



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 July 2023

by O Marigold BSc DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/W/23/3316652

5 Norreys Road, Cumnor, Oxford OX2 9PT

- 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 Shapour Sarabi against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref P22/V2515/FUL, dated 20 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 February 2023.
 - The proposal is to develop an existing five-bedroom semi-detached house into 2 three bedroom houses.
-

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 area.

Reasons

3. The area around the appeal site consists primarily of residential development. There is an apartment block at 1 to 3 Norreys Road and denser built form including terraced units within small plots on Chawley Lane nearby. There are also some detached dwellings, including opposite the site. Nevertheless, most dwellings on Norreys Road in particular are semi-detached and within reasonably wide plots, giving the road a low-density, suburban grain and distinctiveness. 5 Norreys Road is also semi-detached and has a plot width similar to many in the road.
4. The proposal seeks to convert the existing property including its double garage and side extension to form two dwellings. The principal physical changes would be large rear extensions. However, these would be subservient in scale to the host building and would use similar external materials. As a result, their visual impact would be limited.
5. However, the proposal would create a terraced dwelling in between what would become two end-of-terrace properties. The site frontage would be largely filled with parking areas and pedestrian pathways for each dwelling, as well as separate bin and cycle storage facilities. An additional entrance door would also be created at the side to serve the newly created dwelling. These changes individually would be small in scale. However, they would indicate the proposed more intensive use of the site and its discordant terraced form, as would the pattern of movements from them.

6. The rear garden is proposed to be laterally subdivided to form two gardens, one for each plot. This may well provide space for occupiers beyond the minimum required. However, it would result in an unusually narrow plot shape that would not reflect the width of many others nearby. Whilst not prominent from the road, the incongruous plot size would be visible from surrounding properties. Such subdivision may also be achieved using permitted development rights, without requiring planning permission. However, there would be little reason for such subdivision to be undertaken absent the proposal.
7. As such, because of its narrow plot width and denser appearance, the proposal would appear out of place and would harmfully contrast with the predominantly semi-detached, low-density character of properties in Norreys Road. Other properties in the road might not be able to undertake similar proposals, and so little precedent would be set. However, this does not change the effects of the proposal before me.
8. For these reasons, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would be contrary to Policy DBC1 of the Cumnor Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan, made May 2021, which requires that common plot shapes and sizes are maintained.
9. For the same reasons, the proposal would conflict with Policy CP37 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1, adopted December 2016, which requires that it responds positively to local distinctiveness, including the grain of the area. The proposal would also conflict with the similar requirements of the Joint Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance, adopted June 2022, and with the National Planning Policy Framework, which seeks development that is sympathetic to its surroundings.

Other Matters

10. The proposal would provide much-needed smaller and more affordable family properties resulting in an efficient use of land in a built-up area. It could be developed to high environmental standards and be delivered quickly. Future occupiers of the proposal would make a positive social and economic contribution to the area. Construction work and any Community Infrastructure Levy payment would also contribute economically. However, in only creating one additional dwelling, these benefits would be modest and so I give them limited positive weight.
11. The appellant has referred to other proposals locally where dwellings have been created in a similar manner. However, I have few details of these or their background so I can give them little weight. I have noted comments made by the appellant about the Council's handling of the case. However, this has had no bearing on the planning merits of the appeal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. For the reasons given, I have found conflict with the Development Plan as a whole. The material considerations in this case do not indicate a decision other than in accordance with the Development Plan. This leads me to conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

O Marigold INSPECTOR