



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 June 2023

by Rebecca McAndrew, BA Hons, MSc, PG Dip Urban Design, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/23/3315946

31 Oxford Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1UN

- 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 H K Boparai against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02568/HHD, dated 13 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as Two storey side extensions with pitch roof over. Single storey rear extension with flat roof, part first floor extension with flat roof over and timber cladding. Replace front cat slide roof and dormer window with pitch roof, render external, minor internal alterations to the existing layout. Replace existing flat roof porch with new flat roof porch, proposed detached garage with pitch roof over. Dormer windows to garage, single storey flat roof link to garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The name of the appellant has been redacted on the planning application submitted as part of this appeal. I have therefore taken the appellant's name from the appeal form. The appellant's submission includes a statement confirming this to be correct.
3. I have taken the description of development in the banner above from the Council's decision notice as it is more concise than the description included on the planning application form. The appellant has confirmed that he is satisfied with the amended description.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - I. The effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area; and
 - II. The effect on the setting of the listed wall.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property is a large detached dwelling which is located on a corner plot and is therefore prominent when viewed from the off-shoot part of Oxford Road and Cadogan Park. The appeal proposal seeks to construct a range of extensions, of varying designs, to the property.
6. Taken together, the proposed extensions would subsume all four elevations of the existing house. This would give rise to a property with no cohesive design. Whilst the extensions would be set down below the existing ridgeline, given their overall mass and bulk, they would not appear subservient to the original structure. As such, the appeal proposal would unacceptably erode the simple character of the property and would give rise to a sprawling dwelling.
7. I acknowledge the appellant's assertion that flat roof extensions can sometimes provide attractive contemporary additions to host properties of a traditional form. However, the success of this design approach rests on proposals responding to the context of the original dwelling. In the case of the appeal scheme, the excessive footprint of the flat roof rear extension, as well as the lack of design reference to the existing dwelling, means this element of the scheme would not sit comfortably within the context of the host property.
8. I also note that the two proposed side extensions would be set down from the existing ridge height and set back from the front elevation. I accept that they would each appear as subordinate to the host dwelling if considered in isolation. However, they form part of a wider scheme and as such I must consider the overall impact of the appeal proposals. As I have described, overall, the works would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling.
9. In view of the above, the scheme would create an incongruous arrangement that would not respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling. Given the prominent position of the dwelling within the streetscene, the dwelling would also be harmful to the character and appearance of the immediate area.
10. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to Policies OS2, OS4 and H6 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (2018), the West Oxford Design Guide (2016) and Section 12 of the NPPF which, taken together, seek to secure good quality design which protects the character and appearance of the dwelling and area.

Setting of listed structure

11. The appeal site is separated from the Grade II listed boundary wall of Blenheim Palace by two roads and a band of green open space, which includes a number of protected trees. Consequently, a good distance would be retained between the listed structure and the appeal property and views between them would be largely obscured by a significant band of mature trees. On this basis, the proposed scheme would preserve the setting of the Listed Structure and there would be no harm to the heritage asset.
12. The proposal would therefore meet the requirements of Policies EH9 and EH11 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (2018), and Section 16 of the NPPF which, taken together, seek to safeguard designated historic assets.

Other Matters

13. I have considered a number of matters raised by the appellant in support of the scheme. I recognise that the appeal proposals have been significantly amended from another larger scheme to extend the property, which was previously refused planning consent. However, these revisions are not sufficient to overcome the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the dwelling and area.
14. I recognise that planning consent has been granted at the site for a large replacement dwelling which would be substantially different in character and appearance than the existing property. However, that scheme is for an attractive dwelling with a unified design, which would sit more comfortably within the context of the site and area than the incoherent appeal scheme.
15. I have considered other examples of extensions to properties on Oxford Road highlighted by the appellant. These differ from the appeal scheme as they represent the sympathetic and cohesive extension of those properties, rather than the inharmonious appeal scheme which I have described. Given these differences in circumstances, and also taking into account that each proposal must be considered on its own merit, I attach limited weight to these developments in making my decision.
16. I acknowledge that extending an existing property is a more sustainable approach than demolishing a house and building a replacement.
17. None of the other matters raised alter or outweigh my conclusion that the proposed development is not acceptable.

Conclusion

18. Whilst I find that the proposals would preserve the setting of the listed boundary wall to Blenheim Palace, this would not be sufficient to outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and immediate area that I have described. Therefore, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Rebecca McAndrew

INSPECTOR