
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2017

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 6th October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/17/3181283
31 Fourth Avenue, Watford WD25 9QB

- 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 & Mrs Horton against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00351/FULH, dated 16 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "demolition of existing single storey rear extension. Construction of new two storey side extension. Construction of new entrance porch. Update of previously approved application 16/00415/FULH".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. An extant planning permission (ref 16/00415/FULH) exists for a two storey side extension and new entrance porch at the appeal dwelling. I have had regard to extracts relating to that permission provided by both the Council and the appellant. The approved scheme provides the appellant with a fallback position which, as it could be implemented should the appeal fail, is an important material consideration that carries significant weight for the purposes of my decision. My reasoning will consider the differences between the approved scheme and the proposed development.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal dwelling is a semi-detached property that is prominent in the street scene due to its location on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Third Avenue. The surrounding area largely consists of semi-detached properties, with some examples of extensions at the side and rear, although few two storey side extensions due to the narrowness of gaps between pairs of properties.
5. The appeal dwelling appears largely unaltered from the front and side. The adjoining property (38 Third Avenue) has been extended considerably at the side with a two storey extension that turns the corner. This greatly unbalances

the appeal dwelling and No 38 when seen from the front. 29 Fourth Avenue to the south of the appeal dwelling has a smaller and more subservient two storey side extension. The first floor elements of the extensions at both No 29 and No 38 are set back at the rear allowing a subservient relationship with the original properties at the rear in both cases.

6. Amendments were secured before the approved scheme was granted to ensure that the development would be more subservient and balanced with No 38. Although not symmetrical in terms of all detailing, it is evident that the approved scheme would closely resemble No 38 in terms of the scale of the extension and roof shape when viewed from the front. It would also not protrude beyond the front and rear building lines of the existing dwelling, which would ensure a subservient relationship particularly at the rear.
7. The proposed development would enlarge further the roof of the existing dwelling and the side extension than the approved scheme with a taller ridgeline. The side extension would project further rearwards than the approved scheme to create additional kitchen and bedroom space.
8. Viewed from the front of the property, the proposed development would not be as balanced with No 38 compared to the approved scheme due to the roof changes. I note that a number of elements from the approved scheme, including the porch and window details which form part of the proposed development, would not match No 38. However, the difference in roof form and size between the appeal dwelling and No 38 in terms of the proposed development would be very noticeable in the street scene given the prominent corner location. The increased roof bulk and ridgeline would also decrease the subservient relationship of the extension to the front elevation of the original dwelling compared to the approved scheme.
9. At the rear, the additional extension compared to the approved scheme would obscure around half of the existing rear elevation and would not be subservient to the original dwelling due to its scale and footprint. Although the additional rearwards extension would not be obvious in public views from the street, it would be overly dominant and fail to respect the proportions and form of the original dwelling when seen from the rear. It would compare poorly with the side extensions at Nos 29 and 38 which are more subservient when seen from the rear. Although these would be private views, there would still be harm to the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the surrounding area.
10. In conclusion, the proposed development would have a negative effect on the character and appearance of the original dwelling and the surrounding area distinctly greater than what would be caused from the implementation of the approved scheme. Therefore, it would not accord with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 (adopted 2013) which, amongst other things, seeks high quality design that respects and enhances the local character of the area in which it is located. The development would also not meet the aims of the Council's Residential Design Guide adopted in 2014 and amended in August 2016. The guide states that extensions should complement the size, shape and character of the existing property and should normally be subordinate to it. The guide also states that extensions should respect the character, size and shape of neighbouring buildings, including roof forms, and respect the street scene as a whole.

Other Matters

11. The proposed development is intended to provide additional living accommodation for the appellant's family. However, personal circumstances seldom outweigh general planning considerations and in this instance do not diminish the negative effect I have identified.

Conclusion

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

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR