
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 February 2020

by Mr JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/T5150/D/19/3236311

44 Bridgewater Road, Wembley HA10 1AJ

- 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 Ms Daksa Patel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Brent.
 - The application Ref 19/1827, dated 20 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a front porch extension, alterations to front yard including new permeable hardstanding, electrical charging point, bin store, new boundary treatment and replacement of front windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the development on
 - a) the character and appearance of the area and
 - b) highway safety

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property sits in a relatively long terrace of houses that is set back from the pavement behind deep front garden areas, many of which are now used for parking. Whilst no doubt the properties were of matching designs when originally built, over time changes to windows, walls and roofing have introduced a certain variety in the appearance of the terrace. Despite this, each dwelling still has a 2-storey bay that projects forward of the principal elevation, and this establishes a regular rhythm and pattern, giving the row a certain uniformity and cohesiveness that is readily apparent when passing.
4. The proposed porch would extend some 2m from the principal elevation, with nearly two-thirds of its length being forward of the bay window. It would also be slightly elevated due to the fall of the land, and would have solid side walls, whilst it would be wide enough to provide double doors.
5. Taking these factors together, I consider that the porch would be a sizeable and notable addition to the front of the property, that would harmfully disrupt

- and depart from the rhythm and unity that the terrace still displays. As a result, it would be unduly dominant and striking, relating poorly to the terrace's existing form and appearing jarring and discordant on this row of houses.
6. In coming to this view, I accept there is a porch a few properties to the north. However, in my estimation that does not project as far as the proposal before me, and being to one end its impact on the terrace is lessened, especially as it sits closer to the forward projecting gable of the next terrace on the road. As such, it does not lead me to different findings in this instance.
 7. I am to assess the impact of the porch on the context in which it is viewed, and to my mind this is most appropriately defined as the terrace of which it is apart. Therefore, whilst I am aware that there are other porches along Bridgewater Road, the appeal property is not readily seen with them and so I consider they do not form part of its immediate context. As such, their presence does not address or allay the adverse impact I have identified.
 8. Finally, whilst a slightly smaller porch may be 'permitted development' that does not justify this larger one.
 9. The porch is part of the wider scheme to remodel the frontage that the appellant is now proposing, and I raise no objections to the visual impacts of the remaining elements of that. To my mind, and taking into account what is there now, the fencing, surfacing, windows and gates would all be acceptable. As the crossing is not to be widened, I also see no reason why the street tree need be harmed.
 10. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposed porch would detract unacceptably from the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policy DMP1 of the Council's Development Management Policies (DMP) document, which seeks to ensure new development complements the locality.

Highway safety

11. Bridgewater Road is a busy 'A' classified road that carries an appreciable traffic flow, and along this side it is bounded by a public verge, beyond which is the pavement that runs immediately in front of the properties. At the moment the forecourt of No 44 is ungated and so, subject to no pedestrians being on the pavement, a car can pull straight off the highway, pass over the driveway running across the public verge (the driveway), cross the pavement and enter the site in a continuous manoeuvre. By introducing a gate, whether automated or manual, the car would have to stop on the driveway while the gate was opened.
12. On my visit, I saw cars parked on driveways outside a number of properties along this length of the road, and none of them seemed to cause a blockage to either the pavement in front or the carriageway behind. Although they did not appear to be particularly short vehicles, I nonetheless accept that standardised dimensions have to be applied and, if that is done, any car stopped on the driveway would overhang the road and/or the pavement to some degree.
13. However, Bridgewater Road is sufficiently wide at this point to mean that a lane for parked vehicles has been marked out on the inside of the southbound carriageway, with the free-flowing traffic being in an outer lane some 3m or so from the kerb. Moreover, on lengths of the road where no cars were in the parking lane, I noted that passing vehicles continued to use the outer lane.

Outside No 44 there are makings to discourage parking as that would block the access, but cars can park just to the north and that again would prevent passing traffic from coming close to the kerb at this point. Given this road layout I consider that, even if a car were to overhang the carriageway while waiting for a gate to open, it would not disrupt the free flow of traffic and so would not compromise highway safety.

14. Accordingly, I conclude the development would not adversely affect highway safety and so would not conflict with DMP Policy DMP12, which seeks to avoid negative impacts on highways.

Conclusions

15. Whilst I have found the impact on highway safety would be acceptable, the harm to the character and appearance of the area means I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

JP Sargent

INSPECTOR