
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2024

by G Powys Jones MSc FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17.05.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/D/24/3337721

The Old Bakery, Longworth, Oxfordshire, OX13 5EP

- 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 Ms Sigrun Stanton against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref P23/V1587/HH, dated 5 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 8 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two storey extension and enlarged external door opening.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The host property, a detached dwelling, stands on a relatively narrow triangular plot at the junction of Cow Lane and Sudbury Lane at a point where Cow Lane turns at right angles towards the High Street. The two storey element of the dwelling is L-shaped with a simple pitched roof form with gables facing south and west respectively. It is of a pleasant, uncomplicated design which sits harmoniously in its visual context.
4. A mono-pitch single storey extension with a relatively large footprint was added to the dwelling's eastern elevation in the immediate post second world war years. Much of the dwelling's southern elevation, including that of the extension, is covered in wisteria. Neighbouring development, predominantly residential in nature, is of a varied design.
5. The intention, for the reasons provided by the appellant, is to demolish the extension and to build a two storey extension on the same footprint. The existing ground floor layout would be virtually replicated, apart from the provision of a spiral staircase providing access to the newly created accommodation above – a master bedroom with en-suite facilities. A large void would be formed at the upper level thus providing light and airiness to the kitchen and dining area below.

6. The Council has no objection to the loss of the single storey extension, and I have no reason to disagree.
7. Viewed when approaching from the west along Cow Lane, the dwelling would be perceived as relatively unchanged – the main modification being the insertion of a west-facing dormer, which is of an acceptable design. The ground floor changes proposed would not be obvious from this direction from outside the site given the presence of the hedge around the dwelling's garden.
8. It is in short range views from Cow Lane when approaching from the south and from Sudbury Lane that the development would be most apparent. A notice indicates that the latter is a private road providing vehicular access to a farm and some dwellings but is also a public footpath.
9. To my mind, when viewed from these quarters, the additional bulk of the extension would be very prominent and perceived as wholly disproportionate to the scale of the host property. Additionally, what is now seen as a dwelling of a pleasant appearance would be transformed by the addition of a bulky upper floor topped by a roof form of a complicated, and what appears to me as a contrived design wholly unsuited to the simplicity of form of the host property, especially its roof.
10. Whilst acknowledging the efforts made to keep the proposed ridge levels of the various roof elements proposed below those of the host property in an attempt to achieve subservience, the bulkiness of the scheme as a whole would defeat this particular objective.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the host property and its immediate surroundings. Accordingly, a clear conflict arises with those provisions of policy CP37 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan directed to achieving good quality design appropriate to the site and its context.

Other matters

12. Reference has been made to the applicant's pre-application submission and the efforts made in the evolving design of the project to address points raised by the Council. That discourse has been taken into account, but I am charged with determining an appeal on a scheme which the Council ultimately found to be unacceptable.
13. I have noted the references to aspects of the local planning history including the outcome of an appeal which took place over a quarter of a century ago in respect of the dwelling immediately to the north of the site – Field View.
14. I visited that property given its close proximity to the appeal site. I note that the objections raised by its owner were addressed by the Council in its officer report. Whilst I understand the objector's concerns, on balance, I share the outcome of the Council's assessment of them for similar reasons.
15. The references to other development plan policies have been noted, but that to which I have referred is considered the most relevant in the circumstances of this case.

16. I have also noted and considered the various references to local guidance¹ and the Framework. The Framework also advises² that '*development that is not well designed should be refused*'. I shall follow that guidance here.
17. All other matters raised in the representations have been taken into consideration, including the Parish Council's comments, but no other matter raised is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the factors that led me to my conclusion on the main issue.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

¹ Joint Design Guide, Supplementary Planning Document

² National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 139