
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2016

by Veronica Bond LLB (Hons), Solicitor (non-practising)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 25th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/D/16/3158856
9 Islip Road, Oxfordshire, Oxford OX2 7SN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Katharine Mori against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01025/FUL, dated 14 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'part single storey, part two storey back extension and new front porch; new window; new bow window; replacement windows; external insulation.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have taken the appellant's title as above from the application form. However, it appears that this should in fact be 'Mrs Katharine Mori'.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling on a relatively straight part of Islip Road and positioned at only a slight angle to the road. The road then begins to bend just after the far side boundary of 11 Islip Road. Trees in the rear garden of the host property are seen through the gap between No 9 and No 11. This contributes to the sense of openness created by spacing between other properties and glimpsed rear garden views.
5. Properties in the area show some variation in design and a number are set at varying angles to each other and to the road. Generally though, houses which are at a greater angle to the road are related, to some degree, to the bend of Islip Road. The effect therefore appears logical to the eye.
6. The proposed development would include a part two storey side extension which would be of significant height relative to both the host dwelling and adjacent property at No 11. The side extension would not follow the front building line of the host dwelling but would be positioned at a significant angle to it. It would in this way appear visually discordant in its relationship with the

host property and in the street scene. Its angled position would emphasise the mass of the two storey element in that its depth would be more readily perceived. Given the set back and scale of No 11, this would be particularly apparent on approach from the north and would be a visually jarring presence.

7. I have considered comments that the bend in the road leads the eye into the distance and that the No 11's car port would also limit views of the proposed side extension, and that there would be a limited cone of vision. I note also the effect of perspective as regards the set back from the street. Whilst these aspects might limit the prominence of the proposal to a small degree, its mass and awkward configuration would nonetheless be clearly apparent from the public domain. I note that the side extension is intended to have an elegant simple form and to reflect the architectonic language of the host dwelling and angle of the old garage, boundary, and of No 11. I acknowledge also the appellant's credentials and experience. I have though found that the effect would be visually jarring for the reasons outlined above.
8. I have considered also that the scale, set down at ridge level, set back from the street and relatively narrow front elevation all seek to express the extension as subordinate to the original house. I acknowledge also the remaining gap to No 11, perceived footprint and plot size, along with volumetric studies and comments as to the appearance of bulk. However, as outlined, the effect of the angled positioning of the side extension, coupled with its scale would mean that it would be seen as a bulky and awkward addition notwithstanding these aspects. Materials proposed and the angle of the extension apparently seek to indicate a contemporary addition but this does not overcome my concerns.
9. I have taken into consideration the appellant's submissions that the surrounding street layout is not on an orthogonal grid and that the angle of the proposed extension would not appear contrived but rather would reflect other infill development, extensions and replacement dwellings in the area. However, I have not seen any such development which would have a comparable impact to the appeal proposal in terms of its position and as regards the uncomfortable angled configuration and resultant appearance of increased massing. I acknowledge that design is to some extent a subjective matter and that the property is not listed nor in a Conservation Area and that there no character assessment for the street. These matters do not though alter the harm found.
10. I thus conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and area. It would not comply with Policies CP1, CP8 of the Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 (adopted 11 November 2005). These seek, amongst other things, development which respects the character and appearance of the area, together with extended buildings which create an appropriate visual relationship with the surrounding area.
11. I also find conflict with Policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy 2026 (adopted 14 March 2011) and Policy HP9 of the Sites and Housing Plan 2011-2026 (adopted February 2013). These include in their aims requiring development to be appropriate to the site and surroundings and responsive to the overall character of the area.

Other Matters

12. The appellant refers to permission granted for another scheme on site and suggests the present scheme is not materially different. I do not though have full details of the previous scheme in order to form a detailed comparison and have considered the evidence before me and local context as seen at my site visit. It would seem though that the approved side extension was positioned to follow the front building line, thus decreasing the appearance of bulk.
13. I have considered that the property was on the Empty House Register and the environmental credentials of the proposal including the benefits of refurbishment and making efficient use of land. I have considered also the benefits to the family of the improved accommodation and the support in the Planning Practice Guidance for sustainable and functional design. These aspects offer moderate weight in favour of the proposal.
14. I note also that the appellant discussed the proposal with the Council in pre-application meetings and with neighbours, and has sought to ensure there would be no harm to living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Conclusion

15. Although the proposal would offer some modest benefits as identified above, these do not outweigh the development plan conflict and harm found. Equally, I have found that the proposal would not represent good design and thus I do not consider it to be the sustainable development in respect of which the National Planning Policy Framework creates a presumption in favour. For the above reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

Veronica Bond
INSPECTOR