



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2023

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18TH December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/D/23/3329506

52 Cranmer Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX4 2QF

- 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 and Mrs David and Katie Cranwell against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00978/FUL dated 3 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is erection of a part single storey part two storey rear and side extension. Insertion of 2 no. windows to side elevation. Conversion of garage to store and alterations to 1 no. door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the council's description of the development as I feel it more concisely describes the proposal.
3. Since the determination of the application, and the submission of this appeal, a revised National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (the Framework) was adopted on 5 September 2023. The refusal reason generically references the Framework however, it is not considered that this impacts upon the determination of this appeal given the main changes to the Framework.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the host dwelling, the prevailing character and form of development in the area and visual amenity.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a semi-detached dwelling which currently benefits from an existing rear roof dormer and a single storey extension across part of the rear elevation. An outbuilding, a former garage, is to the rear of the property as demonstrated on the site location plan. The Council's delegated report confirms that the proposed changes to the garage are acceptable in visual terms, and I have no evidence before me to conclude differently on this element based upon my site visit and the proposed plans.
6. The proposal seeks permission to incorporate the existing single storey rear extension into a new two storey element which would extend across the rear of the dwelling with a projection, of just under a metre, going beyond the side wall. Part of the two-storey extension would be of a reduced depth and

- provided with a flat roof in contrast to the remainder of the two-storey extension which would be provided with a pitched roof.
7. As can be seen, from the proposed elevations, the two-storey element with the dual pitched roof would intercept with the existing eaves and dormer which would create a visually awkward design from both the rear and side elevations. Whilst the extension would be slightly offset from the dormer, overall, the proposal would result in a visually awkward, and complex, series of roof lines as a result of the flat roof dormer, the dual pitched two storey extension and the part of the two-storey extension which would be flat roofed. The proposals, combined with the existing dormer, would completely consume the original dwelling, fail to be sympathetic and would result in poor quality design.
 8. I do not find that the appeal proposal preserves the prominence of the original structure, nor upholds a subservient relationship to the original dwelling and the utilisation of matching materials, regardless of if they are consistent with the local area, would not result in a seamless integration into the original building nor would the proposal result in a visually coherent proposal as a result of the conflicting roof designs which I have identified. The proposal would be visually cluttered, contrived and visually jarring.
 9. Overall, the proposal does not respect the simple form and proportions of the original two storey semi-detached dwelling which, in its original form, would have been modest. The projection of the two-storey element beyond the side wall adds to the overall visual harm and complexity creating an offset two storey extension, cumulatively wider than the host dwelling, further adding to inappropriate design and impact upon visual amenity. Cumulatively, the extensions would fail to be subservient to the original dwelling, obscuring the rear elevation leaving the rear of the host dwelling illegible.
 10. It is acknowledged that many dwellings have been altered, and extended, in varying forms and there is varied architectural form in the vicinity. At the time of my site visit I walked, down an alleyway, to the recreation ground to the rear of the property and acknowledge that there are flat roofed, first-floor extensions at 58 and 60 Cranmer Road and further examples, in the wider vicinity, were visible from the alleyway to the playground (on Brasenose Driftway). The Council also note that there is a first-floor extension that intersects with the rear roof dormer at 48 Cranmer Road.
 11. During my site visit I found that these examples were visually notable, for negative reasons, and indeed I find that they are visually unsuccessful and demonstrate the visual harm that this type of development can result in. Despite this, I do acknowledge that whilst they are perhaps characteristic in terms of form of development, overall, they are much simpler developments. The proposal would fail to reflect the prevailing character and form of development in the area. The examples that I saw, within the vicinity and within the row which the appeal site stands, are not directly comparable compared to the cumulative impact of the appeal proposals.
 12. Whilst the proposal would not be highly visible within the street scene of Cranmer Road itself (other than projection to the side of just under a metre) the proposal would be visible within views of the rear elevation from the recreation ground to the rear of the site. I do not find that screening by existing trees and vegetation is sufficient to allow a development which is inappropriate in the context of the host dwelling itself as outlined above. The

proposal is to be located in a visually prominent area due to properties backing onto and surrounding this space.

13. It should clearly be kept in mind that character and appearance are separate matters. Appearance is the outward, visible qualities, whereas character is the sum of all the qualities which distinguish an area. In this case, reduced visibility, such as screening, may assist in some cases with reducing impact upon appearance but this still leaves character as a separate matter. In this case, the cumulative extensions, and proposed design, would not only overwhelm the host dwelling, but it would also fail to reflect the prevailing character and form of development in the area.
14. It is acknowledged that the appeal site, and wider site, are not covered by any conservation areas or designations, but this does not reduce the emphasis on high quality design as a component of sustainable development within both the Local Plan and The Framework. No objections were raised by Councillors, Statutory Consultees, or neighbours but a lack of objection is a neutral consideration.
15. The proposal would be contrary to Oxford Local Plan 2036 (adopted 2022) Policy DH1 which confirms that planning permission will only be granted for development of high-quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness. The proposal would also be contrary to paragraph 130 of the Framework which seeks to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and are sympathetic to the local character and history, including the surrounding built environment.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR