
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2025

by **SE Hughes BA (Hons) PGDip MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/24/3355309

Wychwold, Upper End, Fulbrook, Burford, OX18 4BX

- 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 and Ms Andrew and Sam Carpenter and Weller against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01614/HHD.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing rear extension for a new one and a half storey rear extension and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development on the application form has been slightly altered by the Council. The Council have said that the appellant is satisfied with the amended wording, however, there is no written agreement from the appellant to the change, therefore I have used the description of development provided on the application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. Wychwold is a pretty, detached, two up two down limestone cottage, fronting a narrow lane known as Upper End. The property is slightly elevated from the street and is accessed via steps and a pedestrian gate. The immediate locality is composed of historic vernacular buildings and modern detached houses typically built in the local style.
5. Although it is not listed, it is agreed by the parties that Wychwold is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and from what I saw on my site visit I see no reason to disagree. The Framework confirms that the effect on the significance of a NDHA should be taken into account in determining an application. Insofar as relevant to the proposal, the special interest and significance of Wychwold lies in the simplicity of its original form and its use of vernacular materials.
6. With any proposal it is important to take account of the Framework's imperative for good design. In this regard, policy OS4 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (WOLP) requires development to be of high design quality and to reflect the design

advice contained in the West Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (WODG). Policy H6 of the WOLP, which relates to house extensions, requires them to respect the character of the surrounding area. Additionally, policy EH12 of the WOLP which concerns extensions to traditional buildings, requires them to respect the form of the original building, so as not to obscure or compromise it. The WODG advises that whilst there is no fixed rule for the extent to which a property can successfully be enlarged, extensions which would, through their scale and massing, result in the primacy of the original property being eroded or lost altogether should be avoided.

7. Despite the one and a half storey appearance and the slightly reduced height of the aligned ridge, the extension would be approximately double the volume of the original house and would introduce a substantial gable feature to the back of the house, overwhelming the primacy of the original building to the detriment of its significance as a NDHA.
8. To the front and side of the building, the existing rising bank would be cut away and part of the existing boundary wall and garden trees and vegetation, which partially screen the property, would be lost and replaced with a sloping driveway. Whilst it is argued that the footprint of the building would be less than double the footprint of the existing building, due to the new driveway opening from the street, and surrounding topography, the disproportionate mass of the extension would be clearly visible from Upper End.
9. Although various further attempts have been made to reduce the size of the extension, including its narrower plan, lower link section, dormer windows and lack of a chimney, these design measures do not go far enough to differentiate the extension as a secondary addition to the original building.
10. Based on the above, and paragraph 216 the Framework, the proposal would therefore result in substantial, direct harm to the NDHA. Although the replacement of the existing poor-quality, single storey extension and the modernisation of the property would be beneficial, this does not outweigh the substantial harm that I have found.
11. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would be materially harmful to the building as a NDHA. It would conflict with the WOLP policies OS2, OS4, H6, EH9, EH12 and EH16 and the WODG insofar as these seek high quality development which respects the character of the area and protect the historic environment, including the significance of NDHAs, and it would also conflict with the heritage objectives of the Framework.

Other Matters

12. Brook Farmhouse is a grade II listed building dating from the 17th century which lies on the opposite side of the road. The building features an 18th century tower, a cross gabled stone slate roof, creamy limestone coursed rubble walling and stone mullion windows. The special interest and significance of Brook Farmhouse is derived in part by its age and architectural interest. Notwithstanding that the appeal site is proximate to Brook Farmhouse and there is some intervisibility between the two, in my judgement the appeal proposal would preserve the setting of Brook House, the significance of which would not be harmed. A lack of harm in this respect, however, does not alter my overall conclusions.

13. With regards to the appeal site's location in the Cotswolds National Landscape, (formerly referred to as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) I am mindful of my duties to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of National Landscapes. Whilst I have found above that there would be a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the NDHA, that impact, would be localised, as the scale of the development within the confines of the village, is not substantial enough to impact the wider landscape designation.
14. Although, there was a letter of support from a neighbouring property and the Parish Council do not object to the development, this does not outweigh the harm I find.

Conclusion

15. In conclusion, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no other material considerations, including the Framework, that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

SE Hughes

INSPECTOR