

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 August 2017

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/17/3177418
37 Cassiobury Drive, Watford, WD17 3AA

- 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 Jeremy Irvine against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00274/FULH, dated 2 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 28 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, side extension at first floor level, re-roofing and loft conversion (re-submission).
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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 host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling with pleasing elevations and proportions. It is built in the 'Arts and Crafts' style with notable elements which include two gables to the front, sprocketed eaves, a gable to the rear, and an interesting main roof which lies a little lower than neighbouring properties. The locality is one of established residential character with a variety of good quality homes coming together to form a most agreeable suburban scene. The proposal is as described above and would primarily provide for additional living and family recreational space and bedroom accommodation.
 4. The appeal property is an unusual one and whilst I fully recognise that it is not in a Conservation Area or listed it has considerable aesthetic merit which deserves care and respect when extension work is being considered. Unfortunately the appeal scheme would lack the suitable and requisite sense of subtlety. There may well, as the Council notes, be scope for raising the roof if taken in its own right and given neighbouring ridge lines but any such works would have to be designed with the need for harmony, respect to existing detail and a sense of subordination all to the fore.
 5. Regrettably the appeal scheme would not display such characteristics as the increase in ridge height with the use of a crown roof form would take no cue
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from, and indeed disregard, the gables, valleys and eaves details of the present home. The roof would be over-sized, unduly dominant against other features of the property and ungainly and would inappropriately fill in the valley roof losing architectural integrity. The visual impact of the works would be compounded by the addition of height to a side wall and an upper level window such that this would appear as a full third floor element. This would visually jar on the appeal property and would not be characteristic of the area; it would be widely visible due to the varied building line with No 39 set relatively further back. In sum the extended form would be disproportionate, overly bulky and would lack suitable detailing and represent poor design which I could not condone.

6. Policies UD1 and SS1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31, taken together and amongst other matters, call for high quality design which respects and enhances local character and the built environment. I conclude that the appeal scheme would run contrary to these policies. These policies have similar objectives to those embodied in the Council's Residential Design Guide wherein more detailed reference is made to planned works having to be respectful of existing roof forms and generally needing to display subordination in terms of size and shape.

Other matters

7. I sympathise with the Appellant's wish to provide increased family accommodation and can see that there has been a willingness to amend proposals as they have evolved. Unfortunately I would deem that taken as a whole the amendments have not gone far enough for the reasons I have given, albeit the dormers in their own right would follow a subtle design route. I have considered neighbours' concerns but because of relative dispositions of properties I concur with the Appellant and the Council that there would be no undue residential amenity issues arising from the scheme.
8. I recognise that some local people supported the scheme but I have to consider aesthetics for the long term and in line with prevailing planning policies. I considered the crown roofed dwellings drawn to my attention but found that a) they were not characteristic of the surrounds and b) were not all of a design quality which to my mind should be set as a benchmark for the attractive appeal property in its environs. In any event I must consider the appeal case on its own merits. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
9. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered. A key objective of the Framework is to protect and enhance the qualities of the built environment and the development plan policies referred to above mirror this.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR