



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 March 2025

by **John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X1165/D/25/3359483

8 Bridge Road, Torquay, TQ2 5BA

- 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 J Barry against the decision of Torbay Council.
 - The application Ref is P/2024/0650.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a porch at 8 Bridge Road, Torquay, TQ2 5BA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/2024/0650, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan: Drg No 024-0221-1.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the Torre Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a fairly large semi-detached dwelling. Owing to the topography of the area, along with its attached neighbour (25 Bampfylde Road), it appears two-storey to the front, facing obliquely towards Bridge Road, and three-storey to the rear, where it has an equally strong visual presence when viewed from the lower levels of Rowdens Road. The property, along with its surrounding contemporaries, dates from the late 1800s and falls within *The Villas and Semi-detached Villas* sub area of the Torre Conservation Area (CA), as defined within the Council's published *CA Character Appraisal (CACA)*, dated August 2005. The CACA recognises the area's distinctive character as being derived from a combination of form, materials, detail, topography, and spatial arrangement, with the importance of building groups identified over separate buildings. No 8 is marked within the CACA, along with the overwhelming majority of others locally, as being

part of the key buildings and building groups of architectural importance which make a significant contribution to the townscape.

4. The appeal property is a fine example of its type with painted stucco finish and natural slate roof, sympathetic within its setting and respectful of the CA's wider character. The proposal seeks to erect a porch over the dwelling's principal entrance to the side of the building and set back from the building lines to the front and rear. It would be finished with painted stucco render and a flat roof with raised parapet sides incorporating a low-profile glass rooflight. The existing front door in the side elevation would be relocated to the front elevation of the new porch.
5. The Council's officer's report clearly states that given the siting, scale, and design of the proposal it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the character or visual amenities of the locality. I do not disagree. The porch extension would be deeply recessed behind both the building's front and rear elevations; it would be modest in scale, clearly subservient to the dwelling in both form and function; and designed to reflect the architectural style of the original building. Notwithstanding, the Council is concerned that the addition would disrupt the symmetry of the semi-detached pair and thereby diminish their value and contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
6. Whilst the appeal property and 25 Bampfylde Road would originally have been designed as a symmetrical pair, I observed during my visit firstly, that alterations over the years have significantly disrupted any original symmetry, and secondly, even where symmetry does exist, due to the siting, size and orientation of the dwellings relative to the surrounding development pattern, little opportunity exists to view the building comprehensively face-on where the value of any symmetry is important within the wider context.
7. Both dwellings appeared exceptionally well maintained. However, the stucco render to each was painted in a different colour. Replacement windows to No 25 were obviously different in style to those at No 8, and a rendered band detail above ground floor level was missing from No 25. Moreover, due to the corner position of the pair with roads to three sides, No 25 has a much more obvious road frontage, with its side door facing directly to Bampfylde Road, whilst No 8 has a much more muted roadside presence, with its principal entrance door tucked to the side and out of sight. For these reasons I place little significance to symmetry as a key character feature for this semi-detached pair.
8. My impression overall is that the proposed extension would appear as a modest and reasonably inconspicuous addition that would blend seamlessly with the architectural form and composition of the existing. Whilst it would defy the original symmetrical form of the semi-detached pair by extending No 8 sideways, this change would be negligible and of no consequence to the building's overall contribution to the character and appearance of the CA, which would remain positive. I am satisfied that there would be no harm to the character or appearance of the CA and as such, its significance as a designated heritage asset would be unaffected. In these circumstances there would be no conflict with Policies DE1 or SS10 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030, or with Policy TH8 of The Torquay Neighbourhood Plan adopted in 2019, as far as between them they seek to ensure that development is well designed and respectful of local context, including the local character and distinctiveness of the CA. For the same reason there would be

no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework's objectives for conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Other Matters

9. I have noted concerns expressed by a neighbouring occupier. Given the separation that would exist between the proposed porch and 10 Bridge Road, and the array of reciprocal facing side windows to each property, I am not persuaded that any vertical light spillage from the roof lantern would impact upon the neighbour's living conditions to a degree that would be harmful. I note also the Council raised no objection in this regard.
10. There is no evidence before me to suggest that the proposal would impact the adjoining cob wall.

Conditions

11. In addition to the standard time limit condition, a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning. In order to safeguard the character and appearance of the area a condition is required to ensure that the development is carried out in materials to match the existing.
12. The Council has suggested a condition that would remove permitted development rights for the property relating to various alterations and development within the curtilage of the premises that would ordinarily be permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. However, such control is not directly relevant to the development that is before me and would therefore be unreasonable.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR