



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2022

by Rebecca Thomas MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/D/22/3304202

Hurst Cottage, Goring Heath Road, Whitchurch Hill, Reading RG8 7PL

- 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 and Mrs J Ellaby against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref. P22/S2166/HH, dated 7 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is Addition of a dormer to the front elevation of the proposed loft conversion, for which planning permission has been granted (P21/S3515/HH).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling set back from the road. It is a three storey dwelling which features a hipped tiled roof. I was able to see at my site visit that both the appeal site and its attached neighbour have had varying alterations.
4. The development which has been granted planning permission¹ (and was not constructed at the time of my visit) would introduce an extension to the roof, providing a gable end similar to that at the neighbouring property. The development the subject of this appeal would introduce a dormer window to the front roofslope within this extension. This would be aligned above two further proposed windows part of the previous planning permission.
5. Dwellings along Goring Heath Road tend to be set back from the road and there are a variety of single and two storey dwellings of varying character and appearance. The local area has a sense of openness as a result of open-fronted properties and spacious plots. The appeal site is a tall building which is visible from the road and within wider views from the road.

¹ P22/S2166/HH

6. The dormer window would diminish the relatively uniform appearance of the appeal site alongside its neighbour and would be a discordant addition in relation to the rest of the dwelling. This element, combined with the visibly extended side extension combine to result in a prominent and uncharacteristic addition into the local area and host dwelling and as such causes harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and local area.
7. The proposal would dominate this section of the roof, fundamentally altering its shape and unbalancing its form as a whole. I note that the appellant considers that the proposed development, along with the previously permitted development, would introduce more balance to the pair of semi-detached dwellings, with the dormer window adding architectural interest. Nonetheless, the resultant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the appeal site as seen within the pair of semi-detached dwellings would be readily visible in public views on the approach along Goring Heath Road and facing the dwellings.
8. As a result, the proposed dormer extension would harm the contribution of the houses, of which they form a part, to the streetscene. Whilst the appellant considers that the introduction of the dormer window would provide more symmetry to the side elevation of the appeal site, and although the dormer would be constructed in matching materials, these factors would not overcome the adverse effect that I have described.
9. I accept that there may be limited views of the site as seen directly from the street, given the existing vegetation, nonetheless there is no control over the retention of this and is not a material consideration of my planning decision.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the dormer roof extension would be contrary to Policies DES1 and DES2 of the Local Plan² which require, among other things, a high standard of design, consideration and enhancement of local character and appearance. The proposed development is also contrary to the guidance in the Council's Design Guide which states that dormer windows which extend a roof should be set within the roofslope where a clear rhythm of fenestration is established.

Conclusion

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

Rebecca Thomas

INSPECTOR

² South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 (December 2020)