
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2024

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W5780/D/24/3339144

3 Middleton Gardens, Gants Hill, Ilford, IG2 6DP

- 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 Purvi Mehta against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Redbridge.
 - The application Ref. is 3100/23.
 - The development proposed is relocation of the front door and new front porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The name of the appellant is not the same as the applicant given on the planning application form, but the applicant confirmed agreement to the appeal proceeding with this change as part of the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a mid-terrace dwelling with a prominent two-storey bay and arched entrance, which are separated by a central window. Although Middleton Gardens contains different dwelling styles, this original style of property, with the pattern of two-storey bays and arched entrances separated by a window, is found elsewhere in this and surrounding streets. The appeal property forms one of a cluster of dwellings at the eastern end of the road in this same original design. The original form included a recessed entrance in the archway, to create an open porch, but many have now been enclosed.
5. In this context, the prominent two-storey bay and arched entrance are both distinctive features of the dwelling style but also the street scene. Although the arches have been infilled on many properties, their setback position means that they do not compete with the prominence of the two-storey bays.
6. The proposal to replace the existing central window with a porch would place it close to the bay, and to the same depth. An arched window would replace the

existing porch. Whilst I appreciate the aim to retain this distinctive feature, the introduction of the porch between the bay and arched window would create an overly cluttered and cramped elevation that would undermine and distract from the feature bay. The mix of features – arched window, gabled porch and two-storey bay – would not complement the original design and form of the dwelling, nor the surrounding properties.

7. Policy LP26 of the Redbridge Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (adopted 2018) [RLP] promotes high quality design which, amongst other criteria, respects the local character of the area, and makes a positive architectural and urban design contribution to its context and location; and is well integrated and has regard to and respect for the surrounding area, in terms including form, style and scale. As noted above, the 'bay and arch' pattern is a distinctive form in the area.
8. This is reinforced by the guidance in the Council's 'Housing Design' Supplementary Planning Document 2019 (SPD), which requires alterations to a front elevation to be sympathetic in character to minimise its visual impact. In particular, it notes that where a bay window exists, a porch must not extend beyond the depth of the bay, and with a separation of at least 0.3m from the bay. Although the proposed porch would be no deeper than the bay, its projection beyond the shallower flanking panel would be particularly noticeable due to the negligible gap between the two elements.
9. Attention has been drawn to a porch at 56 Middleton Gardens, which spans the area of the arch and window, and abuts the bay, and the gabled porch design at 65 Milton Crescent. However, no details have been supplied to indicate that these required or benefitted from any planning permission, or whether they pre-dated the Council's current planning policies and guidance. As such, they offer limited weight in support of the proposal.
10. Planning permissions appear to have been granted for porches and entrance relocations in Albemarle Gardens, but no information has been supplied of the cases made and the reasoning for the Council's decisions. However, from the plan extracts supplied, whilst these porches are also close to a bay, their simpler designs and siting are not the same as the proposal, and as such do not warrant approval of the appeal scheme. Moreover, dwellings in Albemarle Gardens appear to have been more widely altered, whereas this proposal would have greater visual impact by affecting one of a small group of same-style properties in this section of Middleton Gardens.
11. I appreciate that there are other porch examples within the wider area, some of which have removed the arch feature, but the more prevalent porch style remains the infilled archway. As noted above, in the absence of information of any planning permissions needed or granted, or the planning policies and guidance against which they were assessed, these alternative styles offer little support to this proposal.
12. The appellant advises that the porch could normally have been constructed as Permitted Development (PD) but requires express planning permission due to the relocation of the entrance. Such an addition could also disrupt the original form and design of the dwelling, but as a PD porch would be sited further from the existing bay, I do not consider that the 'fallback' option would cause more visual harm than would result from this proposal.

13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property and the street scene, contrary to RLP Policies LP26 and LP30, which amongst other criteria supports householder extensions which complement the character of the building in terms including scale, style and form, and maintains or improves the appearance of the locality or street scene; and contrary to the guidance set out in the SPD.

Other Matters

14. I note the appellant's comments about the processing of the application, but such matters cannot be explored in a Section 78 planning appeal, and I have considered the appeal on its planning merits.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR