



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 5 March 2021

by T Gethin BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N1160/D/20/3264476

39 Reservoir Road, Plymstock, Plymouth PL9 8ND

- 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 Daniel Paul against the decision of Plymouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01052/FUL, dated 15 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as Proposed Single Storey Extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey front extension and window alterations at 39 Reservoir Road, Plymstock, Plymouth PL9 8ND in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/01052/FUL, dated 15 July 2020, and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site location plan; Site plan (Drawing No 226/20/S); Existing layouts, elevations and section (Drawing No 226/20/01); and Proposed layouts, elevations and section (Drawing No 226/20/02).
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, the appeal form includes different wording which reflects the description in the Council's decision notice. I have therefore used this revised description as it better captures the scope of the development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with particular regard to the design of the front extension.

Reasons

4. Set above and back from the highway, the appeal site contains a semi-detached dwelling with flat-roof front projections. The dwelling has a similar

form and design as the adjoining property and the other 1970s properties which extend along Reservoir Road to the south-west. However, with the notable variety in, for example, fenestration and the size and position of front projections and single-storey garages, there is limited visual symmetry between the dwelling and the adjoining and other 1970s properties. The surrounding area, including on the opposite side of Reservoir Road, also contains a variety of built form with differing designs and features, including single-storey bungalows and larger detached dwellings. Accordingly, while the series of 1970s semi-detached properties are broadly similar, the surrounding residential area has a relatively varied appearance and the streetscene does not read as being particularly uniform.

5. Although the dwelling and adjoining property are set forward of Nos 23-37, the set back within their plots combined with topography, boundary treatment and soft landscaping serve to somewhat limit their presence in the public realm. Views of the dwelling are therefore generally limited to directly in front of the site and its immediate vicinity. Consequently, it does not read as a particularly prominent feature in the locality and is experienced within its varied context.
6. The original flat-roof front projections on the site would be replaced by a single extension that would have a pitched-roof and extend across most of the dwelling's frontage. However, the extension would not project beyond the front of the existing porch and its set-back position and relatively modest height, combined with the intervening presence of soft landscaping and boundary treatment, means that it would not appear as a particularly significant feature from the public realm. For the same reasons, neither would it be seen against many of the front projections of the other 1970s properties.
7. Where it would be seen in the same view with neighbouring properties, the varied sizes and designs of their flat-roof projections – including widths, fenestration and materials – mean that the proposed extension would not read as an unacceptable or incongruous addition. In addition, the proposed pitched roof would reflect the dwelling's main roof while the proposed ground-floor window arrangement and use of render would be similar to the front projection of the adjoining property. Accordingly, the appeal proposal would also read as having a sufficiently harmonious relationship with the main body of the dwelling and the adjoining semi-detached property.
8. The large first-floor window on the dwelling would be replaced with a smaller window to accommodate the proposed extension's pitched roof. However, the change would not appear out of keeping with the other 1970s properties given that several of them – including the adjoining semi-detached property – no longer have such windows in place.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with particular regard to the design of the front extension. I therefore find that it accords with Policy DEV20 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034. Amongst other aspects, this requires development to meet good standards of design, contribute positively to townscape and protect and improve the quality of the built environment. It would also be consistent with the provisions in the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to achieving well-designed places.

10. Although the proposal would not strictly comply with all parts of the Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document (2020), it is guidance rather than policy and, amongst other aspects, it sets out that extensions which differ or even contrast with the original property can occasionally be acceptable. In this instance, I am satisfied that the appeal scheme would also be broadly consistent with the SPD's guidance in relation to the visual impact of residential extensions. In addition, with each case determined on its own merits, allowing this appeal would not set a precedent.

Conclusion and Conditions

11. For the above reasons, the appeal is allowed.
12. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring the carrying out of the development in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of certainty. A condition covering external materials is also necessary in the interests of the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

T Gethin

INSPECTOR