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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2020

**by I A Dyer BSc (Eng) MIHT**

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

**Decision date: 6 July 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/20/3246373**  
**24, Knutsford Avenue, Watford WD24 7EG**

- 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 Mrs Julie Patel against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 19/01326/FULH, dated 15 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 January 2020.
  - The development proposed is described as "Ground floor side and rear extension that joins. First floor side extension. New roof to match existing neighbour's".
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Procedural Matters

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.
3. The appeal was submitted in the joint names of Mr and Mrs Richard and Julie Patel. However, Mrs Patel was the sole named person on the application form. I have therefore referred only to Mrs Patel in my banner heading.

## Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

## Reasons

5. The appeal site is one of a pair of semi-detached houses lying on Knutsford Avenue. Knutsford Avenue is a straight road fronted by residential development, predominantly in the form of two storey semi-detached houses, set back from the road behind modest front gardens. Gaps between the dwellings at second storey level provide visual breaks in the frontage, retaining the visual separation of the semi-detached pairs.
6. Many of the properties have been extended in various ways. However, the overall visual impression of buildings is retained in views along the street.

7. The pairs of semi-detached dwellings with their intervening spaces between them create a visual rhythm along the street. The appellant argues that the design is intended to mirror the property conjoined to the appeal site. However, the introduction of a two storey element filling half of one of these gaps, would, in this case, interrupt this rhythm, leading to a terracing effect. I am mindful that, should other properties follow the example of such an extension the gaps would be further eroded to a point where they are removed altogether and the dwellings would take the form of a terrace.
8. It has been drawn to my attention that elsewhere along the street two storey, or first floor, side extensions have been added to semi-detached dwellings. During my site visit I took the opportunity to view those sites expressly mentioned by the appellant. Whilst I do not have full details of these, several of the sites were adjacent to side streets or the access to a school or the rear gardens of dwellings, as is the case with the conjoined dwelling, and so the opportunity for adjacent building to form a terracing effect would be severely reduced. Others were stepped in from the building line of the property to create a degree of visual subservience to the main dwelling and reduce the terracing effect in views along the road.
9. There were examples where two storey extensions to the boundary had taken place which would provide an opportunity for a similar extension on the next pair of semi-detached houses to close the gap and form a terrace. However, this has not had a widespread effect on the character or appearance of the street and these examples do not justify the further erosion of the street scene that would result from the proposal in that regard.
10. My attention has been drawn to other development in the wider area. I do not have full details of these, but, in any event, they are some distance from the appeal site and do inform its immediate context.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area contrary to the provisions of Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 (2013) which jointly seek, amongst other things, to integrate new development into its surrounds in a way that respects and enhances the local character of the area in which it is located. Similarly the proposal would be contrary to the aims of those parts of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) which seek to achieve well-designed places which are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.
12. For similar reasons the development would not accord with the advice provided within the Watford Borough Council adopted guidance 'Residential Design Guide' (2014, as amended 2016) in which Section 8 advises consideration of the general street scene to achieve development in accordance with the policies of the Local Plan, and contains specific guidance on maintaining meaningful gaps between dwellings.

## **Conclusion**

13. For the reasons set out above the appeal is dismissed.

*I Dyer*

INSPECTOR