



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 December 2019 by John Gunn DipTP Dip DBE MRTPI

Decision by P J Davies BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/19/3237367

82, 12-14 Flanders Court, St Albans Road, Watford WD17 1BN

- 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 Erkose against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00486/FULH, dated 30 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and street scene.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is located at the junction of St. Albans Road and Beechen Grove in an area characterised by a mixture of commercial and residential properties. Individual buildings vary significantly in terms of age, height, massing and proportions. The wide roads, and associated verges, provide an open character to the area.
5. The appeal property is a residential flat that sits at the top of an eight storey high building. Its rotunda form, and contrasting materials, provide a dominant feature at the top of the building in a prominent location. Although the proposed extension would be set in from the edge of the building it would still be visible above the low roof parapet from a number of locations within the surrounding area, including the footpaths along the southern side of Beechen Grove, St. Albans Road, as you approach the roundabout junction with Beechen Road from the south, and the footpaths on the western side of St. Albans Road.

6. The extension would occupy a significant amount of the roof terrace and would partially envelop the aluminium clad rotunda. It would also be seen in combination with the existing fire escape stair well. Despite the small physical separation, this would have the effect of consolidating built development at the top of the building and around the rotunda. As a result, the extension would dominate and reduce the prominence of the rotunda, lessening its distinctiveness. Consequently, the proposal would significantly diminish the role of the host building as a landmark property within the area.
7. The Appellant has referred to a building currently under construction adjacent to the appeal site and has provided a computer generated image of the approved building. Whilst acknowledging that the building may limit views of the site from the north, in other prominent views the visual separation between the approved building and the appeal property would still be sufficient to maintain the visual role of the rotunda design and its importance to the building in maintaining local distinctiveness.
8. The appellant considers that the layout and arrangement of the rooms in the property are quite inflexible with rooms having curved walls and extensive areas of glazing. Being circular in design they are not considered to be very efficient in use and do not meet his growing needs. Nonetheless, the rotunda design is an integral part of the building's character and appearance that makes a significant contribution to the visual quality of the streetscape. Furthermore, the appeal property is a small unit within a multi-level building that would not have been designed with large households in mind. I do not therefore consider that the needs of the appellant outweigh the identified harm in this case.
9. In the light of the above, I find that the design of the extension would have a harmful visual effect upon the character and appearance of the host building and street scene. Accordingly, the development would conflict with Policy UD 1 of the Watford's Local Plan Part 1 - Core Strategy 2006 - 31 (LP) which seeks to ensure new development delivers high quality design which should respect and enhance the local character of the area. It would also run counter to the guidance in paragraphs 8.2 and 8.3 of the Residential Design Guide which require extensions to be in harmony with the host building. These policies are consistent with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

10. I acknowledge that the Appellant has sought pre application advice and has made amendments to earlier schemes with the intention of overcoming concerns raised by the Council. However, this does not alter my findings on the individual merits of the appeal proposal which I find unacceptable for the reasons given.

Conclusion and Recommendation

11. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal is dismissed.

J Gunn

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

12. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

P J Davies

INSPECTOR