



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2021

by Helen Davies

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th December 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/21/3283707

12 Early Road, Witney OX28 1EN

- 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 Dan Coulson against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01662/HHD, dated 4 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 4 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as 'A ground floor rear extension to the kitchen to the existing rear edge of the house. A first floor rear extension is also applied for with the rear edge stepped back by 1 metre'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for an award of costs was made by Mr Dan Coulson against West Oxfordshire District Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. There is an existing two storey wing to the rear of the dwelling at the appeal site. The Council refer to the current proposal as 'another two storey extension'. I have not been provided with information that allows me to identify what may have been the original dwelling and what may be a later extension. Therefore, I have considered the proposal in the context of the existing dwelling, which includes the two storey rear wing.
4. The description of development refers to a ground floor extension and a first floor extension as though they may be separate elements. It is clear from the submitted drawings that they form one development and I have considered the proposal on the basis of the submitted drawings.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site is part of a modern housing development with a mix of two storey dwellings and bungalows. The dwellings are of a similar size footprint with distinct spaces between them. These visual breaks in the built form,

combined with the mix of dwelling heights, contribute an openness to the streetscene, which is a positive element of the character and appearance of the area.

7. The host dwelling is two storeys and is adjoined to 14 Early Road by their garages. To the other side, No 10 Early Road is a detached bungalow with the main front elevation set well back from the front elevation of the host dwelling. Due to the separation, set back and difference in heights, the visual break between Nos 10 and 12 is pronounced and makes a positive contribution to the openness of the area.
8. The host dwelling has a large two storey gabled wing across part of the rear elevation. A number of other dwellings appear to have a similar rear wing, so the host dwelling is currently fairly typical of the scale and design of the two storey dwellings in the area.
9. The proposed extension would fill the remainder of the width between the existing rear wing and the main side elevation facing No 10, with no set down at the eaves, and only a relatively small set back from the rear elevation at first floor. The gable end of the proposal would be narrower than the existing rear gable and set down at the ridge. Despite this and the use of matching materials, due to the design and dimensions the extension would not appear sufficiently subservient in scale to the existing rear wing. As such, the proposal would not respect the existing form and appearance of the host dwelling and would result in a dwelling disproportionate in size to other two storey dwellings in the area.
10. The impact of the proposal on the surrounding area depends on how visible the extension would be from outside of the appeal site. No 10 is set well back from the host dwelling and is single storey. The proposal is located on the side of the host dwelling facing No 10. As a result, elements of the extension would be clearly visible from public viewpoints along Early Road. The proposed extension would also be partially visible from Stonebridge Close to the rear, though these views are at a distance and partially screened by trees.
11. The proposal would result in the side elevation facing No 10 being approximately 9.5 meters deep at first floor. From the perspective of approaching the site from the south west, this would present a bulky and highly visible side elevation. The modest set down of the roof ridge would do little to reduce this bulk. The extension would reduce the visual break between dwellings and the sense of openness in this section of Early Road would be much reduced.
12. Taken together, the disproportionate scale of the resulting dwelling, the visibility of the extension from the road, and the reduction in the sense of openness would cause unacceptable harm to the host dwelling and the streetscene.
13. The appellant has stated that the Council placed too much emphasis on the West Oxfordshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance (DG). Policy OS4 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (LP) specifies that new development should have regard to specific design advice contained in guidance, including the DG. The DG sets out that although weighted towards older traditional house types, the stated key design principles are applicable to all dwellings, irrespective of age or size. The appellant has also stated that LP

Policies OS2 and OS4 should not apply to this proposal as they are focused on major development. However, neither of these policies specifically state they are only applicable to major development or that they are not applicable to extensions to dwellings. I find that they are relevant to the proposal and have considered them accordingly.

14. My attention has been drawn to a recent grant of planning permission for a two storey rear extension at 33 Early Road. Full details of that proposal are not before me, but the plans have been provided. There are material differences between the plans for No 33 and the appeal proposal. Amongst other differences, the plans for No 33 show a pronounced break between the existing and proposed gable roof, and a two storey element with a depth significantly less than proposed for the appeal site. I viewed No 33 during my site visit and note that due to the site configuration, the proposed extension would not be readily visible from the road. Therefore, the development for which permission has been granted at No 33 is not directly comparable to the appeal proposal to such an extent that it weighs in its favour. In any event, each case must be considered on its own merits.
15. I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. Consequently, the development would not comply with Policies OS2, OS4 and H6 of the LP, or guidance contained in the DG, which together, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is well designed, contributes to local distinctiveness and is of a scale that is appropriate to the dwelling and its context.

Other Matters

16. The appellant notes that the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and LP Policy OS1 support sustainable development, and LP Policy OS3 supports the efficient use of land and building. The appellant states that the proposal is a form of sustainable development, as well as making efficient use of the site by providing extended living space. I do not question the benefit of the development to the occupants, or the compliance with overarching aims of the Framework and Policies OS1 and OS3. However, these factors are not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified above and do not lead me to determine the appeal otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above and taking into account the development plan as a whole and all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Helen Davies

INSPECTOR