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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2025

by **S Rawle BA (Hons) Dip TP Solicitor**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/D/24/3345631**

**Willows Reach, Mill Lane, Shiplake, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 3LY**

- 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 Julian Glasspole against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
  - The application Ref is P23/S3452/HH.
  - The development proposed is the erection of external decking.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of external decking at Willows Reach Mill Lane, Shiplake, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 3LY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P23/S3452/HH, subject to the following condition:
  1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos; 2023-001 0001; 2023-001 0002; 2023-001 0200 Rev B; and 2023-001 0100.

### Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development contained on the application form including matters that are not acts of development and I have amended the description to remove them. The development has already been undertaken and I have determined the appeal on that basis. For the avoidance of doubt this appeal relates only to the erection of external decking as shown on the submitted plans and for no other development.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development harms the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a dwelling on a spacious plot where the rear garden immediately adjoins the River Thames. The appeal site and adjoining plots are appreciated from the river itself and comprise detached dwellings set back from the river with lawns, boathouses and river moorings being common features. Many of the properties have mature trees and vegetation along common boundaries and along the waterfront. As a result, the character and appearance of the area derives to a significant extent from the residential form and scale of development with boathouses and moorings along the river.

5. To provide appropriate mitigation from flooding the existing house is built on stilts with a void beneath. There are two areas of approved decking. The first is to the side of the house which wraps around to the rear (side and rear decking) and which links via steps to an area of original decking that I understand was in-situ prior to the redevelopment of the existing dwelling (the pool decking). The second area is a smaller area adjacent to an outbuilding (the outbuilding decking).
6. The development subject of this appeal largely fills the gap between the rear of the dwelling, the pool decking and the outbuilding. There is also a new area of decking located to the front of the outbuilding decking, but in terms of its relationship to the river this does not extend decking further towards the River Thames, but rather results in additional decking that aligns with that part of the outbuilding decking closest to the river. That said, this new decking and the approved decking are set back some distance from the river.
7. As outlined above, the development largely fills the gap between the rear of the house, the pool decking and the outbuilding. As a result, it does not appear jarring or incongruous. Rather it appears subservient to the existing house and the pool decking and fits onto the plot in an appropriate manner. Further, existing trees and vegetation are incorporated into the design to ensure that the development does not undermine the prevailing character and appearance of the area within this sensitive setting which is reflected by its designation as a Special Character Area and Valued Landscape within the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2035 May 2022 (SNP). Moreover, the development appears compatible with its surroundings from any available public views, including from the river and consequently protects the waterside character and does not harm any important views.
8. I therefore conclude that the development does not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it accords with Policies ENV1, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 adopted December 2020 and Policies SV5, SV7, SV9, SV10, SV11, SV23 and SV24 of the SNP which among other things seek to ensure that the landscape, countryside and rural areas are protected from harmful development, that development is of a high quality design that respects the existing landscape character, development integrates with its surroundings and visually complements its surroundings, that proposals should not lead to overdevelopment, that development preserves the features which positively define the character of the area and reflect valuable characteristics, that development adjacent to the River Thames protects and enhances the waterside character, heritage value and setting, that development should not have a significant adverse impact on any important view and that development is compatible with special character areas.

## Conditions

9. As the development has been undertaken it is unnecessary to impose a commencement condition. However, for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of good planning it is necessary to impose a condition to identify the approved plans.

**Conclusion**

10. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

*S Rawle*

INSPECTOR

