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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017

**by Jonathan G King BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/D/16/3165563**  
**20 Elder Avenue, Wakefield WF2 9AL**

- 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 Mrs Nicola Padden against the decision of City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
  - The application Ref 16/02188/FUL, dated 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016, was refused by notice dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.
  - The development proposed is to erect a bay window to front of property.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural matters

2. The application form describes the development as *erect bay window and sloping canopy to the front*. I understand from the Council officer's report that the canopy was subsequently omitted. I have therefore amended the description; and this decision is therefore solely concerned with the bay window, as shown in the set of drawings entitled "Option 2".

### Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area in which it is located.

### Reasons

4. Elder Avenue is a double-limbed residential cul-de-sac taking access off Elder Grove. Development on the northern limb is confined to 4 short terraces of 2-storey houses on its western side, arranged in a staggered form. The appeal property is the middle house of three in the second terrace (Nos 19-21), set back from the road behind a small front garden. The houses are of modest size and conventional design, typical of the mid twentieth century, in brick under tiled roofs. The front elevational treatment of each is simple, comprising a recessed door and a single window on the ground floor, with 2 windows above, arranged broadly symmetrically. The fronts of the houses appear largely unaltered other than with respect to some replacement of doors and windows. The only notable local exception to this is the insertion of ground floor bay windows into 2 of the houses in the first of the terraces.
5. In principle, I agree with the Council that the houses and the terraces in which they sit, though very ordinary in many ways, do benefit from consistency and

regularity in their appearance, including the general absence of projections from their front elevations. Indeed, it is their principal defining character. The bay windows which have already been added detract a little from this, but to my mind not exceptionally so, in view of their small size.

6. The proposed bay window differs from these insofar as it would be considerably broader (at 2.68 metres) and somewhat deeper (at 1 metre), and of rectangular form rather than having angled sides. Moreover, it would also project from the front wall of the house in brickwork from floor to cill level instead of being confined to the window opening; and it would have a tiled roof with a hipped form rather than being flat. In the context of the scale and proportions of the house, it would in my opinion appear bulky and out of scale, uncomfortably dominating both it and the small terrace.
7. At present, the front door is located within a shallow, framed inset, which is just a little broader than the window under which it is located. The submitted Option 2 drawings omit the inset entirely and show the door flush with the front wall surrounded by brickwork. It isn't clear to me whether the proposals are intended to make these alterations. If so, I would take the view that they would also detract from the appearance of the house, further unbalancing the ground floor and emphasising the bulk of the bay window.
8. Although the proposed development would be small in absolute terms, it would nonetheless be located at the front of the property where it would be highly visible from public view and have a disproportionate effect on the character and appearance of the house and its neighbours. Although the Council officer's report and the Decision Notice refer to a Residential Design Guide, none of its provisions have been brought to my attention. Nonetheless, I consider that the development would conflict with Policy D10 of the Council's Development Policies Document, in that it would not respect the character or scale of the dwelling or its location; and Policy D9(a) because it would not respect the character of the locality in terms of design or scale.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It adds that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

I recognise the appellant's genuine wish to improve the appearance of her property and the fact that she has some support from her neighbours. However, in my opinion, the proposed development would fail to reinforce local distinctiveness and would represent poor design. In terms of my issue, it would harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. Consequently, the appeal fails.

*Jonathan G King*

Inspector