



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 December 2023

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/U2235/D/23/3332442

4 St Margarets Villas, Collier Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 9SA.

- 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 Karen Ede against the decision of Maidstone Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/503538/FULL, dated 30 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2023.
 - The development proposed is for a porch to the front of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. I consider the main issue in this case to be the effect of the proposed development on the architectural integrity of the host property, the cluster of properties of which it is part and thereby the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, 4 St Margaret's Villas, is a two-storey semi-detached house located in Collier Street, a small hamlet, located in the open countryside. It is one of four pairs of similar semi-detached houses, set well back from the road. Several the houses, originally all concrete clad Airey prefabs, have been re-skinned externally. Virtually opposite this row of houses is Orchard Barn, listed grade II.
4. The houses are of a simple design with pitched gabled roofs. None of the dwellings have porches, hoods over the front doors or any modelling to their main facades.
5. The appellant proposes the erection of a front porch. However, the porch would have a footprint of approximately 3.7 x 3.5 metres, and therefore would have more the scale and appearance of a front extension than a modest porch structure. Due to the size of the footprint and the proposed height of the roof in relation to the cill of the first-floor window over the proposed roof of the porch would be in the form of a pitched fascia design.
6. In my judgement the introduction of some modulation to the front façade of these dwellings, in the form of small porches, door hoods etc, would help lift

their overall appearance. However, by reason of its size, three-dimensional form and detailing of the proposed porch it would on balance not result in a well-mannered addition to this property. It would therefore cause visual harm to the architectural integrity of the host property, the semi-detached pair thereby the group of properties of which it is one.

7. I note from the evidence that the porch was sized to be able to accommodate a wheelchair/mobility scooter to aid current medical conditions. Nevertheless, I believe that there may be alternative design solutions to facilitate the storage/parking of such items without causing the harm that the large porch as designed would cause.
8. Notwithstanding the harm that I have identified I do not consider, given the separation distance that proposed addition would impact in any significant way on the setting of the listed barn located on the opposite side of the road. I nevertheless conclude in respect of the main issue that the proposed porch, while not impacting on the setting of the nearby listed building would cause significant visual harm to the host dwelling, St Margarets Villas and the character of Collier Street.
9. To allow it would therefore be contrary to the objectives of Policies DM1, DM30 and DM32 of the Maidstone Borough Council's *Maidstone Borough Local Plan* (Adopted October 2017), the design guidance contained in the Maidstone Borough Council *Maidstone Local Development Framework-Residential Extensions* Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted May 2009) and the National Planning Policy Framework. As they relate to, along with other things, the quality of development and its impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusions

10. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR