
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2023

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

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/D/23/3320250

5 Sheldons Piece, Watlington, Oxfordshire OX49 5JJ

- 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 Mrs Ballantyne against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P22/S4511/HH, dated 13 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is the formation of a habitable room in roofspace with side dormer and velux rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area, including the Watlington Conservation Area (WCA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in the WCA. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character or appearance of the WCA.
4. The appeal scheme proposes the construction of a dormer roof extension to the side roof plane of this modern dwelling within the WCA. I recognise that the proposed dormer would be a pitched roof design which would reflect the roof form of the host property and that it would be set down from the ridge and set up from the eaves. However, the excessive height and width of the proposed dormer would give rise to an unacceptably bulky structure which would be at odds with the character and appearance of the existing dwelling.
5. I note that the dormer would sit above a blank side elevation of the host property and therefore there are no existing openings with which it could align. However, the proposed dormer would appear unbalanced within the roof slope, as it would be positioned close to the front gable end and would fail to align with the symmetry of the proposed roof lights. This awkward arrangement, combined with the unacceptable bulk and mass of the dormer as I have described, would be a discordant and unacceptably prominent feature.

6. Whilst this is a modern property in a relatively new development, it sits within the WCA and must be considered as such. There would be clear views of this overly large and incongruous dormer from both Sheldons Piece and the wider WCA, namely Cuxham Road.
7. Taking all of this into consideration, the appeal proposal would unacceptably harm both the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the area. It would therefore fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This harm would be 'less than substantial'. However, the limited benefits associated with the construction of the dormer would not outweigh the harm in this case.
8. In view of the above, the proposal would conflict with Policies DES1, DES2, H20, ENV6 and ENV8 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 (2020), Policy P1 of the Watlington Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017-2033 (2019), the South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide (2022) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). Taken together these seek to secure high quality design which reflects the context of the host property and conserves or enhances the character and appearance of the WCA.

Other Matters

9. I have considered a number of matters raised by the appellants in support of their scheme. I note that Watlington Parish Council supports the proposal. I also recognise that there are examples of roof extensions in the vicinity. Whilst I only have limited information in respect of these properties, they appear to be either historic additions, part of the original fabric of the dwellings and/or better respond to the context of the host dwellings than the appeal proposal would. In addition, each proposal must be considered on its own merits. Therefore, none of these matters outweigh the harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the WCA.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, I conclude the proposal would conflict with the development plan, the NPPF and Conservation Area legislation and there is no material consideration that would indicate the appeal should be allowed. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

Rebecca McAndrew

INSPECTOR