
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2019

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/D/19/3234954

1 Rahere Road, Oxford OX4 3QG

- 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 Andrew Long against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01180/FUL, dated 4 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension and loft conversion including rear dormer window.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The development includes a single storey rear extension and alterations to the roof to change it from a hip to gable roof design and a rear dormer window. The reasons for refusal on the Council's decision notice indicate that the single storey rear extension is the matter in dispute. I have no reason to disagree with the Council's conclusion that the rest of the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms. My reasoning below therefore relates to the single storey rear extension.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a semi-detached property located within a predominantly residential area. The host property has a hipped roof design and benefits from a side flat roof extension and a modest extension and canopy to the rear. The garden is generous in length and is bounded by a timber fence approximately 2m in height.
5. Next door property No 3 Rahere Road benefits from a modest single storey rear extension. Between the site and properties fronting Bartholomew Road is a track providing access to rear gardens and garages. Properties in the area vary in terms of designs with a number extended in the form of side and rear extensions.

6. The proposed single storey rear extension would be set in from the boundary running along the track and would be largely obscured by the existing boundary fence. Views of the extension would be localised and generally limited to from along the track. The proposal would not be highly visible from the public realm and thus would have a limited impact on the street scene. However, the proposed single storey rear extension, in terms of its depth, would be disproportionately and uncharacteristically large when considering the size of the existing dwelling and would unduly dominate the rear of the host property. The flat roof design would not be in keeping with the pitched roof design of the host property and would appear as an incongruous feature against the rear of the dwelling. As a result, the proposed single storey rear extension by virtue of its scale, mass and design would be visually discordant and would not be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host property.
7. I acknowledge that a large proportion of the garden would remain undeveloped, however I find that the proposal would be disproportionately large in comparison to the host property and would unduly dominate it. The extent of the remaining garden area does not justify an uncharacteristic addition to the rear elevation.
8. I acknowledge that there are numerous extensions in the area which gives the area a degree of variety. I note the appellant's comments in relation to other extensions in the surrounding area. However, I have not been made aware of the individual circumstances that led to them being built. In any case, every appeal must be considered on its own merits. The presence of other extensions in the area does not justify the harm that I have identified in relation to character and appearance of the host property.
9. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would improve the internal living accommodation. Whilst this is a personal benefit of the proposal, it is insufficient to overcome the harm I have identified in relation to the main issue. The lack of opposition from neighbouring properties counts neither for nor against the proposal and does not overcome the harm I have identified in relation to the main issue.
10. Taking the above into account I find that the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the host property and the area would be contrary to policies CP1 and CP8 of the Oxford Local Plan (2005) which expects new development to show a high standard of design that respects the character of the area and the siting, massing and design that creates an appropriate visual relationship with the form, grain, scale, materials and details of the surrounding area.
11. As a result, it conflicts with policy CS18 of the Oxford Core Strategy (2011) which sets out that developments should demonstrate high quality design through responding appropriately to the site and its surroundings and high quality architecture.
12. Of the policies referred to me by the parties these are the most relevant to the development proposed.

Other Matters

13. As identified above, the Council has raised no concerns regarding the proposed alterations to the roof. Based on the evidence before me, I see no reason to disagree. However, the appellant has not indicated that they would wish to implement the other extensions in isolation, or that they are severable from the remainder of the proposal. I have therefore determined that appeal on that basis.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR