



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2022

by Nichola Robinson BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/22/3293136

3 Macdonald Close, Didcot OX11 7BH

- 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 Catherine Scott against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P21/S3038/FUL, dated 2 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is new detached 2 bedroom house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The appeal site is in Didcot. The Council concluded that the principle of residential development in this location is acceptable. Therefore, the main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a garden to the side of 3 Macdonald Close. 3 Macdonald Close is a large semi-detached dwelling which occupies a prominent corner plot in a cul de sac of 3 pairs of similar large semi-detached properties which are set back from the highway. A tall, thick hedge encloses the appeal site to the front and side. This hedge lines the entrance to Macdonald Close, screening the host dwelling in views from the east. This, and planting within front gardens, contribute to a green and spacious character within the surrounding area and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. At the time of my site visit I noted that construction was underway for the erection of a detached dwelling directly opposite the appeal property.
4. The proposed dwelling would be of a similar height to the host dwelling and would be consistent in design, fenestration and materials with other dwellings in the Close. The proposed dwelling would have a smaller massing than the semi-detached dwellings within the Close and would be smaller than the scale of the dwelling under construction to the side of 8 Macdonald Close. The proposed dwelling would be sited close to the boundaries shared with the host dwelling and the highway, and consequently the proposed dwelling would appear cramped into the small appeal site. Due to the site's location on a prominent corner the cramped nature of the proposed dwelling would be obvious and would impact adversely on the green and spacious character and appearance of the area.

5. The appellant makes reference to 2 planning permissions granted by the Council for other dwellings elsewhere which also occupy small plots. Limited information has been provided on these schemes and how the decisions were reached, and I am unable to draw accurate comparisons with this proposal. Notwithstanding this at my site visit I was able to observe that the dwelling currently under construction to the side of 8 Macdonald Close¹ referred to by the appellant appears to be of a similar scale to the proposed dwelling. However, this dwelling is set back from the highway on a wider plot and does not occupy a prominent position within the plot. Consequently, this dwelling does not have the same effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Therefore, this permission does not appear directly comparable, and it does not provide a justification for the appeal proposal, which in any case must be considered on its individual merits.
6. For the above reasons I conclude that the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The appeal proposal would therefore be contrary to the aims of Policies DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 (2020) that seek to ensure that development respects local context and enhances local character.

Other Matters

7. Whilst the principle of a dwelling is acceptable and the proposal would make a positive contribution towards the district's housing supply, I have identified harm arising from the conflict with the development plan in relation to the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

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

Nichola Robinson

INSPECTOR

¹ Planning application reference P20/S4718/FUL