



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2020

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/D/19/3242463

22 Marsh Lane, Headington, Oxford OX3 0NF

- 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 Job against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01232/FUL, dated 2 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolish existing side garage/storage building; rear lean-to single storey extension, 3 metres deep; two storey side extension with hip-to-gable roof; front lean-to single storey to form porch and part of new garage; parking and bin storage as existing.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council issued its decision prior to the adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036 (OLP). Policy DH1 of the OLP supersedes those policies cited on the decision notice. The parties have commented on the implications of the altered policy framework for the appeal and I have taken their views into account.
3. The appellant has indicated that he would accept a hipped roof construction. However, my decision must be based on the plans that were submitted to the Council and which formed the basis for its public consultation and decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is typical of the style of housing fronting Marsh Lane, a busy arterial route into Oxford. The dwelling is one of a semi-detached pair, with each property possessing a matching hipped roof. Symmetry around a central chimney stack is a key design characteristic.
6. The proposed two storey extension would replace an attached garage to the side of the property. The contrast between the full gable of the extension and the hipped roof of No 20 would be incongruous and it would create a visual imbalance between the two houses. This would be accentuated by the lack of any set-back and the prominent lean-to addition to the front elevation.

7. The proposal would conflict with Council design guidance which seeks to ensure that extensions to semi-detached houses are subservient to the host building to maintain the legibility of the original pair of properties. The status of this guidance is unclear, and I do not know whether it was formally adopted or the subject of any public consultation beforehand, but nonetheless it is consistent with the objective of achieving high quality design. Paragraph 124 of the National Planning Policy Framework explains that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
8. My attention is drawn to other extensions in the area. The full background to these cases is not before me and in most instances I cannot be certain that the developments were considered against the same policy framework. Although the schemes at 11 Purcell Road and 39 Arlington Drive are recent constructions, they are not directly comparable as they are on less prominent residential streets and have roof forms which reflect the attached neighbour.
9. In my judgement, the proposal would constitute poor design, and it would be materially harmful to the character and appearance of the area. There would be conflict with OLP Policy DH1 which states that planning permission will only be granted for development of high quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness.

Other Matters

10. I have taken account of the lack of objection and the benefits in providing better energy efficiency and additional space for a growing family. I have further noted the appellant's comment that loft conversions with gable ends may not require planning permission, but there is no firm evidence to demonstrate that this is a realistic fallback position which is likely to come about if the appeal is dismissed. These matters do not, individually or collectively, outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
11. I have further noted the appellant's views regarding the Council's choice of design. However, details of that alternative scheme are not before me, and I must determine the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans in any event.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR