

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2016

by J A B Gresty MA MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 04 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/16/3154597

2 Orchard Close, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 3DU

- 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 Mr Guy Hewitt against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00291/FULH, dated 29 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is construction of a new home bicycle and recycling bin store room.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for construction of a new home bicycle and recycling bin store room at 2 Orchard Close, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 3DU in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 16/00291/FULH, dated 29 February 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) 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.
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan: 15/GH-3 A.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of Orchard Close.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached house situated on a residential cul-de-sac which is characterised by similarly designed semi-detached houses set back from the road behind front gardens and driveways. There are gaps between the houses, some of which have single-storey garages built in them, others remain open. Whilst the garages and treatments of the spaces between the pairs of houses are of varied appearance, Orchard Close has a planned and spacious character and appearance with little building forward of the building line formed by the front elevations of the houses.
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4. The appeal property is the first property on the west side as one enters Orchard Close. It has a relatively narrow, irregularly shaped space to the side of it with the back garden of 17 The Gardens immediately to the north side. The appeal proposal is for a single-storey extension which would infill the space between the side of the house and No 17's back garden fence. The extension would project forward of the main front wall of the house by about a metre to be in line with the front elevation of the existing porch. The pitched, tiled roof of the extension would match that of the front porch, resulting in the front of the extension being a continuation of the front of the porch. There would be a pair of side-hung doors at the front of the extension and overall the extension would have the appearance of a conventional garage of similar design to that of the host building.
5. No 17's fence extends along the northern boundary of the appeal property's front garden. A substantial outbuilding in No 17's garden stands next part of this boundary. Although the extension would stand forward of the main front wall of the house, it would have the outbuilding as a backdrop when viewed from the south, limiting the prominence of the extension in the street scene.
6. Overall, the combination of the proposed extension's small size, its sympathetic design using materials which would match the external cladding of the house, its limited projection forward to be in line with the porch and the backdrop of the neighbouring outbuilding building, would result in the extension being an unobtrusive feature in the street scene. Because of its position at the end of the row of houses with a built backdrop, its forward projection would not disrupt Orchard Close's regular, planned character and appearance.

Conclusion

7. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and new development should respond to local character and help to establish a sense of place. In this case the proposed extension would be in keeping with the host property whilst maintaining Orchard Close's strong sense of place. Accordingly, the proposed extension would accord with the design requirements of Policies SS 1 and UD 1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy and sections 8.2, 8.3 and 8.7 of the Watford Residential Design Guide. Overall, on balance and for the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed extension would represent sustainable development as sought by the Framework and that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

8. In order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the proposed side and rear extensions, I impose a condition requiring the external materials to match those of the host property and, for the sake of clarity, I impose a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plan.

J A B Gresty

INSPECTOR