



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2023

by R Gee BA (Hons) Dip TP PGCert UD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/D/23/3314884

8 The Croft, Aston Tirrold, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 9DL

- 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 Katherine Pearce against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P22/S3052/HH, dated 17 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as "new rear facing dormer window to facilitate a loft conversion".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

3. The appeal property is one half of a semi-detached pair of brick-built houses set back from the highway. The dwelling stands within a residential area of mixed character and has a wrap-around two-storey side and single storey rear extension.
4. The proposed dormer window would have a flat roof and would extend the majority of the width of the roof that it would sit within. Despite the use of appropriate materials, the roof of the proposed dormer would also extend beyond the plane of the existing hipped roof resulting in an awkward arrangement. Accordingly, the dormer would not represent a subservient addition to the existing roof. In addition, the proposed windows would not be aligned with the fenestration of the lower floors which consequently unbalances the visual appearance of the property. As such I consider that the proposed dormer would be an incongruous addition to the property, detrimental to its character and appearance.
5. Due to the proposed development being positioned to the rear elevation of the dwelling visibility of the dormer would be limited. Although, as the flat roof dormer extends beyond the plane of the existing hipped roof the proposal would be partially, albeit limited, visible from the front of the dwelling. Views from the nearby public footpath would be limited, particularly due to the presence of tall landscaping along the eastern boundary of the appeal site.

However, the proposed dormer would be visible in the wider landscape, including agricultural land which lies beyond the garden of the appeal site and from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties, all of which lie within the AONB.

6. In any event, the protection of the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB applies across the whole of its designation, whether views are available or not. Owing to its unsympathetic and incongruous design I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and would consequently fail to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB, to which I give great weight.
7. For the above reasons, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the North Wessex Downs AONB. As a result, it would conflict with Policies DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 (adopted December 2020) (LP). Having regard to the conflict I have identified with the South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide 2022, which sets out guidance for appropriately designed and sited dormer extensions to dwellings, the proposal would conflict with Policy H20 of the LP. Amongst others, these policies, require new development to demonstrate high quality design, which respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area and appropriate in terms of location, setting and design in its local context. I find conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which gives great weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONB's which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Other Matters

8. Due to the orientation of the proposed development, based on the evidence before me, I do not find that harm would arise to the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties by way of loss of sunlight or daylight. This, however, is a neutral matter in the determination of this appeal and does not change my position on the harm identified in the main issue.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan as a whole, the Framework and all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Gee

INSPECTOR