, species and size. I therefore have insufficient evidence that the proposal would fail to result in a biodiversity net gain.
21. The proposal would therefore accord with LP Policy EE2 and NP Policy EV-5, insofar as they require development to provide a net gain in biodiversity.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

22. The planning application form indicates that the proposed dwelling would be a self-build dwelling. However, I have no mechanism, such as a signed planning obligation, before me to secure the dwelling as self-build. I therefore attach limited weight to the self-build benefits, which would not outweigh the harms identified above.
23. I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

D Ellis

INSPECTOR