

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 November 2016

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert(Urb) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 09th December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/16/3157683

12, 12A and 14 Woodford Road, Watford, WD17 1PA

- 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 Pravin Nathwani against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00573/FUL, dated 21 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is a rear extension and internal alterations to first floor flats 12A & 14 (also known as 14A).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. There is an inconsistency between the site and block plans, and the elevation and floor plans in their depiction of the rear extension depth. The Council has considered the proposal on the basis of the deeper extension shown on block and site plans. However, it makes more sense to consider the proposal on the basis of the elevation and floor plans by reason of their greater detail and better scale and the appeal has been considered on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposal on (a) the character and appearance of the area and (b) the living conditions of the occupiers of 16A Woodford Road, having regard to outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises a double fronted Victorian building with an A1 shop at the ground floor and two flats above, each served by external metal staircases to each side of the building. The building has deep ground floor flat-roof extensions to the rear and has two original first floor outriggers. The surrounding area is a mixture of Victorian and more modern buildings.
 5. The proposal would result in the removal of the two outriggers and replacement with a first floor extension with a partial hipped pitched roof and a flat-roof above. There are similar two storey outriggers in the surrounding area but the original building here has been much altered and extended in form. However, the overall depth of the extension including the subsumed
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outriggers and width of the extension would be considerable. The roof design incorporating a shallow pitch roof and crown flat roof behind would be incongruous with the steeper pitched main roof of the building. The modern window design would also not relate sympathetically to the spacing and sizes of first floor windows of the building. Consequently, the extension would not be subservient in size and appearance to the original dwelling at first floor and would be poorly designed. Although the extension would be to the rear, the extension would be visible from a number of surrounding properties which I attach significant weight to by reason of the poor design of the extension.

6. In conclusion, the development would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to Policies SS 1 and UD 1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) 2006-31 (adopted 2013), which collectively and amongst other matters, require high standards of sustainability and design, and that new development should respect and enhance the local character of the area. The proposal would also be contrary to the guidance within sections 8.2 and 8.3 of the Council's Residential Design Guide (RDG) 2014 which indicate that extensions should be in harmony with the host building, having regard to size and shape, roof pitch and scale of windows, and respect the streetscene.

Living conditions

7. The neighbouring modern residential building at 16 Woodford Road has flats. The proposed first floor extension would be alongside flat No16a which has windows on the rear elevation and a rear garden.
8. Based on the detailed elevation plans, there would be a further projection beyond the existing outrigger of approximately 2.5m. The submitted floor plans show that this would not interfere with a 45 degree line drawn from the middle of the neighbour's window. Based on what I saw on my site visit, there would be a gap formed by a rear access separating the appeal building, as extended, from the common boundary with this neighbouring property and the closest windows. By reason of this separation and limited extension projection, there would not be a significant loss of sunlight or daylight to windows or garden of this property, even taking into account the south-eastern location of the extension. Similarly, there would be no significant loss of outlook.
9. In conclusion, the development would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property, having regard to light and outlook. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with Policies SS 1 and UD 1 of the CS which collectively and amongst other matters, requires high standards of sustainability and design, and provide for a range of different uses in the built environment. The proposal would comply with relevant guidance within section 8.5 of the RDG which requires extensions to be neighbourly, having regard to light and sense of enclosure.

Other matters

10. My attention has been drawn to a pre-application inquiry for the conversion of the ground floor of the appeal building and two flats above to 7 flats. It is appreciated that Officers gave some positive advice about the re-development of the site but there were concerns expressed about the depth and design of the extension. In any case, this proposal is of a different nature and has been considered on its particular planning merits.

Conclusion

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

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR