
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2017

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: 08 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/16/3162840

4A Ash Tree Road, Watford WD24 6RT

- 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 Adewale Bankole against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01059/FULH, dated 24 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is rear dormer loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises the first floor flat of a two-storey semi-detached property. The surrounding area comprises mainly semi-detached properties which are of similar form and design, despite some extensions and alterations to these properties over time. Although there are exceptions, the prevailing roof form for the semi-detached properties is pitched with full hips to the exposed sides. The general uniformity of roofscapes within the area is an attractive and distinctive visual quality of the area.
 4. The proposal would result in a rear dormer within the roof of the appeal property which has retained its original form. The dormer would be set back from the roof eaves and would not be above the ridgeline of the property. However, the dormer would cover almost the full width of the semi-detached property, including the area created by the hip to end roof addition. This would result in an overlarge and dominant roof extension which would not be proportionate to the size of the original roof. The dormer would also exceed half of the height of the roof and would be more than half the width of the existing roof, on which it would be situated, in conflict with the guidelines of the Watford Borough Council Residential Design Guide (RDG) 2014.
 5. The addition of a gable to the hip end would further unbalance the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached properties which would appear markedly at odds with the prevailing pattern of dwelling forms in the area. The RDG indicates
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that it is only possible to extend a roof in this way in exceptional circumstances where there is a variety of existing roof treatments. This is not the situation here for the reasons indicated.

6. Some examples of similar developments have been brought to my attention. However, there is no evidence before me to challenge that of the Councils which indicates they were built without the need for planning permission. Furthermore, they do not represent the prevailing context of the proposal and additionally demonstrate to me that the proposal as designed would be visually unacceptable by reason of its similar extensive and dominant built roof form. In any case, every proposal has to be considered on its individual planning merits.
7. The roof extension and alteration would be constructed with materials and finishes to match the existing property. The enlargement of the roof would provide improved living conditions for the occupiers of the flat by providing additional accommodation and facilities. This would result in health and well-being benefits. However, the harm to the character and appearance of the area would be substantial by reason of the poor design of the proposal. The National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Therefore the adverse impact would outweigh the benefits and the development would not be sustainable. There would be no harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties but this would be expected of any proposal and so would not represent a benefit on favour of the proposal.
8. In conclusion, the development would harm the character and appearance of the area because of the extent and dominant impact of the roof extension and alteration. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31, which amongst other matters requires development to respect and enhance the character of the area. The proposal would also be contrary to the guidelines of the RDG for the reasons indicated.

Conclusion

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

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR