
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2017

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22nd August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/17/3178808
15 Woodfield Drive, Charlbury, OX7 3SE

- 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 Liam Kelly against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/01439/HHD, dated 4 April 2017, was refused by notice dated 16 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the loft conversion on the character and appearance of the property and the surrounding area, and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Charlbury Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. 15 Woodfield Drive is located within a housing estate. It sits within a row of identical terrace properties, set in a staggered arrangement, all of which have the same roof pitches and roof heights.
4. The proposed loft conversion would result in the ridge height of No 15 being raised by 1m and the pitch changing from 30 to 40 degrees. This would disrupt the design of this otherwise largely uniform terrace, which would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the property, the terrace and the surrounding area. In my opinion the staggered nature of the terrace would do little to disguise the altered roof form.
5. A box dormer is also proposed which would stretch across a large proportion of the rear roof slope. Although set down from the ridgeline as raised, and set up from the existing eaves it would still be an overly large and dominant addition to the roof giving the property a top heavy appearance which would be readily apparent from the adjacent public highway and neighbouring properties. It would therefore cause additional harm to the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area.
6. The appeal site falls within the Charlbury Conservation Area. Whilst there are no obvious buildings or features of historic interest in the immediate vicinity of

the appeal site, largely owing to fact that the housing estate in which it is located was built in the 1970s, given the above harm it follows that the proposal would, nevertheless, neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Charlbury Conservation Area. I note the appellant's questioning of the inclusion of the appeal site in the Charlbury Conservation Area, but it is Local Authorities who are responsible for designating such areas. It is not, therefore, a matter for my consideration under a S78 appeal.

7. Taking the above points together the proposed loft conversion would be harmful to the character and appearance of the property and surrounding area, and would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Charlbury Conservation Area. It would therefore conflict with policies BE2, BE5 and H2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 which require extensions to not erode the character and appearance of the surrounding area and to preserve or enhance conservation areas by, amongst other things, ensuring extensions are designed to respect the form of adjoining buildings.
8. In terms of the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 134, the harm to Charlbury Conservation Area would be 'less than substantial' affecting only its immediate surroundings. However, that would still represent a harmful impact, adversely affecting the conservation area's significance as a whole. No public benefits of the proposal have been brought to my attention.

Other matters

9. The appellant refers to a similar application at 16 Orchard Way. From the plans before me the terrace of properties to which this application refers do not appear to be as uniform as that which is before me. In any event, this one example, which does not provide an immediate context to the appeal site, does not justify the proposal given the harm I have found.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given, and having had regard to all matters raised, including the absence of any letters of objection, the appeal is dismissed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR