The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 March 2017

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 07 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N1540/D/17/3168847
79 The Downs, HARLOW, Essex, CM20 3RF

- 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 Mr Florin Timis against the decision of Harlow District Council.
- The application Ref. HW/HSE/16/00435 was refused by notice dated 30 November 2016.
- The development proposed is alteration to unapproved porch.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property, the terrace of which it forms part, and the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an end-terrace house in a residential area that is fairly uniform in character and appearance as a result of repeated house styles throughout the estate. It would appear that an original feature of some houses in the vicinity is a flat-roofed porch and canopy, although many of these have been altered to enclose the open canopy and to provide a pitched roof. The terrace of which the appeal property forms part comprises four dwellings, with the other three retaining the original modest flat-roofed porch and canopy. The houses in this terrace vary in terms of colour finish and fenestration design, but they remain a cohesive group.

5. A large front extension is under construction at the appeal property but the proposal seeks to reduce the depth as built from 2550mm to 2200mm[1], with a consequent alteration to the roof pitch and increased separation from the footway in front. Whilst there are a variety of porch styles and sizes on the

[1] As dimensioned on the submitted plans

wider residential estate, they are generally modest in depth and appear proportionate additions to the host properties.

6. In contrast, as proposed, the appeal development would appear as an overly large and dominant addition to the front elevation of the property. The position of the dwelling at the end of the terrace and near an approach into The Downs makes it particularly prominent in the street scene, and the proposal would be a discordant feature given the scale of other porches in the vicinity. The notable difference in roof pitch between the main house and the proposal would add to its incongruity. As a result, the proposal would be at odds with the design aims of Policy BE1 of the Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan 2006 (ARHLP), which requires extended buildings to relate to their setting to strengthen, enhance, protect, or create local character, and for matters such as height, massing and appearance to make an appropriate visual relationship with the surrounding area. This is supported by detailed guidance in the Harlow Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD).

7. Whilst I note the guidance in the SPD, given the range of materials used on other porches in the vicinity, and the various fenestration patterns created, I do not share the Council's view that these elements of the appeal proposal (including the roof lights) would detract from the character and appearance of the dwelling, the terrace and the street scene. However, this does not outweigh my conclusions of harm in respect of the overall size, scale and dominance of the proposed development

8. The appellant has drawn attention to planning permission granted for a front extension at 37 The Dashes[2] (No.37), but limited information of that development has been supplied. In particular, I do not have plans from which to gauge a comparison, but when viewed from the public domain at the appeal site visit, the extension at No.37 did not appear to be as deep as proposed in this case, albeit the floor area of that extension overall may be greater. Moreover, The Dashes is not within the immediate locality of the appeal site, and does not form part of the same context.

9. I therefore conclude that the size and scale of the proposed porch would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property, the terrace of which it forms part, and the street scene. It would conflict with the design aims set out in national planning policy and guidance, and with ARHLP Policy BE1 and the SPD.

10. In conclusion, the National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and part of its environmental strand is to contribute to protecting and enhancing the built environment. A core planning principle of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design, but for the reasons given above the proposal would not comply with this principle and would not be sustainable development supported through the Framework. As a consequence, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR

[2] Granted under ref. HW/PL/13/00147