



Appeal Decision

APPENDIX 6

Site visit made on 20 April 2007

by **Jacky Wilkinson** IHBC Registered Architect

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government

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Date: 10 May 2007

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/A/06/2029800

Land at 5A Kingfishers, Grove, Wantage OX12 7JL.

- 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 John Bell against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
- The application Ref GRO/19143/1, dated 10 August 2006, was refused by notice dated 3 October 2006.
- The development proposed is the construction of a dwelling and garage.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Reasons

2. The original village of Grove has been much expanded. The historic core has a wide variety of building types in different positions in relation to the road, but beyond its core Main Street, which is the wide long central spine road of the village, has a more uniform linear character dominated by 1 and 2 storey 20th century housing, with front gardens.
3. The appeal site is on the corner of a cul-de-sac, Kingfishers, and Main Street. Kingfishers, typically for its time, has a wide long vision splay on both sides of the entrance. Originally the buildings on either side of this entrance were set back to a deep building line. The setback on the north side where the houses face Main Street, allows the mature trees and landscaping in the grounds of The Manor to form a focal point in the street scene. If the splays were intended to form a symmetrical semi-public open space leading into the development, that intention was never achieved and a new house has since been built on the south side to form No 5A Kingfishers, forward of the original building line. This left a smaller area of open ground (the appeal site) on the Main Street frontage which was intended to be enclosed by a wall or fence. This was never done, and it has not been used as a private garden but simply as a turning and parking area with an ambiguous open status.
4. The view towards the site when approaching from the north is largely screened from view by the trees in the grounds of The Manor. Once past the slight bend the property comes into view and the unenclosed rough open space with the ship-lapped fence behind is not an attractive feature in the street scene. The appellant asserts that the occupants of 5A have no incentive to maintain the

- site. However this could have been overcome by the implementation of the enclosed garden area as shown on the approved plans.
5. The proposed house would be closer to the road than any other property in the immediate vicinity. In my opinion it would become an over dominant feature for some distance which would harm the open character of Main Street. In addition the proposed house would have a hipped roof on the Main Street frontage. To my mind this would look out of keeping with the simple format of gable ends which is to be found in the area and especially the terrace, which is one of several with a similar design in the cul-de-sac.
 6. The proposed house would align with the existing terrace, but the entrance would face Main Street. Because of the requirement to maintain the existing vehicular access with turning space, to the rear of 5A and to provide a garage, the new house would have a only a very small enclosed yard at the rear. A door has been provided on the Kingfishers frontage leading onto the front garden, which would be enclosed by a timber fence of unspecified height. Although this space would be open to public view, it would be under pressure for use as private amenity space, with all its associated paraphernalia. A fence, especially if it was high and forward of the building line in Kingfishers, would be an over dominant element in the street scene, where open landscaped front gardens and lawns have an important softening effect.
 7. For the above reasons I consider that the proposals would harm the character and appearance of this part of the village and would be contrary to Policies DC1 and H10 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, which seek to protect the positive attributes of the character of existing of areas.
 8. The proposed garage at the rear of 5A would not accommodate a family sized car and it is likely that this would lead to increased pressure for parking on the street in addition to the cars associated with the new house. Parking is not restricted on either road in the near vicinity. The appellant has presented figures which show that car ownership in the area is relatively low and that adequate on and off-street parking is available. Services and public transport links are close by. The Council has not disputed these figures, but has stated that the parking standards are below the County Council standards for this area which is described as a "larger settlement" linked to Wantage, requiring the use of a car.
 9. "Manual for Streets" 2007 is now current Government Guidance on the design of streets. Whilst largely relating to the design of new streets it discusses in Chapter 8 "Parking", the role of on-street parking and the appropriate way to assess the required level of on-street parking. Moreover Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 "Transport" advises that local authorities should not require developers to provide more parking spaces than they themselves wish. The appellant's assessment broadly follows the criteria set down in Para 8.3.18 of Manual for Streets and I am satisfied that there is adequate on and off-street provision nearby and a reasonable likelihood that the occupiers of the new house would not need to own two cars. Even if they did, I consider that the potential addition of up to three cars in this area would not cause undue risk to the safety of highway users, including pedestrians, as there are good footways on both sides of both streets. The proposals would therefore comply with

Policy DC5(iv) of the Local Plan with regard to the requirement for adequate and safe provision for parking vehicles, which in this case would be on-street. The proposals would however fail to comply with DC5(iv) in that no provision for cycles has been shown. Manual for Streets in Para 8.2 emphasises the importance of good cycle parking provision in homes to encourage the increased use of cycles.

10. A recent development nearby has been raised as a precedent for this proposal. The new house at 1 Mandhill Close is close to the corner with Main Street, but the arrangement of houses around it and their design character are very different from the appeal proposals. I have considered the appeal proposals on their own merits. I recognise that that a new dwelling would make a small contribution to the housing needs of the village but do not consider that this outweighs the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
11. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

Jacky Wilkinson

INSPECTOR