
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 July 2017

by K Ford BSocSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/W/17/3173078

Formerly The Star Inn, Bucknell Road, Bicester, OX26 2DG

- 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 Castlepride Management Limited against the decision of Cherwell District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02465/F, dated 11 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is alterations to create 2 No 2 bed flats in roofspace and 2 No 2 bed flats and 1 No 1 bed flat at first floor level.
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Preliminary Matters

1. The appeal site is subject to further applications which the Council say are pending (17/00888/F and 17/01022/F). For the avoidance of doubt this appeal relates to proposed changes to permission 14/02062/F, which was approved for a 2 storey rear extension, erection of an external staircase and creation of 2, 2 bedroom and 1, 1 bedroom flats. Since approval of this application permitted development rights have changed which would mean that permission would be required to change the current A4 drinking establishment use to A1 retail. This does not form part of this appeal.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The Star Inn is a former public house located between a 2 storey computer shop with office above and a parade of shops with 2 storey flats above. The wider area is predominately residential with a mix of single storey and 2 storey detached and semi-detached dwellings with either hipped roofs or gable ends which face onto the road. The Star Inn is a detached hipped roof property that follows the same building line as other properties in the road. It blends in with the character and appearance of the wider area in contrast with the parade of shops which stand out as being different as a result of its scale and form.
5. The proposal seeks amendments to a previously granted permission to convert the public house into a retail unit with self-contained dwellings above. The

proposal is to construct a large flat roof box dormer. This would allow the provision of 2 additional flats on the second floor. The dormer would link the hipped roof of the existing building to the hipped roof of the previously approved 2 storey extension on the side closest to the parade of shops. The previously approved external brick staircase to the first floor on this side of the building would be changed to a steel framed staircase which would run from the ground floor up to the second floor. The proposal also involves the insertion of 4 roof lights into the front and rear elevations and 2 roof lights and 2 windows on the side of the building closest to the computer shop.

6. The height of the flat roof section of the dormer would sit below the ridgeline of the front and rear hipped roofs and although the horizontal and vertical elements of the dormer would be set back from the side elevations the proposal would still add bulk to the overall roof. Whilst the proposed materials of construction would match the existing this would not take away from the overall massing which would create a top heavy appearance that would not fit in with the scale of the hipped roof of the building or with the scale and form of other roofs in the area. The dormer would be visible from Bucknell Road and so visually harmful to the street scene.
7. The staircase leading up to the roof extension would not be seen from the front elevation. The staircase leading to the first floor would be screened by a wall and the existing building would screen steps between the first and second floor. However, as with the dormer roof the staircase would be visible from the side. The design of the staircase would result in a complex zig zag structure up the side elevation which would have an industrial appearance as a result of the materials used. It would create a cluttered appearance which would dominate the side elevation and consequently be a negative addition to both the building and wider street scene. The proposal would therefore conflict with policies C28 and C30 of the Cherwell Local Plan (1996) which requires development to be sympathetic to the area and policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 (2015) which requires development proposals to respect the form, scale and massing of buildings.

Other Matters

8. The proposal would make a positive contribution in terms of providing additional housing in a sustainable location. However, an additional 2 flats is a modest contribution which is outweighed by the harm caused by the design of the proposal.
9. The appellant has put forward potential amendments to the design of the staircase however I am only able to consider the proposal before me.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons outlined, and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Ford

INSPECTOR