



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2020

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th April 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/19/3241975
19 Woodland Drive, Watford WD17 3BU

- 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 Azam Razzaq against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01010/FULH, dated 30 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is a double storey side extension with crown roof and loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a double storey side extension with crown roof and loft conversion at 19 Woodland Drive, Watford WD17 3BU, dated 30 August 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan Drawing No 19WOODLANDLOCATIONPLAN; Existing Plan Drawing No 19WOODLANDEXISTINGDWG; and Proposed Plan Drawing No 19WOODLANDPROPOSEDDWG01 Rev 1.
 - 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 dwelling.

Application for costs

1. An application for costs was made by Mr Azam Razzaq against Watford Borough Council. This application will be the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matter

2. The development includes a rear dormer window. The Council's decision notice indicates that the side extension is the matter in dispute. I have no reason to disagree with the Council's conclusion that the rear dormer window is acceptable in planning terms. I therefore only considered the appeal with regard to the effects of the side extension.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host property and the area and the impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises a detached dwelling located within a spacious suburban location. The property at ground floor extends boundary to boundary and has been extended to the rear. Properties in the area are largely individual and vary in terms of size and design. The majority of dwellings benefit from sizable extensions and prominent roofs including crown roofs, including those either side of the host property, and with varying degrees of separation between them.
5. Whilst the proposed extension would not be subservient to the host property the proposal it would not be visually dominant or overbearing but would rather complement the design and roof form of the host property. It would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, taking into account the property variations I have identified.
6. I acknowledge that the proposal would not fully accord with guidance set out in paragraph 8.8.1 of the Watford Residential Design Guide (2016) (the Design Guide) in relation to the separation distance to the side boundary with No 21. However, in this particular instance, taking into account the existing separation between the host dwelling and No 21 and the variation in the design of the properties, including their roof design, a noticeable and obvious gap between them would be maintained.
7. Consequently, I am satisfied that the proposal would not result in a cramped relationship or a terracing effect which the Design Guide seeks to avoid. I acknowledge that other nearby extensions pre-date the Design Guide, but they are nonetheless notable features that make up part of the area's character and appearance. Therefore, I am satisfied that the proposal would not result in unacceptable effects.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would accord with Policies UD1 and SD1 of the Watford District Plan (2013) (WDP) which, amongst other things, requires new development to respect and enhance the local character of the area. The proposal would also accord with guidance set out in Chapter 8 of the Design Guide.

Privacy

9. On the basis of the available evidence, it is clear, that there would not be any habitable room windows in the side elevation of the proposed extension and that windows in the rear elevation would not result in direct overlooking into No 21 or its private amenity space. I therefore find that the proposal would not adversely harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 21 by reason of a loss of privacy.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would accord with Policies UD1 and SD1 of the WDP which, amongst other things, promotes sustainable

design. The proposal would also accord with guidance set out in Chapter 8 of the Design Guide.

Other Matters

11. I note from my observations on site that No 21 extends further than the rear wall of the host property. I acknowledge that the proposal would extend up to the side boundary. However, as it would sit within the existing footprint of the host property and maintain the existing separation between the properties, in my judgement, it would not create a sense of enclosure or adversely affect the living conditions of the neighbouring occupants in terms of loss of daylight.
12. The Council's decision notice does not allege harm in respect of the living conditions for future occupiers, even though the Officer's report refers to harm, as the ceiling height of the loft would be a maximum of approximately 2.17m. There is no evidence before me to indicate the Council has any adopted numerical standards or guidance in respect of ceiling heights. In my judgement the proposed ceiling height would be acceptable and would not result in a poor standard of living accommodation within the roof space. As such, the proposal would provide an adequate internal layout in relation to the needs of future occupiers.

Conditions

13. I have considered the imposition of conditions in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the standard three-year time limit condition for implementation; I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty. A condition requiring matching materials is necessary in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above the appeal is allowed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR