



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2020 by S Watson BA(hons) MSc

Decision by V Lucas LLB (Hons) MCD MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/19/3240299

15 Orchard Close, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 3DU

- 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 Mohsin Aslam against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00964/FULH, dated 20 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2019.
 - The development is a front porch extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. The front porch that is the subject of this appeal has already been constructed. This appeal therefore seeks retrospective permission for the development. I have determined this appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and street scene.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is on the east side of Orchard Close, a residential street characterised by the relatively uniform semi-detached dwellings which form a strong building line on both sides of the road. The frontages of the dwellings are characterised by a recessed porch next to a two-storey bow window with half-hipped roof above. The appeal site contains a semi-detached dwelling, with a pitched roof porch on the front, set back from the road by a parking area.
6. The porch projects significantly from the front wall of the host dwelling and beyond the bow window. As the appeal site is in the middle of the street the porch jars with the pattern of relatively uniform frontages of the surrounding properties. Moreover, given the lack of any screening between the dwelling, the

highway and neighbouring properties, the porch is in a prominent position for public views and is visually intrusive within the street scene.

7. Although a relatively large porch in relation to the scale of the host dwelling, it is still proportionate and subservient to it. Moreover, although the design of the porch is not in keeping with the host dwelling it does not affect its subservience. However, I do consider that its design makes it a far more intrusive addition by way of its jarring appearing with the style and appearance of the host, and surrounding, buildings.
8. It has been brought to my attention that No 2 Orchard Close has a porch and garage extension which projects forward of the front wall. This development is of a different size and style to the one before me and moreover affects the street scene differently by way of its siting at the end of a row. Nevertheless, all proposals must be considered on their own merit. I therefore give this example little weight in my determination of this appeal.
9. The appellant has raised a possible fallback position, by way of replacing the existing pitched roof with a flat roof. The appellant states that this would be more harmful to the style and character of the host dwelling. However, although there is a disagreement as to the reason why, both parties agree that the current porch does not meet permitted development requirements. Given this disagreement and the lack of any clear evidence to demonstrate that a porch under permitted development rights would be possible, I consider that there is no more than a theoretical possibility of this being carried out. I therefore find that there is no reasonable prospect of such a fallback position being implemented.
10. In light of the above, I consider that the development is out of keeping with the host dwelling and street scene. As a result, the contribution that it makes to the appearance of the area is significantly diminished. The development therefore causes an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the dwelling and street scene. This is in conflict with Policy UD1 of the *Watford's Local Plan: Part 1 – Core Strategy 2006-31*, which in part requires that development should respect the local character of the area in which it is located; and, with the guidance in Paragraph 8.10 of the *Residential Design Guide* which specifically covers porches.

Other Matters

11. As the development before me does not accord with an up-to-date development plan, it does not comply with Paragraph 11(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore, the principle of the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not come in to play.

Conclusion and Recommendation

12. For the reasons given above I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Watson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and concur that the appeal should be dismissed.

V Lucas

INSPECTOR