



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2025 by E Street BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/G3110/W/24/3351224

14 Blay Close, Oxford OX4 6BQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Robert Xhani against the decision of Oxford City Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02784/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as “demolition of existing garage and rear outbuilding. Erection of a two storey side extension to create a 1 x 1 bed dwellinghouse (Use Class C3). Provision of car parking, bin and cycle stores, amenity space and air source heat pump. (amended description and plans).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure and Preliminary Matter

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal. In addition, the description of development was changed during the life of the application. It was agreed by the appellant. I have used that description above.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is a semi-detached dwelling with a single storey garage. Dwelling type and scale vary on Blay Close with a mix of terraced, semi-detached and flats. Notwithstanding, the appeal building is set within a row of uniform semi-detached dwellings which are largely unaltered with spacious gaps by virtue of the single storey garages. These features lend a pleasant consistency between the different dwelling types which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
5. The proposed new dwelling would be adjoined to 14 Blay Close (No 14) by virtue of the extension and conversion of the garage. It has been demonstrated that the site would seek to make efficient use of land as per Policy RE2 to which this is not in dispute by the Council. That said, the policy also details other criteria the proposal must meet including being compatible with the site and surrounding area. The scale and positioning of the proposal would introduce a cramped and incongruous form which would detract from the pleasant and open nature between the buildings. Whilst some openness would be retained due to the neighbouring garage, it would still contribute to a significant loss and an unacceptable change. The narrow nature of the new dwelling would be emphasised by the uniform and consistent existing semi-detached dwellings and appear as an extension rather than a self-contained unit. In addition, due to its centralised position, it would be highly prominent and create an out of place dwelling detracting from the original and currently preserved row.

6. I am unaware of the planning status of 2 Blay Close (No 2) or the policies and prevailing guidance at that time. The scale and form of No 2 is similar to this proposal, however, the distinct difference surrounds the siting and the type of development. No 14 is central in the row compared with No 2 and the proposed scheme would be emphasised by the prevailing pattern compared with the end of row position No 2 holds. No 2 clearly reads as a secondary addition to the host dwelling not detracting from the established semi-detached character whereby the proposal would create a terracing effect and sit uncomfortably as a self-contained dwelling.
7. The examples given at locations such as 18 Merlin Road and 51 Balfour Road vary in such that different plan policies were in place and the setting is not directly comparable. For these reasons, only limited weight can be given to the two schemes in influencing this appeal proposal. In addition, the details provided do not lead me to finding in the appellant's favour on this main issue. Taking this and the above into account, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies DH1, RE2 and G6 of the Oxford Local Plan 2036 which together seek to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard.

Other Matter

8. Nationally speaking that there is significant pressure to provide new housing, it should nonetheless be in the right place, of the right type and not give rise to unacceptable harms. Whilst the Framework suggests to positively look at such, there is no indication that the Council's supply is lacking. I have therefore been given no specific reason to be directed to Paragraph 11 of the Framework.

Conclusion and Recommendation

9. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would not comply with the development plan, and I have been given no other compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced, to deviate therefrom. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Street

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

10. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR