



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2025

by R Gee BA (Hons) Dip TP PGCert UD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/W/25/3369394

Wheatsheaf Barn, Mount Pleasant, Aspley Guise MK17 8JZ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
 - The appeal is made by Mr P Childerley against Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/25/00135/FULL.
 - The development proposed is conversion of Coach House to a one bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission for conversion of Coach House to one bedroom dwelling is refused.

Costs

2. The appellant has made an application for an award of costs against Central Bedfordshire Council. This is subject to a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. This appeal was made on the basis of the Council's failure to determine the planning application within the statutory timescale. In its statement the Council have set out that they would have refused permission should it have made a decision on the proposal. The Council consider that the proposed development would fail to provide adequate outdoor amenity space for future occupiers and would result in the intensification of use of a substandard access which makes no provision for adequate driver/driver or driver/pedestrian intervisibility and would lead to conditions of danger and inconvenience to users of the highway and the property. I have had regard to the parties' submissions in establishing the main issues which I set out below.
4. My attention has been drawn to two dismissed planning appeals on sites proximate to the current appeal site¹. From the information before me, in both circumstances, the description of development differed to that of the appeal scheme before me. However, I recognise there may be some similarities in terms of the main issues in these cases, namely highway safety. Be that as it may, I have determined the appeal based on the evidence before me and on its own merits.

Main Issues

5. The site lies within the designated Green Belt. Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) it is not disputed between the parties

¹ APP/P0240/W/22/3290201 and APP/P0240/W/18/3210940

that the proposal is not inappropriate development and therefore the principle of residential use is acceptable, and I see no reason to disagree. It has therefore not been necessary to consider the proposal as grey belt, as advanced by the appellant.

6. In light of the above, the main issues are:

- i) the effect of the proposal on highway and pedestrian safety; and
- ii) whether living conditions of future occupants would be acceptable, with particular regard to outdoor amenity space.

Reasons

Highway and pedestrian safety

- 7. The appeal site consists of a single storey detached building located on Mount Pleasant. The proposed access would use an existing access that currently serves No 31a Mount Pleasant.
- 8. The surrounding area is predominately residential comprising a close-knit built form. Mount Pleasant is narrow village road subject to a 30mph speed limit. In the vicinity of the appeal site, there are no footways on the appeal site side of road. The road opposite, Spinney Lane, is a no-through road and serves a school. Whilst I appreciate it is only a snapshot of time, at my site visit, undertaken during a weekday morning, I observed significant on-street parking.
- 9. Due to the absence of a footway on the north-west side of the highway visibility from the access is limited and the required splays of 2.4m x 43m are unachievable in both directions. The visibility splay to the south-east provides a relatively clear view of oncoming traffic. However, these views are over third-party land and therefore beyond the appellant's control to maintain in perpetuity. Given its position directly abutting the public highway, the appeal building itself obstructs visibility to the north-west. Consequently, exiting vehicles would have to advance onto the highway to obtain a clear view.
- 10. The evidence before me sets out the planning history of the site, and adjacent land, and indicates that the appeal building currently has no vehicular use associated with it. The site was formerly occupied a public house. However, the public house has been replaced with three dwellings and as such, its former use is of little relevance to the current proposal.
- 11. Whilst only a single bedroom property is proposed it would generate additional traffic and parking demands, along with associated service and delivery traffic movements. Due to the constrained nature of the site, it is likely that service/delivery vehicles serving the proposed dwelling would park on the highway. This would exacerbate existing parking stress.
- 12. I concur with my Inspector colleague that the highway environment around the appeal site access is relatively congested and the traffic and pedestrians moving through the highway in front of the site, including a school access opposite, would combine to form a busy environment at certain times of the day. A further dwelling would increase the quantity of traffic using the substandard access. Consequently, such intensification would be likely to increase the risk, and danger, to road users resulting in harm to highway and pedestrian safety.

13. The appellant submits that the Framework states that permission should only be refused where residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe. However, the first part of paragraph 116 of the Framework states that development should be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety. For the reasons stated I therefore find conflict with the Framework in this regard.
14. On this main issues, I therefore conclude the proposal would be harmful to highway and pedestrian safety. Conflict therefore arises with Policies T1 and T2 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 Adopted July 202 (LP). These policies require that new development must not impede the free flow of traffic and provide safe and convenient access to ensure there would be no detrimental effect on highway safety.

Living conditions

15. The outdoor amenity space for the proposed dwelling would comprise a courtyard area located in between the rear elevation of the proposed dwelling and the carport of the neighbouring property. It would be limited in size, measuring 3m in depth and 12 sqm and would be enclosed by a close boarded fence.
16. This area falls considerably short of the minimum guide of 50 square metre garden size for a one/two bedroom dwelling, as set out in the Central Bedfordshire Design Guidance (2023). Furthermore, the amenity area would also accommodate cycle parking and refuse storage within it.
17. It is accepted that there would be no loss of privacy between existing properties because of the shortfall and I recognise that some residents may be content with small amenity spaces. Nevertheless, in this circumstance I concur that the area provided, even when having regard to the balcony area, would be significantly deficient in terms of space and useability.
18. The appellant submits that a further area of land, indicated as an area for tree and landscape planting could be secured by condition as amenity area. This area of land would be physically detached from the property it would serve, with intervening uses and is intended to be landscaped. For these reasons, I consider this proposed area would not allow for effective and practical for use by residents and thus future occupiers of the property would likely to be deterred from using it for such purposes.
19. Accordingly, I am not satisfied that the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for the future occupants, with particular regard to outdoor space. Accordingly, conflict arises with Policy HQ1 of the LP in this regard, which amongst other things, supports healthy lifestyles through the design and layout of development.

Other Matters

20. The appeal site is proximate to the Grade II listed Valentine Cottage and Park Cottage. As a conversion of an existing building, with limited external alterations combined with distance and intervening development between the appeal site and the respective listed buildings, I am satisfied that the proposal would not harm the setting, and thereby the significance of the designated heritage assets.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

21. The evidence indicates that the Council cannot demonstrate a Framework compliant housing land supply, with its position being a 4.85-year supply. In such instances, Paragraph 11 d) of the Framework Is engaged.
22. The dwelling would contribute towards housing provision, noting that the Framework is supportive of small and medium sized sites, including windfall sites, which can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built out relatively quickly. However, given the small scale of the proposed development the weight afforded to this benefit is limited.
23. I note the environmental credentials of the proposed development in terms of utilising previously developed land, the inclusion of energy efficiency measures and biodiversity improvements. There would be limited social and economic benefits associated with the proposal relating to construction employment and spend within the local economy once the dwelling is occupied. However, these factors carry no more than limited weight in favour of the development.
24. In this circumstance, the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Accordingly, the material considerations in this case do not indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
25. For the reasons given above, having had regard to the development plan and Framework as a whole, the appeal is dismissed.

R Gee

INSPECTOR