



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 December 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/20/3256951
58 Queensway, Didcot OX11 8LU

- 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 Mark Rawlins against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P20/S1049/HH, dated 16 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is a detached workshop to rear and first floor extension over existing ground floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a detached workshop to rear and first floor extension over existing ground floor at 58 Queensway, Didcot OX11 8LU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P20/S1049/HH, dated 16 March 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: QNS.P01 E.
 - 2) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in materials as detailed on the application form.
 - 3) The first floor window in the rear elevation of the workshop building shall be glazed in obscure glass with a minimum of level 3 obscurity, and shall be fixed shut with the exception of a top hung openable fanlight, prior to being first occupied and it shall be retained as such thereafter.

Procedural matter

2. The Council issued a split-decision on the original planning application and the appellant has appealed this decision. Section 79(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out that on appeal the Secretary of State may deal with the application as if it had been made to them in the first instance. As such, I have not restricted myself to the matters that concerned the Council. Nonetheless, I have noted that the Council have raised no objection to the proposed outbuilding. I have little evidence to reach a substantively different conclusion, although I shall return to the matter of conditions.

Main Issue

3. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposed first-floor extension on the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is occupied by a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling located within a crescent of similar properties fronting onto a landscaped green. These properties form a distinct group within the street scene. The buildings are linked with a continuous ground-floor wall that has very little variation in depth save for a nominal set-back to the side access surrounds. There is some variety in the appearance of the built form in the crescent, most notably with the front extensions at 62 and 64 Queensway. Otherwise, the group has a high degree of homogeneity with even the wider houses at either end of the crescent having flush frontages. The host building has a flush single-storey element to the side and a degree of symmetry with 60 Queensway. However, the single-storey element to No 60 has been altered, eroding the symmetry of the pair.
5. The proposal would maintain the simplicity of the building and reflect the wide, flush frontages of other houses within the crescent. It would be set in from the side boundary, thus avoiding any potential terracing effect at first-floor level. Whilst the proposal would impact on the symmetry of the host building, a matter identified within the Council's Design Guide, this has already been diminished. Moreover, given the limited width of the first-floor extension any effect would be relatively modest. Any residual concern is outweighed by the proposal maintaining the homogeneity of the crescent through the proposed flush finish. The use of matching materials would help the proposal to assimilate and any slight difference would fade as the materials weather.
6. Therefore, in conclusion on the main issue the proposed first-floor extension would not harm the character and appearance of the host building and surrounding area. As such, the proposal would not conflict with Policy CSQ3 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, December 2012 or Policies G2 and H13 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011. These seek to ensure high-quality design that responds to the host building and the area's local distinctiveness.

Conditions and conclusion

7. I have noted the conditions on the Council's Decision Notice and those suggested within their statement. The appellant has had opportunity to make comments on these. In the interests of certainty, I have imposed the approved plans condition. In order to protect the character and appearance of the area I have required the use of materials set out on the appellant's application form. In the interests of the living conditions of occupants of neighbouring property I have imposed a condition to secure the proposed restricted opening/obscure glazing. For the sake of precision, I have made some minor amendments to the Council's wording of these conditions.
8. Furthermore, I have considered the Council's condition to require the outbuilding to remain ancillary to no 58. However, I find such a condition unnecessary as any material change of use would require a separate planning approval. Furthermore, noting that development of the outbuilding has commenced an implementation condition is not necessary.
9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR