
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2020

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/20/3247065
577 St. Albans Road, Watford WD25 9JH

- 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 Paul Hanna against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01260/FULH, dated 29 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of single storey front and side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host property and the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two storey detached dwelling situated on a corner plot at the junction of St. Albans Road and Spring Gardens. It is located in a mature well-established residential area, typically characterised by detached and semi-detached properties set back from the road behind a front garden/driveway. No. 577 St. Albans Road being situated on a corner plot has even more expansive grounds, which add to the open character and appearance of the street scene.
4. The proposal would entail the construction of a single storey L-shaped front and side extension with a pitched hipped roof that would wrap around the north-west corner of the property. It would extend across the full width of the house and project out by about 4.5m from the side elevation of the property.
5. The Council's Residential Design Guide 2016 (RDG) specifies a minimum set back of at least 1m for a single storey side extension from the principal building line (main front wall of the house) and a set-in requirement on corner plots of least 2m from the street boundary in order to preserve the areas character and sense of openness (Paragraph 8.7). In this case, the proposed front extension would be set back from St. Albans Road frontage and would extend up to the street boundary running along Spring Gardens.
6. Although the proposed extension would not appear overlarge, relative to the overall plot size, the scale and form of the proposed extension would

nevertheless still be a significant addition relative to the main property. Whilst it would be set back, the proposed front extension would result in substantial bulk on this side of the dwelling, which would detract from the architectural integrity of the host property and compromise the sense of space and openness in the area.

7. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's prominent position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along St. Albans Road and Spring Gardens. The proposed extension, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would fail to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property. As such, I consider that the proposed extension would result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that would cause unacceptable harm to the host property and the area.
8. I have considered the appellant's arguments regarding the orientation of the front elevation of the property and that the design and layout of the proposed extension have been carefully considered in order to minimise any adverse impacts on the host property and the area. However, whilst the use of matching materials, fenestrations and the boundary treatment would assist in integrating the proposal with the host property and the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above.
9. I note the appellant's willingness to amend the appeal scheme. This, however, would result in material changes to the proposal before me and in any event, I am required to consider the proposal on the basis of the same details that were before the Council when it made its decision.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It would be contrary to the overall aims of Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 and the RDG. These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development and residential extensions are of a high quality design that complement the host property and respect and enhance the local character of the area. The proposal would also not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework that developments should seek to secure a high quality of design (paragraph 124) that are sympathetic to the local character (paragraph 127).

Other Matters

11. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the single storey extension at No. 579 St. Albans Road has different development characteristics to the appeal scheme. The development of flats and the various extensions to the properties on corner plots along St. Albans Road relate to a different scale and form of development. In any event, each proposal falls to be assessed primarily on its own merits and I am unaware of the full circumstances associated with these other cases. I therefore accord them limited weight as precedents in this case.
12. I have considered the appellant's comments regarding the family's personal circumstances and the benefits to the family arising from the proposed additional accommodation to provide care and assistance to the appellant's relative. However, the courts have generally taken the view that planning is concerned with land use in the public interest. Although personal circumstances can sometimes justify a personal or temporary permission,

that would not be appropriate here where a permanent structure is intended and as such are matters to which I can attach only limited weight in making this decision.

13. I note the appellant's comments regarding the various benefits arising from the proposal including the scheme's high quality design and to create additional accommodation to meet the needs of the appellant's family. While I have given them some weight, these benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified. For all these reasons, there are no other material considerations to outweigh the development plan conflicts identified.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR