
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 November 2019

by L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th December 2019.

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/19/3235785

127 Sheepcot Lane, Watford, Herts WD25 0DU

- 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 Randall against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00506/FULH, dated 3 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is first floor side and rear extension.
-

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 dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property, No 127 Sheepcot Lane, is a two storey, semi-detached dwelling with a hipped roof. The property has an existing side and rear extension which has resulted in the front elevation of the dwelling covering virtually the entire width of the plot. The wider area is generally characterised by a variety of detached and semi-detached properties set back behind front garden areas, or areas of hardstanding.
4. The proposal is to construct a first floor side and rear extension above the existing extension. The proposal would cover almost the entire width of the existing extension at the rear and side and would be set back from the front elevation. The proposed extension would have a crown roof with a shallow pitch and the materials to be used would match the existing dwelling.
5. Due to the shallow pitch and flat roofed element, the crown roof would sit awkwardly with the host dwelling and would not integrate effectively with the existing steeper pitch and hipped roof form. Consequently, the crown roof would appear as a visually jarring addition to No 127 and would not respect the design or built form of the host dwelling.
6. Roofs in the area closely surrounding No 127 appear to be largely of a pitched design and during my site visit I did not identify any obviously similar crown roofs in the vicinity of the host dwelling. The introduction of a crown roof in this

- context would appear as an incongruous addition to the host dwelling which would not be consistent with the character and appearance of the wider area.
7. Whilst a large proportion of the proposal would be to the rear of No 127 and not visible from the public realm it would be prominent in views from some neighbouring properties. The side extension would be readily visible from the street and whilst the set back and scale would limit its impact this would not be to such an extent so as to mitigate the harm I have identified.
 8. The appellant makes reference to the existence of other extensions to properties nearby. However, none of these examples appear to be identical to that proposed at No 127 and many are part of a different immediate visual context. In any event, each case must be determined on its individual merits and the circumstances in each case are likely to be different; for instance most, if not all, of the examples cited by the appellant appear to have been determined some time ago under a different planning and policy context.
 9. I acknowledge that the dwelling is not in a conservation area and recognise the appellant's efforts to create a sympathetic scheme in the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the area. The design aims to achieve this by setting the side extension back and designing the roof in such a way so as to reduce the bulk and attempt to maintain the visual break between No 127 and No 125. These considerations are, however, not sufficient to outweigh the harm set out above.
 10. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policy UD1 of Watford's Local Plan, Part 1 - Core Strategy 2006 – 31, adopted January 2013. This policy seeks to secure high quality design and, amongst other things, states that development should respect and enhance the local character of the built environment.
 11. The proposal would also fail to accord with guidance set out within the Residential Design Guide, adopted in July 2014 and amended in August 2016 (SPG). The SPG advises that extensions must respect the character of the host building and should have a roof form, pitch and angle that respects that of the host property.
 12. The development would also fall short of the expectations of The National Planning Policy Framework which promotes high standards of design and states that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to the character of the area.

Other Matters

13. I have noted the concerns raised by a neighbouring resident in respect of the effect of the proposal on light and outlook at their property. The Council, however, considered that the proposal would not cause undue harm to the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings in respect of their living conditions. From my own assessment of the site and the scheme I have little reason to disagree in this respect. However, in any event, the absence of harm is neutral and would add weight neither for nor against the proposal.
14. I have given careful regard to all of the above considerations. However, none are sufficient to dissuade me from the conclusions I have reached regarding the harm to local character and appearance.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J O'Brien

INSPECTOR