
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 August 2021

by J P Longmuir BA(Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/W/21/3270765

Gateways, Harcourt Hill, Oxford, OX2 9AS

- 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 Siriwat Pinsiranon against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref P20/V3257/FUL, dated 11 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is replace existing dwelling and erect additional dwelling and garage in the rear garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 20 July 2021 after the submission of the appeal statements. Both parties were given the opportunity to comment on its changed significance or otherwise.
3. The appeal site has been the subject of a previous appeal¹ for its subdivision to create an additional dwelling to the rear. This was dismissed on grounds of harm to character and appearance, on 1 October 2020. I have therefore given this consideration.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. Harcourt Hill lies on the outskirts of Oxford. It is a steep hillside with detached houses on one side set within large verdant gardens and Oxford Brookes campus on the other.
6. The previous Inspector noted the pattern of development on Harcourt Hill being well-defined, with houses set well back from the highway behind a strong building line. He also noted the rectilinear plots are generously proportioned with deep rear gardens combining to provide a sense of spaciousness and

¹ APP/V3120/W/20/3253915

- tranquillity. The houses take up a small percentage of their curtilage and there is a significant amount of greenery between buildings and the road.
7. The appeal site includes a 1960s style two storey dwelling, sited towards the Harcourt Road frontage. It has buff brick walling which matches that in the campus buildings opposite.
 8. The appeal site is on a corner formed by the junction of Harcourt Hill with its offshoot Stanton Road. The appeal site includes rough grassland which extends substantially to the rear alongside the Stanton Road frontage.
 9. The proposal involves the demolition of the existing house and its replacement on a similar siting but substantially wider and taller at two and a half storeys. It would have a formal classical detailed front elevation which together with a significantly forward projecting gable would have an impression of grandeur.
 10. However, the front of the appeal site would not be sufficiently large to provide the space and grounds to offset the scale and detailing of this dwelling, so that it would appear cramped. Furthermore, it would appear out of context and too close to the road within a frontage dominated by parking, rather than being in an appropriate formal setting.
 11. The frontage would also include an access to the proposed house behind. The access would be immediately alongside this formal house and would again look out of keeping.
 12. The fenestration of the front elevation is reflective of the classical style which is also emulated by hipped ends, front gable and entrance porch. However, at one side of this elevation is a garage door. This breaks up the asymmetry of the elevation and also looks overtly utilitarian.
 13. The front roofslope includes a dormer window which would be one of the widest windows on the elevation and of considerable length. This would not appear as subservient and attract undue attention away from the rest of the elevation, competing inappropriately with other elements such as the entrance.
 14. The proposal involves a second house to the rear. The previous Inspector concluded that sub-division of the garden would not be in keeping with the nature of the other residential plots. I do not disagree. I acknowledge that the proposed house would be smaller, however the Inspector's conclusion in part points to the principle of development.
 15. The proposed house to the rear would be designed as an unassuming one and half storey dwelling. However, it would have a central offshoot gable with substantial offset fenestration. This would look at odds with the rest of the building and spoil its coherency.
 16. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area.
 17. Core Policy CP37 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan requires development to respond positively to the site and its surroundings and visually integrate with its surroundings. The Vale of White Horse Design Guide provides criteria to appreciate a site's character and context and how to respond accordingly. Policy HS1 of the North Hinksey Neighbourhood Plan requires that new housing follows the pattern of the surroundings. Paragraph 126 of the National Planning

Policy Framework requires the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 130 requires that development is sympathetic to local character. The proposal would be contrary to the above policy and guidance.

Other matters

18. I am aware of the concerns from local residents about the privacy, however I consider that direct overlooking would not be likely, and the garden areas would be sufficiently segregated. I also note concerns about highway impact, but this is a cul-de-sac with yellow lines and traffic speeds should be low. The concerns of biodiversity and the impacts on landscaping would have to be addressed by details but in any event, I am not so minded. There is also concern about ownership of some of the site but that would be a matter between those parties rather than a consideration here.
19. The proposal would result in an additional dwelling which would help housing land supply and have social and economic benefits. However, these would be limited and would not outweigh the impacts.

Conclusion

20. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR