
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

by **N Bowden BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/25/3371338

82 Hookhams Lane, Renhold, Bedford MK41 0JX

- 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 Bryn Jones against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00894/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a double garage with hobby room over.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for an award of costs was made by Mr Bryn Jones against Bedford Borough Council. This is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The application form gave the address of the site as land adjacent to 78 Hookhams Lane and this appears to follow from the description given on the recent applications for the erection of two new dwellings on this site including the neighbouring property. However, these dwellings are substantially complete and therefore I have used the Council's description of the site as 82 Hookhams Lane in this decision for the avoidance of doubt. This further reflects the annotations on the submitted plans.
4. The appellant provided additional information with the appeal in the form of a Drainage Assessment. The Procedural Guide: Planning appeals – England explains that, in general, appeals are determined on the same basis as the original application. Therefore, the appellant's submissions, including the statement of case, should not normally include new evidence or additional technical data not previously seen by the LPA and interested parties at the application stage.
5. However, in this instance, as this information responds to a reason for refusal that was expressed by the Council and, largely, does not include any new information which is not already in the public domain, I have taken account of it in reaching my conclusions here. Moreover, as the Council has commented upon this and the matter it pertains to, which did not feature in third party objections, I find there would be no prejudice to any parties in my doing so.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:

- 1) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, and
- 2) whether the proposed development would increase the risk of flooding.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal site comprises one of a pair of recently completed chalet style bungalows. These are largely single storey structures but do feature relatively steeply pitched roofs and dormer windows offering first floor accommodation within the roof space.
8. The site is set along Hookhams Lane, a slightly winding but linear form of predominantly 20th century homes linking the village of Renhold with the northernmost outskirts of Bedford. The homes in the immediate area are almost exclusively single storey properties albeit some have had first floor extensions, such as the care home next door, or are in a chalet bungalow style. Properties, especially on this side of the road, are set well back from Hookhams Lane and have open front gardens featuring driveways, low front boundary walls, hedges and trees.
9. Outbuildings to the front of properties are rare and where they do exist, are commonly set much further back into their host properties and are not set near the boundary with the road. I accept there is the slight anomaly in the case of 43 and 49 Hookhams Lane as these properties are uncharacteristically close to the road. These homes, however, due to their site layouts, feature more open space around them. Moreover, they are set in a position where the road curls around and evolves into an area where development on both sides of the road exists and two storey homes become more prevalent.
10. In the case of the appeal site, the existing bungalow occupies most of the width of its plot and the garage would be set very close to the boundary with the road. The properties along this stretch of the lane, addressing Renhold Brook, do not feature any detached buildings forward of the general building line and it is in this context that the proposed garage would be seen. There is no doubt that garages and other structures are closer to the road in other parts of the village and wider area, however, these do not directly affect the context of this proposal. Accordingly, the proposal can only be fairly judged on the basis of what can be appreciated in the context and within sight of the appeal site itself.
11. The proposed garage is a fairly large structure, providing a double garage with room in the roof space and reaching a height comparable to the host dwelling. It would occupy roughly a third of the site frontage, resulting in the dominance of the built form in this otherwise low scale context. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal by reason of its size, height, position in the front garden and in an area where such outbuildings do not exist, it would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with policies 28S (i and ii), 29 (i and ii) and 30 (i and ii) of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030 (adopted 2020) (BLP) and provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)

insofar as it would not promote local distinctiveness or have a positive relationship with the surrounding area.

Flood risk

12. The site is set opposite Renhold Brook, a small watercourse which drains into the River Great Ouse. As a consequence, the area around this watercourse falls into Flood Zones 2 and 3 which are at a greater risk of flooding and therefore, where development is proposed, subject to the sequential and exception tests set out in the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. However, paragraph 176 of the Framework sets out that some minor development should also not be subject to the sequential test, nor the exception test and footnote 62 explains that this includes householder development as is proposed here.
13. Paragraph 181 of the Framework sets out that, where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Footnote 63 explains that a site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3.
14. Whilst they were consulted on the application, the Environment Agency has not provided a response to the Council's consultation.
15. The appellant has provided a plan indicating the position of the proposed garage in Appendix 3 – Drainage Statement. I am not entirely persuaded that this plan is sufficiently accurate to demonstrate that the proposed garage is fully outside of the area identified as falling within Flood Zone 2. Even so, I do appreciate that the level of detail of the Environment Agency mapping makes plotting a proposal at this scale challenging. There may be a very small incursion of the garage into Flood Zone 2 but, if there is, this area is so small that it would be de minimis. Therefore, I find it reasonable to conclude that as no material part of the proposed development is within Flood Zone 2, a site-specific flood risk assessment is not necessary in this instance.
16. I have nevertheless noted that the plans suggest an extended area of hardstanding on the front driveway, and this does appear to represent an incursion into Flood Zone 2. However, as permission has not been sought for this, I have not factored this into my considerations here.
17. For the reasons given, I conclude that a site-specific flood risk assessment is not required for the proposal and as such there is no conflict with policy 92 of the BLP or Chapter 14 of the Framework insofar as there would be no increase in flood risk.

Conclusion

18. Whilst the proposal would not result in an increased flood risk, it would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development thus conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. The appeal is dismissed.

N Bowden

INSPECTOR