



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 December 2024

by **A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22ND January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/D/24/3352870

75 Oxlease, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 3QY

- 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 Mrs Watts against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council .
 - The application Ref is 24/01448/HHD.
 - The development proposed is Erection of front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for Erection of front porch at 75 Oxlease, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 3QY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/01448/HHD and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: OWT/1406 and OWT/1407.

Preliminary Matter

2. Although not expressly considered in the Council's report, the appeal site overlooks and is situated at the edge of the extensive Witney and Cogges Conservation Area (WCCA) within a character area identified in the Council's Character Appraisal as Cogges. Although the appeal site lies outwith the boundary of the WCCA its immediate adjacency is such that I have, noting the duty set out in section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, necessarily had regard to the impact of the proposal upon the setting of the WCCA in my decision.

Main Issue(s)

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site (No.75) lies within a residential area developed in the late twentieth-century with a compact arrangement of detached and semi-detached dwellings which, largely due to the repetition of house types and unrelieved

conformity of materials and fenestration, attempts, but does not entirely succeed in reflecting, a vernacular informality. In that regard the extent estate roads is minimal with, in some cases, remote parking and garages. This is the case with No.75 and its Immediate neighbours which rely solely on pedestrian access along their shared frontage at the edge of Oxlease Park (the Park) and the WCCA. These dwellings look out upon this open space but are separated by a line of significant trees¹ which seem to enclose the Park along this boundary. In that regard, the houses fronting the Oxlease development present as a partly-screened single entity of development set apart from the wide green space of the Park.

5. The proposal would replace an existing small porch with an entrance lobby and ground floor WC. Although extended, the open-plan layout of the ground floor does not present a convenient way to incorporate within the existing built form what has become an important facility for dwellings². Although the proposed extension would be significantly larger the existing porch, the additional depth and width proposed are not excessive for the purpose intended and would integrate visually with the line of development which faces the Park, impinging on the foregarden area to an extent which is not disproportionate, having regard to the scale and layout of the surrounding development.
6. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide 2016 (Design Guide) has limited guidance on porches. However, in particular it states '*sometimes the porch may be completely enclosed, with an outer door, again typically with a gabled or flat roof*'. The part of that guidance referred to by the Council in their consideration of the application is prefaced by reference to 'a modest period cottage' which is not, to my mind, an appropriate context for No.75 which has the proportions and scale typical of twentieth century housing, furthermore it is clear that the guide does not preclude larger porches. I note that the appellant refers to other development approved in the locality³ with an implication of inconsistency on the part of the Council. Whilst the context of setting and other circumstances may reasonably lead to differing outcomes for superficially similar proposals, in this case I consider the proposed degree of change to the appearance of the dwelling would not be obtrusive or inconsistent with the approach taken in other nearby dwellings. Overall, notwithstanding that No.75 lies at the edge of the WCCA and may be considered within its setting, having regard to what is said in the character appraisal and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 what is proposed would not noticeably affect the experience of that designated heritage asset by its users.
7. Taking into account all matters raised there would be no conflict with Policy OS4 which seeks high quality design nor therefore, with the development plan as a whole. Consequently, for the reasons given and taking all matters raised into account, the appeal succeeds subject to the usual timing and plans condition. As the approved drawings stipulate the use of matching materials a condition to that effect is not necessary.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR

¹ As stated in the WCCA character appraisal.

² WC on ground or entrance floor level which now a requirement for new-build dwellings

³ Including 18/00106/HHD Erection of a single-storey front and side extension at 138 Oxlease Witney Oxfordshire OX28 3QU.

