



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2025

by **B Astley-Serougi BA(Hons) LLM MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/24/3347935

**The White House, Rosebery Road, Tokers Green, Reading, Oxfordshire
RG4 9EL**

- 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 Dr Ian Hart against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is P24/S0018/FUL.
 - The development proposed is 4-bedroom 1.5-storey detached house next to the existing house. All associated landscaping.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised description of development has been agreed between the parties. I have amended the description in the banner heading above to reflect the agreed description. I have removed words not in relation to acts of development for clarity.
3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was issued on 12 December 2024. Whilst some paragraph numbers have changed, the relevant paragraphs and parts of paragraphs identified as directly affecting this case have not been amended. Therefore, in this case it has not been necessary to consult the parties on the revised Framework.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site lies within the village settlement of Tokers Green and the local valued landscape identified in the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022 (the NDP). It is accessed via a private road known as Rosebery Road. There are approximately 15 dwellings located on Rosebery Road including The White House which has been granted permission for various amendments¹.

¹ Planning Application Ref: P24/S0017/HH and P24/S1847/NM

6. The streetscape along Rosebery Road is varied however the majority of the dwellings are single storey. There are spaces between the majority of the dwellings on Rosebery Road which results in a pleasant rhythm to the street as well as visual relief between the built form. The appeal scheme would subdivide the existing plot and create a detached 1.5 storey dwelling on garden land to the side of The White House. The width of the plot would be narrow and the appeal scheme would result in the conversion of the majority of the front garden area into a driveway.
7. The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2022 (the JDG) outlines the importance of retaining gaps within the street scene to reduce a terracing effect. It highlights that the extent of the gap should be determined by the pattern of the development in the area but, in general, it should not be less than 1m wide.
8. The appellant acknowledges that the proposed gap between the proposed dwelling's gable end and the gable end of The White House would be below the recommended 1m. However, the gap between the gables of the appeal scheme and the neighbouring dwelling known as The Furrows would be approximately 1.25m, with a gap of 1m to the eastern side boundary.
9. Consequently, due to the narrow width of the plot, the appeal scheme would span most of the width of the plot and be located close to the boundary with the neighbouring dwellings at both ground floor and first floor. This would result in a cramped layout of the site and consequently result in a terracing effect. It would be exacerbated by the lack of a sufficient gap at first floor between the proposed development and The Furrows. Consequently, it would result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area including the wider street scene.
10. The appellant highlights that there would be a large gap between The White House and its westerly boundary when including the garage. However, this would not justify the cramped layout I have identified above in regard to the relationship of the appeal scheme with the Furrows.
11. Examples of other dwellings on Rosebery Road have been cited by the appellant with regard to smaller gaps to their side boundaries including Haven, Silver Birches and Astracot. The gap between Haven and Silver Birches is approximately 1.2m and therefore accords with the JDG. There is a gap of approximately 0.2m between the single storey side elements of Silver Birches and Astracot. Each case is determined on its own merit and context. Nevertheless, the first floor of Astracot is set back considerably from the boundary with Silver Birches. Consequently, there remains visual relief from the built form at first floor unlike the proposed development which would result in a two-storey dwelling less than 1m from The Furrows.
12. Elsewhere on Rosebery Road there are buildings close to their respective boundaries, however, not necessarily close to other built form. Nevertheless, I have identified above that each application is determined on its own merit. Given that The Furrows is located close to the existing boundary, the appeal scheme would result in a terracing effect due to the proximity of both the ground and first floor to the boundary and consequently The Furrows.

13. There are numerous dwellings with driveways and parking spaces located within their frontages however they retain significant soft landscaping features. The proposed parking provision would replace the majority of the existing front garden area of The White House. It would include minimal soft landscaping features and therefore the hardstanding would dominate the frontage. Consequently, this dominance would fail to assimilate with other dwellings on Rosebery Road and would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
14. Given all of the above, the appeal scheme would result in overall harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area due to the lack of adequate gaps between the proposed development and the neighbouring dwellings. It would therefore conflict with Policies DES1, DES2 and ENV1 of the South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2035 insofar as they seek to ensure development is of a high design quality and takes into account layout, building orientation and massing of its surrounding context.
15. The appeal scheme would still fail to accord with Policies LCI, LCDPG, LPLV and LTSAP of the NDP. These policies seek to ensure the size of gaps between dwellings are reasonable, that the appearance of developments as well as the off-road parking provisions assimilate with the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area including the local valued landscape of which the appeal site is a part.

Living Conditions

16. I have identified above the close relationship that would result from the appeal scheme with both The Furrows and The White House. The appeal scheme would project approximately 6 metres in total further than the rear elevation of The Furrows. The appeal scheme would include an eaves height of approximately 5.6m and roof ridge height of 7m for the first 3m of the rear projection. This would be approximately 1m from the boundary and consequently approximately 1.8m from The Furrows. The flat roof section of the appeal scheme would have a roof height of approximately 4.2m and 3.5m from the boundary.
17. The substantial height of the rear projection of the appeal scheme in conjunction with its proximity to The Furrows would result in an overly dominant development when viewed from the patio and garden area of The Furrows. Consequently, it would result in harm to the living conditions of the occupants of The Furrows.
18. Regarding the relationship of the appeal scheme with The White House, I saw on my site visit that the aforementioned permissions were in the process of being implemented. The Council indicated that it had no concerns regarding the appeal scheme on the living conditions of the occupants of The White House should the approved scheme at The White House be implemented. I find no reason to disagree.
19. In conclusion, the appeal scheme would result in harm to the living conditions of the occupants of The Furrows due to its overly dominant scale. It therefore would conflict with Policy DES6 of the South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2035 insofar as it seeks to ensure development proposals do not result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants.

20. It would also fail to accord with Policies LCI and LCDPG of the NDP insofar as they seek to ensure the scale of developments do not result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants.

Conclusion

21. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

B Astley-Serougi

INSPECTOR