The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2017

by K Ford BSocSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B0230/W/17/3170467
St Johns Methodist Church, Birdsfoot Lane, Luton LU3 2DN

- 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 Birchell against the decision of Luton Council.
- The application Ref 16/01652/FUL, dated 10 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
- The development proposed is new replacement entrance porch.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. St Johns Methodist Church is located on a prominent corner at the junction between Birdsfoot Lane and Barton Road. Visible from both roads, the property is set back from the highway with car parking to the front and is notably different architecturally to the wider residential area and petrol station opposite. The proposal is to erect a replacement porch on the front of the building which would be accessed via the existing disabled ramp.

4. The existing frontage presents a balanced elevation through the alignment of the windows and doors and the length of the cross pointing to the apex of the roof. There is unity in the design between the porch and window above which is reinforced by the architectural detailing of the window panes in the ground floor and window. The existing porch is in keeping with the wider architectural features which compliments and strengthens the overall architectural design that is framed by the pitch of the main roof.

5. The proposed location of the new porch left of centre, along with the positioning of the glazing on the front, would unbalance the appearance of the church. The replication of a pitched roof which is used elsewhere on the building would not overcome the harm that would be created. The design, detailing and mass of the featureless glazing would be incongruous and detract from the notable design feature of the central upper window. It would be damaging to the appearance of the building and consequently be detrimental to the character and appearance of the wider area. The proposal would therefore conflict with policies LP1 and ENV9 of the Luton Local Plan which requires

development to maximise opportunities to improve the physical environment, enhance the character and appearance of an area and respect the detailed design of the existing building where extensions are proposed.

Other Matters

6. I note the benefits of the proposal including the provision of office accommodation. This however is outweighed by the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. Whilst the church is not a Listed Building or located in a Conservation Area, this does not detract from the importance of good design.

Conclusion

7. For the reasons outlined above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

K Ford

INSPECTOR