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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2020

**by C J Ford BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI**

**a person appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y1110/D/20/3252564**

**15 Kerswill Road, Exeter EX4 1NY**

- 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 Russell Pike against the decision of Exeter City Council.
  - The application Ref 20/0078/FUL, dated 17 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2020.
  - The development proposed is demolition of building to rear of dwelling and construction of new single storey kitchen/diner.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
  - i) the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area, and
  - ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of No 16 Kerswill Road with particular regard to their outlook and natural light.

### Reasons

- i) *Character and appearance*
3. With the exception of a later infill property between Nos. 8 and 9, Kerswill Road comprises modest two storey semi-detached houses. The habitable accommodation was originally built to a common design with the hipped roof form, the two storey front bays with neighbouring first floor round window and the stone quoins being amongst a number of distinctive features. Where the houses have been extended, a good degree of amenity space has been retained within the plots, particularly in the rear garden areas. The resulting sense of spaciousness at the rear of the houses is therefore an important characteristic of the locality.
  4. The appeal property has a corner plot position whereby the flank faces the front of three houses of a later detached form in Pineridge Close. Sited behind the property there is also a locally listed former church which has been converted into two dwellings. Consequently, any development to the side or rear of the house would be prominent in views from Pineridge Close and form part of the setting of the nearby non-designated heritage asset.

5. The proposal seeks to replace a small projection at the back of the house with a 5m deep single storey extension. At a little over 8m wide, it would span the full width of the plot. It would also wrap around the rear corner of the house to include the existing undeveloped space behind the attached single storey garage.
6. The Council's 2008 Supplementary Planning Document 'Householder's guide to extension design' (SPD) contains several general principles that are particularly relevant. Principle 5 on scale and massing specifies that extensions should be subservient to the original house. Given the footprint of the extension would be comparable to that of the two storey part, its size and proportions would not enable the main house to remain the dominant feature. The appellant's contention that an extension would have to be of a two storey wrap around form for it to appear out of scale is not accepted.
7. Principle 7 on architectural details states they should be protected and repeated in the extension design while principle 8 states external materials and the way they are used should match the original house. The proposed rendered finish to the extension would starkly contrast with the primarily brick construction of the side and rear walls of the house. Although there would be brick coping with tile creasing beneath and brick quoin work, owing to the expanse of the rendered surface area in the flank elevation, these elements would fail to successfully mitigate the clear departure from the materials used in the original building. The proposed small round window in the flank would also appear out of place as it is an architectural feature common only to the first floor of the houses.
8. Given there would be nearly 66 sqm of usable garden space remaining after construction compared to the minimum specification of 55 sqm, principle 9 would be met. Nevertheless, in the context of the locality, the house would prominently appear cramped within its plot and fail to comply with principle 2 on street scene which states that extensions should respect the pattern of buildings in the street and the spaces between them. The sizeable extensions at Nos 8, 20 and 21 are not directly comparable because they occupy larger plots than the appeal property and Nos 8 and 20 are more secluded at the rear.
9. Principle 6 on roofs sets out they should match the main roof in terms of shape and pitch. However, the vast nature of the proposed flat roof would appear incongruous against the distinctive pitched roof character of the main part of the house and amongst the other houses in Kerswill Road.
10. The introduction to the SPD explains there is a presumption that extensions should harmonise with or where possible enhance the character of the original house. The above assessment against the relevant SPD guidance demonstrates the scale of the extension would be so excessive and it would depart to such a degree from the design of the original house that it would be unduly dominant and create its own conflicting character. It would also prominently erode the characteristic sense of spaciousness at the rear of the houses.
11. Accordingly, owing to its position and inappropriate design, in particular its scale, massing and the use of materials, it is concluded the proposed development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. It would therefore conflict with Objectives 8 and 9 and Policy CP17 of the Council's Core Strategy (2012) and Policy DG1 of its Local Plan First Review (2005). Amongst other things,

these seek to ensure that development proposals promote local character and distinctiveness, aims that are similarly reflected in paragraphs 127 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It would also conflict with the SPD for the reasons previously stated.

*ii) Living conditions*

12. As No 16 has a roughly 2.5m deep rear extension adjoining the common boundary, only 2.5m of the 5m depth of the proposal would project beyond that and have an effect on the ground floor living area and rear garden area of the neighbouring house. Given this limited depth and taking into consideration its relatively low single storey flat roof form, it is concluded the proposed development would not have an unacceptably harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 16 with particular regard to their outlook and natural light. It would therefore not conflict with Policy DG4 of the Local Plan which seeks to ensure a quality of amenity which allows residents to feel at ease within their homes and gardens. Similarly, it would not conflict with the SPD guidance in this regard.

**Other Matters**

13. The benefits of the proposed development including the enhanced living accommodation and removal of the dilapidated side boundary treatment are acknowledged. It is also appreciated there were no third party objections. Nevertheless, these considerations do not outweigh the identified harm.
14. In its reasons for refusal the Council referred to the proposal creating an undesirable precedent. However, the scheme has been duly considered on its own merits.

**Conclusion**

15. Notwithstanding the finding on the second main issue, the unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area are overriding considerations. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

*C J Ford*

APPOINTED PERSON