The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2022

by M Cryan BA(Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/D/21/3285141
6 Legrams Avenue, Bradford BD7 2PP

- 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 Samiya Kauser against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
- The application Ref 21/03640/HOU, dated 8 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 September 2021.
- The development proposed is a front porch.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The porch which is the subject of this appeal has already been erected, and I am therefore considering the appeal retrospectively.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the front porch on the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a semi-detached house in a residential area. It is situated on a corner plot, at a point where Legrams Avenue broadens out around an open green space. The house has a two-storey side extension built under a previous planning permission (LPA ref: 18/03945/HOU) which also allowed for a new front porch. However the porch which has been built, and for which the appellant is now seeking permission, is not the same as that originally permitted.

5. The Council's 2012 Householder Supplementary Planning Document ("the SPD") provides guidance for front porches, advising that large porches are unlikely to be acceptable, and that the context of the area is important.

6. I saw on my site visit that front porches are an intermittent, rather than prevalent, feature of the area; most houses nearby tend to have a simple cantilever canopy at the front door. Where there are front porches – for example, on the houses around the other half of the green on the northern side of Legrams Avenue – they tend to be narrower and shallower than that which has been built at No 6, and their visual impact is limited by their being set in

recesses between bays so that they do not project beyond the street elevation. On the few occasions where I saw porches had been erected forward of the main elevation – for example, as at No 3 Legrams Avenue – these seemed to me to be of a relatively small scale. The porch at the appeal property is a substantial addition to the building, and in part it is simply its width and depth which make it a bulky and prominent feature.

7. However, the porch at the appeal property is also of a different design to others in the area. Others I saw nearby tended to have either hipped roofs – as, for example, at Nos 5—19 and 27 Legrams Avenue – or single pitches set against the main front elevation – as at Nos 3 and 21—25 Legrams Avenue. All of these arrangements allow for a low eaves height, and a relatively limited massing of the porch roof; together this makes the other porches relatively light and unobtrusive features. The porch at the appeal site, on the other hand, has a double-pitched pent roof, with a large gable wall facing the street. As a consequence, the already substantial bulk of the porch is given additional visual emphasis.

8. The porch extends across both the original house frontage and the new side extension. In straddling what would otherwise be a slight step back between the original front elevation and the side extension, it has the effect of making the side extension less subordinate to the original property, and emphasising a loss of the symmetry which is otherwise a common feature of the housing blocks within the area.

9. The overall consequence of all of these factors is that the porch which has been built is a bulky, prominent and intrusive addition to the appeal property. It detracts from the appearance of its host building, and in turn is at odds with the generally much smaller scale and lighter character and appearance of porches in the area.

10. I therefore conclude that, because of its size, siting and detailed design, the porch is harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area. The development conflicts with Policies DS1 and DS3 of the 2017 Bradford Core Strategy, which together seek to ensure that development is well-designed, and responsive to existing positive patterns of development (such as layout, scale and detailing) which contribute to the character of the area.

Other Matters

11. The appellant has stated that the size and design of the porch, and in particular the increase in size compared to the earlier planning permission, has been driven by caring needs. I note also the letters provided by a medical practice and a care service provider to this effect. It is intended that the appellant's mother, who has a range of health problems requiring carers to attend several times a day, will occupy the new bedroom on the ground floor of the side extension. The larger porch allows a separate entrance to be provided to this bedroom, allowing carers to come and go as necessary and providing the different generations of the family, including the appellant's young children, to have a degree of privacy. The additional space would also allow for storage of a wheelchair for the appellant's mother.

12. I am sympathetic on this matter, but although I give it modest weight in favour of the proposal this does not outweigh the significant harm to the character

and appearance of the area which I have found, as personal circumstances rarely outweigh planning concerns.

13. As I have described above, the combination of its height, width, siting and design makes the porch a prominent and intrusive feature. It may be, or may have been, possible to design a less substantial porch which would still allow the care needs of the appellant's mother to be met. However, the porch as built would be a permanent and harmful alteration to the property, and its detrimental impact would be likely to felt in the area long after the current personal circumstances cease to be relevant.

14. The Council considered that the development is acceptable in principle, and the porch does not cause any harm to living conditions for neighbours; none of the evidence before me or anything I saw on site leads me to a different view on these points. Similarly, in terms of its materials and finishes the porch is in keeping with the host property and the wider area. However, a lack of harm in these respects is a neutral matter which does not weigh in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

15. The scheme conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including those of the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

M Cryan

Inspector