
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 February 2021

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/A1720/D/20/3262539

5 New Road, Fareham PO16 7SR

- 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 Duncan (Crofton HIC) against the decision of Fareham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/20/0930/FP, dated 22 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider surrounding area; and
 - The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of the host property, with particular reference to daylight.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is located on the north side of New Road, within an established residential area in Fareham. The street comprises a T-shaped cul-de-sac, the main part of which comprises a straight road, flanked on both sides by similarly designed late 19th century terraced housing. The two-storey, pitched roof properties are sited close to the road frontage, having a consistent front building line, with low boundary walls across their frontages. As such, the road has an intimate enclosed character, and a regular rhythm of built development on both sides.
4. The houses exhibit a strong uniformity of design, comprising brick walls under tiled pitched roofs with brick potted chimneys, and a regular fenestration pattern on the front elevation, comprising a front entrance door and window on the ground floor with a single window above at first floor. Window sizes and proportions are similar across the properties. Window and door headers, window cills and ornate brick banding separating the ground and first floors comprise attractive elements of architectural detailing on the front elevations.

5. Frontage brick walls include contrasting capping and feature brick detailing, and capped brick piers flank tiled pedestrian entrances. No properties have had front extensions added.
6. As such, the terraced housing presents an attractive and uncluttered frontage to both sides of the street, which is readily apparent in views from the public realm, given the straight nature of the street. The appeal property forms an integral part of this established townscape and, as such, makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
7. The appeal proposal would introduce an incongruous element into this harmonious street scene. It would extend close to the site frontage and across a large part of the width of the house, resulting in a visually intrusive and cramped form of development in relation to the existing house and the street. It would obscure some of the forementioned attractive decorative features of the front elevation. Its position in front of the existing front door and ground floor window, and its proposed design with two front windows and a side door, would disrupt the established pattern of front fenestration along the street.
8. The proposal would also impact on the existing frontage treatment, including necessitating the repositioning of the pedestrian access, which would be out of keeping with the existing regular positioning of front boundary wall with pedestrian access directly opposite the front door.
9. The result would be a visually dominant and discordant addition to the front of the property, which would be at odds with the simple, uncluttered, regular building frontages which typify the road. It would not relate well to the existing building or the established pattern of development along both sides of the street.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to the existence of a number of front porches in Gordon Road, and has referred me to 3 planning permissions in particular. On the basis of the information before me, and my site inspection, I find that the examples cited are not directly comparable with the appeal scheme, having regard to their detailed design and their impact on the host properties and the wider street scene. The townscape of Gordon Road differs from that of New Road, incorporating a greater variety of dwelling types, designs, materials, and set-backs from site frontages, so that it is not directly comparable with the townscape of New Road. Also, the T-shaped nature of New Road means that there is a distinct separation between the northern part of street, onto which the residential properties front, and Gordon Road.
11. In any event, I must determine this appeal on the basis of the particular circumstances of the appeal site and its immediate context, and on the merits of the scheme before me. The existence of other front porches in Gordon Road does not justify the harm that I have found, notwithstanding that access to New Road is gained via Gordon Road. Neither does the fact that New Road is not within a designated Conservation Area justify the harm that I have identified.
12. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CS17 of the *Fareham Local Development Framework Core Strategy* (2011), which, amongst other things, requires all development to be of a high quality of design,

respond positively to, and be respectful of, the key characteristics of the area, and provide continuity of built form.

13. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Chapter 12 of the *National Planning Policy Framework 2019* (the Framework) which requires high quality design.

Living conditions

14. The proposed positioning of the porch in front of the only window serving the front ground floor room of the dwelling would result in a reduction in natural light reaching this room. However, I am not persuaded, on the basis of the evidence before me, that the resulting reduction in direct daylight entering the front room would be so materially harmful as to warrant refusal of the appeal scheme.
15. In coming to this view, I have had regard to the south-facing orientation of the front of the property and the incorporation of 2 windows in the front elevation of the proposed porch. As such, I find that a significant amount of daylight would still be able to enter into the front room via the porch and the existing front window.
16. Furthermore, I note that the appellant considers that a benefit of the scheme would be a potential reduction in glare from sunlight and daylight entering the room via the existing front ground floor window. I saw during my site inspection that a blind has been fitted to the window, and I find it reasonable to assume that this blind is used both to reduce glare from direct sunlight at certain times, and also to provide privacy to the front room given the proximity of the front window to the street. As such, the natural daylight reaching the room is already restricted by the blind, which is less likely to be required with the appeal scheme, thereby off-setting some of the daylight impacts of the appeal scheme.
17. For the above reasons, I conclude that there would be no demonstrable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of the host property, with particular reference to daylight. As such, in this respect, the proposal would accord with Policy DSP3 of the *Fareham Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies* (2015), in so far as this policy seeks to ensure that development proposals do not have an unacceptable adverse impact upon living conditions on the site by way of loss of daylight.
18. This is generally consistent with paragraph 127 of the Framework, which seeks to ensure that developments will function well and promote a high standard of amenity, health and well-being for existing and future users.

Other Matters

19. Whilst I have given careful consideration to the reasons for seeking the appeal proposal, including improved comfort, and property usability and energy efficiency, I am mindful of the advice contained in Planning Practice Guidance¹ that, in general, planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. It is also probable that the proposed development would remain long after the current personal circumstances cease to be material. For these reasons, I therefore find that this factor is not sufficient to outweigh the aforementioned

¹ Paragraph 008 Reference ID 21b-008-20140306 – 'What is a material planning consideration?'

harm that I have found in respect of the first main issue, and the conflict with the development plan and the Framework.

20. I note the appellant's comments that the proposal would not result in harm to neighbouring living conditions. However, this is a requirement of the development plan in any case, and does not outweigh my conclusions on the first main issue.

21. I acknowledge that no third-party objections have been received. However, this does not affect my conclusions in respect of the first main issue.

Conclusion

22. Whilst I have not found harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of the host property with particular regard to daylight, this does not outweigh the harm I find to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

23. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Leonard

INSPECTOR