



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 March 2023

by F Harrison BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X1355/D/23/3314570

52 Longdean Park, Chester-le-Street, Durham DH3 4DG

- 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 Frank Dunn against the decision of Durham County Council.
 - The application Ref DM/22/01502/FPA, dated 19 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as ground floor rear extension and internal renovation works. Modernisation of existing family property with replacement doors, windows and retrofitted insulation, installation of solar panels with new roof tiles. Replacement flat roof to porch and garage and widened driveway with dropped kerb.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. A revised Residential Amenity Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in January 2023, while the appeal was in progress. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment on the implications of the SPD for the appeal scheme.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two-storey detached house in a residential area, characterised by similar detached properties, finished in brick, stone cladding and hanging tiles. The similar styles of properties results in a consistent and harmonious character and appearance. There is a white rendered property nearby. However, it is on a corner plot and set further back from the road, and as such, is not readily seen in context with the appeal site, such that it does not inform the immediate character of the area.
5. While the proposal would introduce a mixed palette of high-quality materials, including stone cladding and timber, the entire property would be rendered in white, which would draw the eye and look harmfully out of place. Consequently, due to its appearance, the proposed development would be a discordant feature that would detract from the otherwise harmonious character and appearance of the area.

6. I have considered the examples of properties in the wider area which have introduced different materials and colour palettes to modernise the appearance. The context of the examples differs in overall appearance and relationship with the street scene. They are on a different section of Longdean Park or a different street, and as such would not be seen with the appeal scheme and are not directly comparable. The other examples do not, therefore, lead me away from my above findings.
7. While the SPD advises that the use of contemporary materials may be permitted, the use of such materials at the appeal site would not reflect or respect the characteristics of the original property or the surrounding streetscape. The extensive use of white render would result in such a marked change in appearance that it would not contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. While there were no objections from neighbouring occupiers to the scheme, this is not a reason in itself to allow harmful development.
8. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policy 29 of the County Durham Plan (2020). This policy requires proposals to contribute positively to an area's character.
9. The proposed development is also contrary to the guidance set out in the SPD regarding high quality design standards, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework at Section 12 in relation to achieving well designed places.

Other Matters

10. The proposal would improve the thermal efficiency of the property without reducing internal space, which is a clear benefit of the scheme. Tackling climate change and reducing heat loss from homes is a key aim of the Council, however there is also a policy requirement for proposals to contribute positively to an area's character. In this case, I have found there would be significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, which is not outweighed by the improvements the appeal scheme would make to the thermal efficiency of the property.
11. While the appellant has expressed frustrations with the Council's handling of the case, this has not affected my consideration of the planning merits of the scheme.

Conclusion

12. My above findings bring the proposal into conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that have been shown to have sufficient weight to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

F Harrison

INSPECTOR