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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2019

**by Richard Aston BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: Friday, 30 August 2019**

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### **Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/19/3233072 79 The Ridgeway, Watford WD17 4TJ**

- 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 and Mrs A Shields against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 19/00377/FULH, dated 2 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2019.
  - The development proposed is described as *'Two Storey Side/Rear Extension to replace an existing attached Garage & with a single Storey Frontage Extension in line with the existing Bay window & canopy. Also, to extend the rear Basement store & with an extended Patio area over. Formation of a Room in the Roof space & including a Dormer window on the rear roof slope'*.
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### **Decision**

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for development described as *'Two Storey Side/Rear Extension to replace an existing attached Garage & with a single Storey Frontage Extension in line with the existing Bay window & canopy. Also, to extend the rear Basement store & with an extended Patio area over. Formation of a Room in the Roof space & including a Dormer window on the rear roof slope'* at 79 The Ridgeway, Watford WD17 4TJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/00377/FULH, dated 2 April 2019, 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1:1250 Site Location Plan, 18-1247-1 and 18-1247-3a.
  - 3) 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.

### **Procedural Matter**

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been

agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application in the decision above.

### **Main Issue**

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and area.

### **Reasons**

4. On my reading of the Council's decision and the officer report the objections mainly relate to the creation of a terracing effect from the first floor side extension proposed on the boundary with No. 77 and its subsequent effects. I observed a residential street characterised by a wide variety of sizes and styles of dwellings, including a mixture of semi-detached and detached properties located in rows, groups and pairs and with substantial architectural variety between them. The properties are set back from the road behind soft and hard landscaped front gardens with vehicle hard standings.
5. Although gaps existed at first floor level above various side extensions, in this part of the street a number of properties and their extensions were also sited very close to their side boundaries. Gaps were evident but there was such an array of markedly different sized spaces between the buildings that there was no prevailing sense or perception that the spaces were an overwhelmingly important part of this particular streetscene that any further development of this nature should be resisted. To my mind, it is the variety in the buildings and spaces, in combination with mature street trees and soft landscaping, that most positively contributes to the street's suburban character and appearance.
6. Furthermore, I observed similar first floor side additions on a semi-detached pair opposite the appeal site and a slightly narrower first floor side extension on No. 81, the attached property. Although they are of some age and predate the Watford Residential Design Guide 2016 ('RDG'), nevertheless, in any reasonable assessment such built form is part of the character of the area and the appearance of this part of The Ridgeway streetscene.
7. The eaves of the extension would match the height of the eaves on No. 77 and it would be set back from the front elevation and well below the main ridge. Despite being a further addition that would reduce the size of the gap, the property sits lower than those opposite and the highway. Some space would still be retained between the sloping roofs and there would still be an appreciation of a gap and views through it, albeit at roof level. Appropriate materials could be secured by condition and in the context of this particular street the reduction in the gap would not result in such a harmful terracing effect that the proposal would be incongruous or visually harmful. Overall, it would be an entirely appropriate design for the host property and area.
8. For these reasons, the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property or the area. It would not conflict with Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 and the RDG which, when taken as a whole and amongst other things, require protection and enhancement of the character of an area and that all new development should be of an appropriate and high quality design. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's ('the Framework') objective of achieving well-designed places, ensuring that developments are

sympathetic to local character and add to the overall quality of an area. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with the design objectives of national planning policy.

9. In reaching this view I have had regard to the representation from a third party in relation to overdevelopment. The Council did not object on this basis however and given my findings in relation to the main issue, the proposal would not result in overdevelopment of the host property or the appeal site.

### **Conditions**

10. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council and have amended the wording where necessary in the interests of clarity and simplicity. A condition is required to ensure compliance with the approved plans as this provides certainty. A condition requiring the materials to be used to match existing is also necessary in order to protect the character and appearance of the host property and area.

### **Conclusion**

11. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would accord with the development plan, when read as whole. Material considerations, including the Framework do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Having considered all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

*Richard Aston*

INSPECTOR