
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2019

by **L McKay MA MRTPI**

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th December 2019.

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/19/3237711
2 Hazel Tree Road, Watford WD24 6RQ

- 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 Trajkovski (Makrom Properties Ltd) against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00155/FUL, dated 7 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of an attached dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Hazel Tree Road and surrounding streets consist of predominantly 2-storey semi-detached dwellings set back a consistent distance from the road. The pairs of dwellings, curved bay windows and central chimneys give the streets a strong character and pleasant rhythm which has not been significantly diluted by the alterations and extensions that have occurred. At road junctions, front and side gardens create a more spacious character and are important in defining the character and appearance of the area. The appeal site reflects the characteristic spaciousness of such plots and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The appellant contends that the new dwelling would have all the features of a semi-detached dwelling. Nonetheless, the proposal would add a further dwelling onto the end of the existing pair, creating a terrace of 3 properties. Although there are terraces in the wider area, these are some distance from the appeal site. There are none in the immediate vicinity and as such, the proposal would be a marked change to the pattern of development in the locality and an incongruous and harmful addition to the street scene.
5. The proposed dwelling would not reduce the separation distance between properties or extend past the existing single storey rear extension. It would however be significantly closer to Beechwood Rise than the existing dwelling and substantially taller than the existing wall on that boundary. Consequently, in this prominent location, the proposed dwelling would appear dominant in the

street scene and would significantly and harmfully reduce the openness and spacious character around the junction.

6. In most respects the proposed dwelling would mirror the design of the existing dwelling. However, the lack of a shared chimney between the two would give the resulting terrace an unbalanced appearance and draw attention to its lack of symmetry. Consequently, the design and form of the proposed dwelling would interrupt the regular rhythm and character of the street scene.
7. While there are other two storey extensions in the street, they are subservient to their host property and therefore do not have a significant impact on the street scene. There is no evidence before me of any development comparable to the scale and prominence of the appeal proposal.
8. Views along roads are not protected by local policy and neither local or national policy advocate copying existing development. However, understanding of context and local character are important to achieve high quality design. Therefore, while it would create variety in the street scene, the design and layout of the proposal would fail to respond to local character. Consequently, it would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
9. The proposal would conflict with Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy 2006 – 31 which, amongst other things, require high standards of design and that development respect and enhance the local character of the area in which it is located and achieve continuity of street frontages. It would also conflict with the advice in the Watford Residential Design Guide 2016 to respond to context and reinforce local characteristics. Furthermore, it would conflict with the objective of paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) to create well designed places.

Other matters

10. The proposal would add to housing supply in a location with good access to local services and facilities, would generate economic benefits through construction and make efficient use of the site, as supported by the Framework. However, the modest benefits of one additional dwelling can be afforded little weight and would not outweigh the significant harm identified above.
11. The inclusion of bin and bicycle storage are required to meet the needs of future occupiers and as such are of neutral consequence.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR