
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 January 2022

by J Wilson BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI DMS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 FEBRUARY 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/21/3284690

The Laurels, Romsey Road, Kings Somborne, STOCKBRIDGE, SO20 6PR

- 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 Matt Wilde against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01267/FULLS, dated 7 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is to replace PVC front porch with an oak timber and slate roof porch.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for retrospective application to replace a PVC front porch with an oak timber and slate roof porch at The Laurels, Romsey Road, STOCKBRIDGE, SO20 6PR, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/01267/FULLS, dated 7 June 2021, and the plans submitted with it.

Procedural Matter

2. The development has already been carried out. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on a retrospective basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the King's Somborne Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

4. This 20th Century building lies on one of the main roads through the village and within the CA. It is identified as a building of local interest on the map included in the King's Somborne Conservation Policy (1987) though no further details as to the rationale for that identification have been referred to and I have therefore treated the heritage asset to be the CA as a whole. This part of the CA is characterised by large double fronted residential buildings in a mixture of brick, painted brick and stone buildings with a variety of roofing materials including slate, tile and thatch, and which have a varying mix of detail.
5. The appeal building is a symmetrical double fronted house of traditional appearance with painted brickwork under a slate roof and with ground floor projecting bays.

6. The porch is a notable alteration to the front of the building however its prominence in the street scene is within a wider context. Vegetation to the west provides partial screening and the adjacent dwelling to the east incorporates a porch of greater width and height on a building of similar proportions to the appeal site. From the approach in either direction the porch is read against these features.
7. The appeal proposal is detailed in oak and employs traditional carpentry techniques. Though the timber profiling is relatively weighty it displays a rustic simplicity. The Council argue that the natural oak finish of the porch is out of step with the detailing of the property preferring a slimmer timber profile with a white painted finish. In contrast the intention of the appellant is that the natural timber finish will weather to a silvered finish. They highlight that this is a technique employed locally on properties nearby which are also visible from the main road, I saw examples of this on my visit.
8. When compared to the size of the building, the porch is of modest proportions. It projects to around the same depth as the bay windows either side and its height is marginally less than those bays. Whilst the timber work is heavier in proportion its relationship with the host property is not unbalanced and the natural materials used have already begun to weather slightly. This process will inevitably continue and will, in time, weather to soften the appearance further.
9. Given this context I consider that the porch is not oversized nor unacceptably prominent in the street scene. I consider it is neither disproportionate nor materially harmful to the building or the wider CA. In reaching this conclusion I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the CA, as a designated heritage asset, and my statutory duties¹ in that regard.
10. Consequently, I have found no conflict with Policies E1 or E9 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) (Local Plan), to the design principles of the National Planning Policy Framework nor with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
11. Policy COM2 of the Local Plan relates to settlement hierarchy and makes links to compliance with other policies in the plan; as such I do not find any fundamental conflict between the appeal proposal and policy COM2.

Other Matters

12. The appellant emphasises that the building previously had a larger porch and that the roadside wall is not in fact the curtilage to the property. These factors though noted, have not altered my conclusion.
13. It has been highlighted by the appellant that the proposal has, since the refusal of planning permission been assessed by him against the governments Technical Guidance on Permitted Development rights for householders. He argues that the porch is in full compliance with provisions in Class D of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). It is not the function of this appeal type to make any formal determination as to whether the proposal complies with the provisions of that Order. As such it is not my place to make any findings in that respect. In any event, within this appeal I have found that the scheme does not conflict

¹ Under s72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

with the development plan and that the appeal should succeed. Consequently, the matters raised relating to the GPDO do not impact on my findings.

14. The appellant raises issues related to the handling of the application including the application of delegated powers. He also refers to a Freedom of Information enquiry. Whilst noting the frustrations with the handling of the planning application, matters relating to the Councils internal processes are not for me to consider as part of this appeal.

Conditions

15. Three conditions have been recommended by the Council relating to statutory timescales for commencement, matching materials, and compliance with the submitted plans. However, as the development has already been completed in full there is no requirement for the addition of such conditions.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is allowed in the terms set out above.

J Wilson

INSPECTOR