



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 September 2022

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/D/22/3302905

2 East Street, BICESTER, OX26 2EX

- 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 & Ms A and D Withey and Harvey against the decision of Cherwell District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00721/F, dated 9 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of front and rear single-storey extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of front and rear single-storey extensions at 2 East Street, BICESTER, OX26 2EX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00721/F, dated 9 March 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2206-01; 2206-03; 2206-07; 2206-08
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the area around East Street and Hudson Street.

Reasons

3. No 2 is a semi-detached house situated on a corner plot at the junction of East Street with Hudson Street. It is a brick-built house with a small enclosed entrance porch on its shorter elevation facing East Street. The proposed development would involve the construction of a single-storey extension at the rear, and a single-storey extension, with depth a little under 2 metres and a mono-pitch roof, across the whole of the elevation facing the road junction.
4. Policy ESD 15 of the Cherwell Local Plan (LP) indicates that new development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high quality design. Policy C28 of the

Cherwell District Plan (DP) indicates that control will be exercised over all new development, including extensions, to ensure that the standards of layout, design and external appearance, including the choice of external-finish materials, are sympathetic to the character of the context of that development. Policy C30 of the DP indicates that design control will be exercised to ensure that any proposal to extend an existing dwelling is compatible with the scale of the existing dwelling, its curtilage and the character of the street scene. Chapter 5 of the Home Extensions & Alterations Design Guide advises that front extensions should normally be limited to appropriately sized porches.

5. The Council contends that the proposed front extension by virtue of its design and size would result in an incongruous form of development that would fail to sympathetically integrate into the built environment or reinforce local distinctiveness. There are no issues raised with regard to the proposed rear extension, and I concur with this view. My consideration of the issue is therefore restricted to the effect of the front extension only.
6. The appellants contend that the extension is modest in scale and design with matching materials to be used. Furthermore, there are other examples of front and side extensions, both single- and two-storey, in the vicinity, and the symmetry of the pair of houses comprising the appeal property and the adjoining No 4 Hudson Street is already disrupted, as is also the case with a number of other pairs of semi-detached dwellings in the local area.
7. The houses along East Street and Hudson Street share a similar basic design, which is of a largely plain rectangular property with generally small scale variations. The Council notes that front extensions in the area are characterised by canopy porches and the occasional modestly sized porch. I acknowledge this to be the case, although many houses have their canopy porch or enclosed porch to the side elevation, and the four houses on the corner plots around the junction of East Street and Hudson Street are very varied in terms of the types and scale of extensions evident.
8. In the context of the immediate street scene around the road junction, No 4 Hudson Street has a large, complex glazed conservatory to the side elevation. No 1 East Street has a two-storey side extension, set back a small amount from the main elevation and with a front door facing the road, but no canopy or porch. No 6 Hudson Street has a two-storey side extension that continues the main elevation of the house and has a small enclosed porch to the side. There is, therefore, no symmetry to the pairs of houses, nor is there a common, distinctive characteristic of the extensions to those four houses that are most prominent in the street scene at this point.
9. I accept that there is no other extension of the type proposed for the appeal property in the surrounding area. However, there is a range of porches and side extensions in the vicinity, and a large front porch and two-storey side extension at No 14 Hudson Street, close to the appeal property. The proposed front extension at No 2 would be of limited depth and, therefore, compatible with the scale of the existing dwelling, its curtilage and the character of the street scene. By virtue of its scale, design and materials used, it would not appear as a prominent feature in the streetscape. Furthermore, the existing 'front' porch would remain on the shorter elevation facing East Street, and would provide a visual link to the similar characteristic features on the side and front elevations of many other houses in the wider surrounding area.

10. In conclusion on the main issue, in this case I do not consider that the proposed front extension would be harmful to the character or appearance of the area around East Street and Hudson Street. It could be said to add a relatively discreet feature of interest to the appearance of the house in the street scene, and would be sympathetic to the context of the host property and its immediate surroundings. On this basis, it would not conflict with Policy ESD 15 of the LP or with Policies C28 or C30 of the DP.

Conditions

11. I have attached a condition relating to plans because it is necessary that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I have attached a further condition relating to materials in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR