



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 July 2025

by **Eleni Marshall BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/25/3363662

50 New Yatt Road, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NZ

- 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 Christoph Corvin and Katharine Berman against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application reference is 24/03227/HHD.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey rear and side extension, single storey side extension, replacement doors and windows and associated landscape work.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have utilised the Council's description of the development as per the decision notice as I feel it more concisely describes the development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character of the original dwelling, street scene, visual amenity and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a detached residential dwelling found in a residential area off New Yatt Road. At the time of my site visit I found that the character and appearance of dwellings along New Yatt Road, within close proximity to the host dwelling, is varied. There is evidence of varying bulk, scale and massing, varying alterations to properties as well as a varied material palette within the street scene. The appeal site forms an unusual property insofar as it effectively presents as half of a semi-detached pair which results in an unusual, straight, elevation to the northeast.
5. I do not find that the property is particularly poor or unattractive in itself, or within the context of the street scene, insofar as its existing appearance could be utilised to justify potential alterations or extensions as an improvement to the appeal site/host property itself. The proposal seeks to construct a two-storey rear and side extension, single storey side extension as well as replacement doors and windows and associated landscaping.
6. The proposal would, by the Council's calculation (set out within the delegated report) result in a proposed footprint in the region of 122 sq./m (totalling in the region of 209 sq./m). The proposal is stated, by the Council, to result in

development which would more than double the footprint of the original dwelling (excluding the extension to the kitchen and lounge permitted in 1977). In addition, the width of the original dwelling is stated to have been in the region of 8 metres with a proposed width, as a result of the appeal proposals, to be in the region of 17 metres. The original dwelling had a length in the region of 14 metres with the proposed extension extending the length of the dwelling to around 16 metres. The appellant's statement of case does not dispute the figures stated within the Council's delegated report.

7. The starting point for determination is the Local Plan in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 taking into account all material considerations such as, in this case, the West Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (the Design Guide). The guidance, in relation to extensions and alterations, outlines that extensions or alterations that are of an inappropriate scale, or likely to obscure or significantly alter the form or the character of the original property, are unlikely to be supported. As an overarching principle the scale, form and character of the original property should be sympathetically reflected in any proposed changes.
8. I acknowledge that there is no fixed rule for the extent to which a property can be successfully enlarged and that every property is different, however, it is a well-accepted principle with regard to extensions that any extension should remain clearly secondary and subservient to the original property. Extensions should not result in the primacy of the original property being eroded or lost altogether and extensions which would double, or more than double, existing volume are unlikely to be supported as well as extensions being secondary in terms of footprint, height and volume.
9. In terms of footprint, and width, the proposals that are before me would be a significant enlargement of the property. The two-storey side and rear extension would fail to show proper subservience to the host dwelling and would leave the character and appearance of the host dwelling effectively illegible and consumed by the proposals. Overall, I find that the proposal would appear bulky and, due to scale and massing the proposal would not be clearly secondary and subservient to the host dwelling nor proportionate to the scale of the original dwelling resulting in it detracting, unacceptably, from the character and appearance of the original host dwelling.
10. The proposal would be visible within the street scene which, in itself, is not a reason for refusal, however, the top section of the existing northeast elevation is prominent within the street scene (and partly exacerbated by its more unusual elevation as outlined). The bulk, scale and massing at roof level as a result of the proposed two storey side extension would also detract from the visual amenity and appearance within the wider street scene. I do not find, therefore, that the proposal is sensitively conceived nor would represent a form of high-quality residential development that is appropriate or proportionate to the appeal site.
11. I do not find that the property should, as the appellant states, rightly be improved and provided with a more characterful appearance nor that the proposal can be justified as a result of the building's existing appearance. The existing dwelling is acknowledged not to be listed nor stand in a Conservation Area nor be subject to any local area special planning policy designations, however, a lack of such designation does not overcome the requirement for high quality design which is

appropriate to the host dwelling itself. I note, from the appellant's statement of case, that the appellant considers that the proposal complies with the three pillars of sustainable development, however, due to the issues I have outlined with regard to character and appearance and disproportionate proposals in the context of the host dwelling I fail to find that the proposal would be consistent with the environmental objectives of sustainable development.

12. Whilst I acknowledge that the existing dwelling is unusual in its design I do not find that the property presents as awkward nor of sufficiently poor design to justify the overall scale of the proposals that are before me and as a result of failing to be a form of high quality design the proposal cannot contribute to sustainable development as a result of the three pillars of sustainability which require consideration in mutually supportive ways and not in isolation. Furthermore, whilst the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (the Framework) is a material consideration the starting point for determination is the Local Plan and for the reasons I have set out, I find the proposal to be inconsistent with the relevant policies and Council's Design Guide on such matters.
13. The Framework does set out policies and promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes, however, even if I considered the proposal acceptable in the context of its occupation of a large plot it does not automatically follow that disproportionate extensions should be allowed for the reasons set out nor that they would necessarily automatically result in an effective use of land. As outlined, the Council has no objection to the principle of development but rather that the proposals, as currently submitted, are disproportionate and do little to retain and promote the character of the host dwelling in terms of set back and general relationship to the existing site.
14. It is outlined that the large exposed northeast wall attracts damp and is very energy inefficient and that the appeal proposal would contribute to a more energy efficient home. I also note that the proposal is stated to allow a growing family to remain in occupation of their dwelling, however, whilst these points are acknowledged in the context of the appeal proposal I have no evidence before me to suggest that the appeal site could not be made more energy efficient or extended in a manner which would allow a growing family to remain in a manner which would be more appropriate in terms of bulk, scale and massing than the proposals that are before me which I find would consume the host dwelling as set out.
15. The proposal would be inconsistent with West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2018 Policy OS2 which confirms (in general principles) that all developments should be of a proportionate and appropriate scale to its context, Policy OS4 which requires that new development should respect the character of the locality and regard should be had to the Design Guide and Policy H6 which requires that alterations and extensions of existing dwellings should respect the character of the surrounding area. The proposal would also be inconsistent with the guidance and overarching objectives of the Design Guide which, as outlined above, seeks to ensure that proposals are proportionate in the context of the host dwelling and that extensions are subservient and secondary. The proposal would also be contrary to paragraph 135 of the Framework 2024 which seeks to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and be sympathetic to local character.
16. Whilst LP Policy OS2 is, as an overarching objective, designed to direct development to the right place and I acknowledge the site is located within

Whitney, the same policy does go on to confirm within its general principles for development that there is a need for development to be proportionate and appropriate in scale to the site context. I do not find an issue with the principle of extension nor the location for development of this nature but find that the proposal in its current form is disproportionate and inappropriate for the reasons set out. In a similar manner, LP Policy H6, as set out above, requires that extensions or alterations will respect the character of the surrounding area.

17. A lack of neighbour objection, or objections in general, is a neutral consideration as is a lack of objection in respect of highway safety and car parking.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Marshall

INSPECTOR