



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 November 2023

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/D/23/3326400

12 Iffley Turn, Oxford, OX4 4DU

- 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 Vinay Banta against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03065/FUL, dated 23 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as the construction of ground and first-floor extensions, with internal and external alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of ground and first-floor extensions, with internal and external alterations, at 12 Iffley Turn, Oxford, OX4 4DU, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/03065/FUL, dated 23 December 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1148.G.6, 1148.G.7, 1148.G.8, 1148.G.9, 1148.G.10, 1148.G.11, 1148.G.12.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) No building hereby permitted shall be occupied until surface water drainage works shall have been implemented in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Before any details are submitted to the local planning authority an assessment shall be carried out of the potential for disposing of surface water by means of a sustainable drainage system, having regard to Defra's non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (or any subsequent version), and the results of the assessment shall have been provided to the local planning authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the area around Iffley Turn.

Reasons

3. No 12 is a detached house situated on the western side of Iffley Turn. It is narrow-fronted with a shallow two-storey side extension on the northern elevation, which includes the front door, and a small, single-storey side projection on the southern elevation. The house stands in a wide plot and occupies the northern part of the site. The proposed development would involve the demolition of an existing rear conservatory and the construction of a large side extension on the south side with a new rear extension across the whole width of the enlarged house.
4. Policy DH1 of the Council's Local Plan (LP) indicates that planning permission will only be granted for development of high quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness. Policy G2 of the LP indicates that development that results in a net loss of sites and species of ecological value will not be permitted. Sites and species important for biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected. Policy R4 of the LP indicates, among other things, that all development proposals will be required to manage surface water through Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) or techniques to limit run-off and reduce the existing rate of run-off on previously developed sites.
5. The Council contends that, because of its width, depth, excessive mass and bulk and the prominent and centrally located front door, the proposed development would fail to reflect the appearance, character and pattern of development in the area, appearing as an overly large and prominent single detached dwelling house that would be visually incongruous and alien in its setting, to the detriment of visual amenity.
6. The appellant contends that the development would fit in with the established character of Iffley Turn and its local environment. The dwelling would appear similar to others in the area, in terms of density, scale and design. Moreover, there is no predominant style of buildings in the vicinity and the design of the extension would allow the house to function well and improve its accessibility and usability.
7. Iffley Turn is a quiet residential road leading south from its junction with Henley Avenue. The eastern side of the road is characterised by detached dwellings on relatively wide plots, with trees, hedges and grass verges to the road frontage. The appeal site is located on the western side of the road. In the vicinity of the appeal site, this side of the road is characterised by a mix of detached and semi-detached houses of varying designs and sizes. To the north of No 12, is a detached house of a similar scale to that of the appeal property, followed by a pair of semi-detached houses and a detached house on the corner plot at the junction of Iffley Turn with Cavell Road. To the south are two pairs of modern semi-detached houses and a short terrace of houses fronting Augustine Way.
8. There is no clearly prevailing character or appearance to the area in the vicinity of the appeal site. Further south, beyond Augustine Way, properties lie within large, heavily landscaped plots. Immediately to the north of Cavell Road, the houses along Henley Avenue are a mix of detached and semi-detached houses that appear as a continuation of Iffley Turn. On this basis, I do not consider that the proposal would appear as an alien feature in the street scene. There are narrow gaps between most properties with wider gaps on the south sides of both Nos 4 and 12. The proposed extension at No 12 would retain a gap of

around 2 metres between the house and the boundary with No 14, which itself is some 3 metres from its northern boundary. The proposal would not result in a house that appeared as uncharacteristically large or prominent on its plot, nor with an uncharacteristic scale of gap to neighbouring properties.

9. I note that the two pairs of modern semi-detached houses at Nos 14-20 Iffley Turn each have their front doors located adjacent to one another in the centre of the pair. Similarly, No 282 Henlay Avenue, close to the appeal property, is a wide-fronted detached house with a centrally located door. In neither of these cases does the front door arrangement appear incongruous or alien, and I do not consider that such an arrangement at the appeal property would be uncharacteristic or harmful to the area around Iffley Turn.
10. In conclusion, I find that the proposed extension would not appear out of scale or character within the general context of the character and appearance of Iffley Turn. Moreover, the central position of the front door would not appear alien to its surroundings where there are already examples of wide-fronted buildings with doors positioned centrally. On this basis, therefore, I find that the proposal would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area, and would not conflict with Policy DH1 of the LP.

Other Matters

11. There would not appear to be habitable room windows in the side elevation of No 14, and so I do not consider that the conditions suggested by the Council relating to windows and other openings in the side elevation of the proposed extension are necessary in this case.
12. I have not been presented with any evidence of the presence, or a clear likelihood of presence, of bats at the property, and, in this case, I do not consider the proposal would be likely to conflict with the thrust of Policy G2 of the LP.

Conditions

13. I have attached a condition relating to plans because it is necessary that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I have attached a further condition relating to materials in the interests of the visual amenities of the area, and a condition regarding sustainable drainage in order to avoid increasing surface water run-off and to prevent an increase in flood risk in line with the requirements of Policy R4 of the LP, although I have altered the wording of the condition suggested by the Council for the sake of clarity and precision.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR