



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2023

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/22/3308641

15 Griffiths Close, Northmoor, Witney, OX29 5TA

- 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 & Mrs Andrew Grant against the decision of the West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02160/HHD, dated 3 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 28 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is Demolition of single storey structure and construction of 2 storey side and rear extensions to provide suitable bedroom space and first floor family bathroom.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the building.

Reasons

3. The appeal site relates to a semi-detached house within the Northmoor Conservation Area (CA) and marks the edge of the village where farmland extends beyond. Houses are set back behind substantial front gardens with lawns and hedges providing an open and verdant appearance. House designs vary along the road but gabled dormers on the front elevations and steep roofs are a common feature which contribute to the significance of the CA, along with the open rural setting that surrounds housing within the village. In the case of the appeal site, and adjoining neighbour, the roof ridge on their gabled dormers extend to approximately half the main roof height and are positioned on both the front and rear of the houses close to where they join. This, along with their pitched roof front porches and flat roofed side wings, gives a pleasing symmetry to the houses when viewed from the front and rear.
4. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) (WODG) advises that extensions should remain secondary and subservient to the host property and not erode its primacy. The 2 storey side extension, viewed from the front, is stepped down from the main roof ridge and the new windows and gable dormer match those of the existing house and adjoining property. Thus, it is subservient and, despite its increased height compared to the side wing on the neighbouring house, retains elements that contribute to the character and symmetry of the pair.

5. The proposed 2 storey rear extension would include 2 roof gables with the eaves between them raised significantly higher than the eaves on the rest of the roof. The dormers would be substantially larger than the existing dormer and would have larger windows which would accentuate the differences between them. Although the increase in volume would not be double that of the existing building, as the Council suggest and the (WODG) advises against, the proposed development would substantially alter and dominate the rear of the house rather than appearing as A secondary feature and thus conflict with the guidance. As a result, the existing symmetry that the pair of houses demonstrate from rear views would be lost and the character and appearance of the house harmed.
6. I agree with the Council that the effect of the proposed development on the CA would be neutral as it would not impact on the open rural setting or key design features on the front elevations of houses which contribute to its heritage significance. Nonetheless, the proposal would be contrary to Policies OS2, OS4 and H6 of the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (2018), the WODG, the National Design Guide (2021) and the relevant paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) which require development to be of a high quality that respects the scale and character of the original property.

Other Matters

7. I have had regard to the examples of extensions provided by the appellant but none of them appeared to be directly comparable with the current appeal proposal. In any case, I have come to my own view regarding the development rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.
8. I have considered all other matters raised in support of the appeal, including the improvements that would be made to the building's energy performance. However, they do not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

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

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR