



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2023

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/D/23/3314302

3 Ridgemont Close, Summertown, Oxford, Oxon OX2 7PJ

- 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 Prad & Shweta Walimbe Nahar against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application 22/01752/FUL, dated 15 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is 'Demolition of the existing conservatory and porch to north-east elevation. Erection of a single storey extension to north-east elevation with formation of 2No. dormer windows and insertion of 1No. rooflight in association with loft conversion. Erection of a single storey extension to the south-west elevation, with replacement of balcony doors with window, insertion of 2No. additional windows at ground and first floor and insertion of 4No. rooflights. Insertion of flue to north-east roofslope. Formation of new vehicle access from Woodstock Road, with provision of dropped kerb, carparking, entrance gates and associated landscaping.'
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Procedural Matter

1. The description of development was changed following submission of the application. The amended description better describes the proposed development and therefore that is the description I have utilised for the purposes of the appeal.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, and;
 - The effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is an end of terrace dwelling situated in Ridgemont Close, a small housing development off the A4144 Woodstock Road, a main arterial route between north Oxford and the city centre. Ridgemont Close comprises of terraced houses and apartment buildings, with separate garage blocks. The Woodstock Road is fronted by a variety of building types and sizes, and it

comprises various mixed uses including residential, commercial, and institutional. The prevailing character of the Woodstock Road is of spaciousness across the road and between plots and a verdant urban area interspersed with development.

5. Ridgemont Close is predominantly residential and has a tighter grain of development which turns its back to, and is predominantly enclosed from the more spacious and massive development along Woodstock Road. As such, the character of Ridgemont Close is somewhat insulated from that of Woodstock Road.
6. The appeal site terrace has a distinctive design with a vertical emphasis, exemplified by several steep half-pitched roofs staggered to create interest. The opposite end of the terrace flanks Ridgemont Close and all of the dwellings in the terrace front a pedestrian path leading back towards the road. As such, the appeal site's rear elevation and rear garden front Woodstock Road.
7. The appeal scheme would introduce a large single storey extension onto the front elevation of the property, almost entirely occupying the front garden space. The front extension would span almost the entire width of the ground floor and would have more than half the depth of the house, which would have a massive appearance. It would be an overly dominant form of extension and would be incongruous with the proportions of the terrace as a whole and would project even further forward on the already staggered building line. Moreover, it would create a strong horizontal emphasis, at odds with the design of the host dwelling.
8. The appeal scheme would effectively swap the functions of the elevations. As such, the main private amenity space to the rear of the dwelling would be lost to a driveway and open front garden, fronting the busy Woodstock Road. This would entirely alter the way that the dwelling and the terrace interacts with the Woodstock Road. There are many existing vehicular accesses leading off Woodstock Road, however, they generally serve larger detached dwellings or dwellings with a greater setback from the road. The new driveway and dropped kerb would open Ridgemont Close up to the Woodstock Road in an incongruous manner. The impact of this on the local character would be exacerbated by the unusual design of the terrace itself which would not integrate well with the surrounding development of Woodstock Road.
9. As such, the scheme would conflict with policy DH1 of the Oxford Local Plan (OLP), adopted 2020, and policy HOS2 of the Summertown and St Margaret's Neighbourhood Plan (NP), made 2019, as well as the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These policies seek, amongst other things, high quality design which creates or enhances local character and distinctiveness.

Highway Safety

10. The scheme would introduce a new vehicular access to the road. Whilst there are several vehicular accesses off Woodstock Road, the appeal site is situated opposite a junction to St Edward's Avenue and in close proximity to the junction with Ridgemont Close itself. The access would also lead vehicles across the existing bus lane, and in very close proximity to a bus stop which is outside of the rear boundary of the appeal site. As such, the new access would have potentially complex and multiple vehicle manoeuvres taking place close by at the same time, creating a potential hazard to highway safety.

11. The Appellant contends that the benefit of providing a vehicle parking space to allow for an electrical charging point would overcome the potential harm to highway safety. The Appellant considers that the proposal would reduce congestion on the road; however, the proposal would in no way reduce vehicular movements on the road network and the site is located in a very good location for sustainable modes of transport other than private motor vehicles. As such, I give limited weight to the environmental sustainability merits of the scheme. Moreover, the appeal property has an existing parking space at its garage block, which could theoretically provide for the same benefits of off-road electrical vehicle charging without the highway safety impact.
12. As such, the scheme would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety which would not be outweighed by the sustainability credentials of the scheme. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies M3, DH1 and RE7 of the OLP, and the Framework. These policies seek, amongst other things, high quality of design for development which takes into account electric vehicle charging as well as the transport impact of schemes.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would conflict with the relevant policies of the development plan and no material considerations indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is accordingly dismissed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR