



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 1 July 2021

by G Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/21/3275100

88 Catlins Lane, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 2BX

- 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 Mrs Ishrit Ahmed against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 15681/APP/2020/2934, dated 12 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is porch to front and rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the front porch. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the rear porch and planning permission is granted for the rear porch at 88 Catlins Lane, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 2BX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 15681/APP/2020/2934, dated 12 September 2020, and the plans submitted with it so far as relevant to that part of the development hereby permitted, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be retained in accordance with the following approved plans insofar as relevant to the rear porch: PB/1020/04; 1020/01; GFP/1020/03 (insofar as it relates to the rear porch) and 1020/02 (insofar as it relates to the rear porch).

Applications for costs

2. An application for an award of costs was made by Mrs Ishrit Ahmed against the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matters

3. I have adopted the usefully more concise development description as set out on the Council's Decision Notice and by the appellant in the appeal submissions in the banner heading above. I am satisfied that in so doing neither party would be disadvantaged and I have determined the appeal accordingly.
4. For the reasons that follow, I find the rear porch to be acceptable and it is clearly severable both physically and functionally from the front porch. Therefore I intend to issue a split decision and grant planning permission for the rear porch.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the front porch on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site lies within the Raisins Hill Area of Special Local Character (ASLC). Raisins Hill is described as being built in the 1950s along 'Garden Suburb' principles, with a well-defined character with common building styles, materials and architectural detailing. The appeal property, whilst fronting Catlins Lane, backs on to properties on Raisins Hill and is part of the Raisins Hill Area of Special Local Character (ASLC) and forms the outer western perimeter of the ASLC.
7. Properties within the ASLC are a mix of detached and semi-detached houses, each with particular and common features. Thus, whilst detached houses within the ASLC typically feature projecting flat roofed garages / porches, such features do not typically appear on the semi-detached houses. Conversely, the semi-detached houses typically feature prominent two-storey bays to the front and heavily recessed front doors, albeit those with retained recessed front doors are limited where they have been infilled with 'flush' porch doorways. More generally, properties tend to be well-spaced by virtue of regular spacing between properties and the rise and fall of predominantly hipped roofs, creating a pleasing sense of rhythm to the street frontages, whether observed on Raisins Hill or Catlins Lane.
8. The front porch is a simple structure; a dual-pitched roof with peak to front, supported on two columns. The structure is open-sided and is intended, the appellant states, to afford protection to the timber front door from the elements.
9. However, the structure's simple nature does not mitigate its visual impact. Despite its slender support columns, the porch roof is nevertheless of considerable visual presence. The projecting ridge, dual pitch roof and peak front are, collectively, uncommon features along Catlins Lane and within the wider Raisins Hill ASLC. In longer views along Catlins Lane, where the rising land and the gradual sweep of the road elevate successive pairs of semi-detached properties, the porch is a disruptive element, its angular rooflines introducing discordant and conflicting angles, whilst its bulky roof structure erodes the primacy and rhythm of the characteristic two storey bays on houses along the eastern side of Catlins Lane.
10. Collectively, Local Plan: Part One (LP1) policies BE1 and HE1 and Local Plan: Part Two (LP2) policies DMHB1, DMHB5, DMHB11, DMHB12 and DMHD1 seek to ensure high quality design that maintains and enhances the quality of the borough's built environment. Proposals are expected to recognise and reflect local distinctiveness and character, harmonise with local context, take account of, amongst other things, streetscape rhythm, architectural composition and detailing and respect the design of the original house. The rear porch is consistent with the aims and provisions of these policies. However, for the reasons I have set out, the front porch would not and thus fails in these respects and would not be consistent with the key characteristics of the Raisins Hill ASLC. The front porch is therefore contrary to LP1 policies BE1 and HE1 and LP2 policies DMHB1, DMHB5, DMHB11, DMHB12 and DMHD1.
11. I have been referred to other examples of porches in the surrounding area, not least that at 92 Catlins Lane, a near neighbour and a short distance away. I acknowledge that this example is a more substantial structure than that at the appeal property, is enclosed on all sides and is of masonry construction.

However, its hipped and pitched roof design is such that it appears more in keeping with the similarly formed main roofs of properties along this particular stretch of Catlins Lane than the appeal scheme.

12. My attention has also been drawn to a small number of other properties elsewhere on Raisins Hill and Selway Close which feature front porches of varying design. However, of those, the projecting garage / canopy / ground floor bay window at 60 Raisins Hill is typical of many detached houses within Raisins Hill, whilst 10 Selway Close is not directly comparable in terms of context, streetscene, house design or location within the ASLC. The example at 25 Raisins Hill perhaps shares some similarities with the appeal scheme in terms of its design and appearance, but its position within the street is not directly comparable with that of the appeal property. For these reasons, I am not persuaded that the given examples justify the appeal scheme insofar as it relates to the front porch.

Other Matters

13. I have considered the representations made in respect of the appeal scheme, both those made in objection and those in support. I have however determined the appeal scheme on its merits and have reached my conclusions in respect of the main issue for the reasons set out above and the presence of these letters, whether in support or objection, are not determinative in themselves.
14. I have noted the appellant's reasoning for the front porch and the long-standing attachment to the neighbourhood, but these are not matters which overcome the harm to character and appearance that I have identified. The absence of harm in respect of neighbour's space, outlook or privacy weighs neither in support of nor against the proposal.

Conditions

15. As set out above, I intend to issue a split decision and grant planning permission for the rear porch. It is clear that the Council considered the proposal retrospectively and so therefore the Council's suggested conditions regarding commencement and development being carried out in accordance with the proposed plans are not strictly relevant in such circumstances.
16. It is also clear that the Council did not object to the rear porch. Thus, I have no compelling evidence before me setting out why the rear porch's materials are not appropriate. I have not therefore imposed a materials condition. However, a plans condition with revised wording referring specifically to the rear porch is both reasonable and necessary in the interests of certainty and the avoidance of doubt. I am satisfied that its imposition would not prejudice in the interests of either main party.

Conclusion

17. Thus, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed insofar as it relates to the rear porch and dismissed insofar as it relates to the front porch.

G Robbie

INSPECTOR