

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2023

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/D/23/3330810

6 Ash Grove, Exmouth EX8 3BN

- 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 Miss Johanna Leonard against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application, Ref. 23/0891/FUL, dated 21 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is described as '*Retention of porch to front of dwelling*'. (See paragraph 2 below.)
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application description refers to the retention of the porch. However, as 'retention' is not development under planning legislation I shall deal with the appeal as being for an application for retrospective permission for the erection of the porch.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the porch on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene of Ash Grove.

Reasons

4. The officer's report considers that the porch is too large in terms of both its height and floor area to be in keeping with the dwelling and the Ash Grove street scene. I note that the Council's objection is shared by third parties including the town council and neighbours.
 5. On my visit I saw that Ash Grove includes a number of semi-detached bungalows of essentially the same design, including very similar front elevations. No. 6 is one half of one of three such pairs on the eastern side of the road with three further pairs more or less opposite on the western side. Although there are other bungalows of a different appearance in the road, the above half dozen dwellings with their uniformity of hipped roofs and low eaves profile make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the locality.
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6. However, the porch with its height that includes a flat roof above the eaves and a significant rectilinear projection from the front wall is an obtrusive and bulky addition entirely unsympathetic to the host dwelling and the street scene. As such it draws the eye and in my view can reasonably be perceived as a harmfully obtrusive development in a prominent position.
7. The grounds of appeal include photographs of many other additions in the area. However, many of these have little or no similarity to the appeal proposal as regards design or context and I can therefore afford them very little weight in my decision. In any event, they do not justify an addition that is clearly harmful to the character and appearance of both the existing building and Ash Grove.
8. I have noted the appellant's explanation of why the porch as built is materially different from the approved plans. However, this does not mitigate the harm that has occurred as a result of the development and if professional advice is sought it may well identify remedies in relation to the process of the construction.
9. Be that as it may, I find that in terms of the main issue in this appeal the porch is unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and Ash Grove. This is in conflict with Policy D1 of the East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031 adopted in 2016; Policy EB2 of the Exmouth Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places' of Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
10. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR