



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2025

by **K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P0240/D/25/3373349

10 Bath Place, Clifton, Shefford, Central Bedfordshire, SG17 5HE

- 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 Charlie Goakes against the decision of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is CB/25/01547/FULL.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension over existing garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, including the Clifton Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal dwelling is a modern, detached house with adjoining single storey garage set at the end of Bath Place, a narrow, unmade, no-through street which gives access to a number of dwellings and the rear of dwellings on Church Street. The appeal site backs onto Sears Close, a development of modern dwellings. It lies in the Clifton Conservation Area (CA).
4. The garage has a pitched roof with gable to front and rear which is linked to the main dwelling by a roof of similar height with its ridge at right angles to the garage. The proposed extension would increase the height of both the garage and the link on the same footprint as existing. The new roof over the garage extension would be some 0.5m below that of the main dwelling with the link roof lower again.
5. Nevertheless, the proposed extension would result in an addition that materially widened the dwelling at first floor and was of sufficient height to appear as an unsympathetic, dominant and distracting first floor feature. Owing to its location at the no-through end of the street, the extension would be clearly visible from Bath Place. In this view it would be set back from the main dwelling but its width and height would be readily apparent. When seen from Sears Close the obtrusive and incongruous effect would be emphasised by its projection beyond the two storey rear elevation of the main dwelling, almost to the depth of a single storey rear addition. Overall, the height, width and rearward projection of the proposed

- extension would result in it competing with and materially detracting from the pleasant, simple character and appearance of the host dwelling.
6. Turning to the effect on the surrounding area, including the Clifton CA, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes clear that conservation areas are designated heritage assets. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed by alteration of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Statutory protection is provided by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that special regard/attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the heritage asset, including its setting. Policy HE3 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2015-2035 (LP), adopted 2021, accords with the NPPF in respect of heritage assets.
 7. The Clifton CA encompasses much of the core of the village. In the vicinity of the appeal site the character is predominantly residential with older properties of various ages, scale and design seen in Church Street and Bath Place. Church Street, including the first section of Sears Close within the CA, has a spacious, open feel owing to the width of the road, verges, low frontage walls and vegetation. This contrasts with Bath Place with its enclosed feel, characterised by the narrow street, buildings set close to the street edge, higher walls and limited vegetation.
 8. The appeal site lies within but at the edge of the CA with most of Sears Close beyond the CA boundary. The effect on the character and appearance of Bath Place would be limited, given the varied character of this street which includes both older and modern dwellings of various sizes and designs, and outbuildings to the rear of dwellings in Church Street. Within this mixed street scene and in view of its position and noticeable set back from the main façade of the host dwelling, the proposed extension would have a modest effect on the character and appearance of the area.
 9. From Sears Close and Church Street, the proposed extension would be prominent in the street scene and in views into and out of the CA. From the junction of Church Street and Sears Close it would be seen beyond the appeal dwelling but projecting towards the street and beyond the first floor building line which is currently set well back from the edge of the carriageway. This would detract from the spacious character and make it a jarring and inharmonious element in the street scene.
 10. When seen in views from Sears Close towards Church Street, the proposed extension would stand out as a conspicuous and inharmonious addition that would be prominent in the street scene, projecting beyond the two storey rear of the host dwelling. It would be readily visible in the view towards 47 Church Street, (Hawarden Cottage) an attractive, double fronted house dating from 1894, which is identified in the Clifton Conservation Area, 2004, appraisal as an important view. Although the arrow on the plan in the CA appraisal ends at the edge of the CA, I saw at my site visit that this notable vista is seen from further to the east, when looking towards the CA along Sears Close. From here the proposed extension would be a material detractor in the street scene, failing to relate well to or reinforce the local surroundings.

11. In view of the harm identified to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, I find that the proposed extension would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA. Nevertheless, the harm that would arise would be towards the lower end of less than substantial harm within the meaning of Paragraph 214 of the NPPF. The harm must therefore be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development. The appellant points to the benefit of providing additional space for the needs of his family. However, these are private benefits with any public benefit being limited to the small economic benefit of construction.
12. Overall, I therefore find that although there would be private benefits, the public benefits would be minor and would not outweigh the great weight that should, in accordance with the NPPF, be given to the conservation of the CA.
13. It is concluded on the main issue that the proposed first floor extension above the garage would have a materially detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area and would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Clifton CA. In consequence, it would conflict with LP Policies HQ1 and HE3 and with Policies CPHE1 and CPH2 of the Clifton Neighbourhood Plan, 2024. Taken together and amongst other things these expect development proposals, including extensions, to be of the highest quality and to relate well to existing local surroundings, including the host building. They should enhance or reinforce the distinctiveness and character of the area and preserve, sustain or enhance designated heritage assets and their setting.
14. The appellant points out that extensions above existing garages are a common form of development and draws my attention to a number of other developments in Clifton and elsewhere that have been permitted, either by the Council or on appeal, which he considers raise similar issues to those in the case of the proposed development. However, whilst I agree that first floor extensions above garages are often seen, each case must be considered on its own merits, which I have done. Moreover, the other examples, including those of other types of development in the area, are not readily comparable with the appeal proposal and do not, therefore set any precedent in this case.
15. The appellant further points out that neither the Parish Council nor any third parties raised any objection to the proposed development. However, this does not weigh in favour of the development, being neutral in the balance.
16. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR