



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2025

by **L Gardner MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/D/24/3353831

13 Marchmont Green, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 5BB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Radu Herban against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01352/FHA.
 - The development proposed is alteration to external finishing material. (From brick to render finish).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 12 December 2024, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published and corrected on 7 February 2025. There is no need to invite further comments from the Council or the appellant on the revisions as there are no fundamental changes relevant to the appeal before me.
3. The appellant suggests that the development could be carried out under permitted development. However, this is not a matter for me to determine in the context of an appeal made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (the Act). It is open to the appellant to apply to have the matter determined under sections 191 or 192 of the Act. Any such application would be unaffected by my determination of this appeal. I have proceeded to deal with the case before me on its planning merits.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property forms a two-storey end terrace dwelling in a predominantly residential area. There is a strong sense of uniformity in design and materials within both the terraced row and other dwellings within the immediately surrounding area. The similarities in design and appearance are key characteristics of the area creating a strong sense of place, particularly noting the prominent location of the property adjacent to an area of publicly accessible green space.
6. The proposal seeks to introduce a rendered finish to all exposed elevations of the dwelling at both ground and first floor. This would disrupt the established and defined character of the area in a way which would not be sympathetic to the host

building or the neighbouring residential properties. The contrasting materials would have a stark and imposing impact on the immediately surrounding area, particularly due to the prominent positioning of the site on a corner plot, and the proposed white colour of the render. For these reasons, I disagree that the use of render would improve the look of the property through its texture or colour.

7. I have noted the examples supplied by the appellant of render being used elsewhere, and indeed I observed the use of render in the wider surrounding area during my site visit. However, I do not find the context comparable to the appeal site which remains highly sensitive to change, given the general uniformity of the immediate site surroundings.
8. The proposal would therefore have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to the Saved Appendix 7 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004) as well as Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) which, amongst other things, seek to preserve attractive streetscapes.

Other Matters

9. It is presented that the use of render has benefits such as providing a protective barrier against weather elements, improving thermal performance, providing a durable low maintenance material and the use of environmentally friendly materials and methods. I acknowledge that these qualities have minor economic, social and environmental benefits to which I have attached some weight. However, no robust evidence has been provided to demonstrate that these benefits could not be achieved by other, potentially less harmful means. In the context of the minor scale of the benefits, they do not outweigh the harm identified in respect to matters of character and appearance. Equally, I do not consider that a lack of impact to property values or the quality of life for nearby residents, weakens the harm identified.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan and all relevant materials considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Gardner

INSPECTOR