



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: 1st October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/20/3249622

9 Holtsmere Close, Watford WD25 9NG

- 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 Richard Cowling against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01477/FUL, dated 22 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension and detached three bedroom house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two storey semi-detached property with a single storey extension and garage at the side and conservatory at the rear. The proposal would involve the demolition of the existing extension and garage and the construction of a two storey detached dwelling with car parking at the front. The proposal would also involve a single storey extension at the rear of the appeal property.
4. It is located in a mature well-established residential cul-de-sac, typically characterised by a mixture of detached and semi-detached dwellings set back from the road behind front gardens/driveways. Although there is some variation in the design and style of the other properties in the cul-de-sac, the adjacent semi-detached properties have similar features with distinctive hipped roofs. The properties are relatively evenly spaced, of comparable scale and form, with uniform separation distances between them. Where garages and other structures exist between dwellings, these are very low, clearly subsidiary, and have little impact upon the sense of separation.
5. The built form and layout of the proposed dwelling with a gabled pitched roof would be significantly different to those typically found in this part of Holtsmere Close. Such positioning, on what would be an atypically narrow plot, would compromise the sense of space and openness between the

dwelling, interrupt the established pattern of development in the area and appear as a visually cramped and incongruous addition to the street scene.

6. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the hard edged appearance of the new car hardstanding area at the front of the appeal site and the proposal's prominent position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Holtsmere Close. As such, I consider that the proposed development, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would fail to promote or reinforce the distinctive characteristic of the area and would adversely harm rather than positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
7. I have considered the appellant's argument that the design and layout of the proposed dwelling has been carefully and designed in order to provide an innovative design solution to the development of the site that would minimise any impacts on adjacent dwellings and the area. Whilst the use of matching materials, fenestrations and landscaping would assist in integrating the proposal with the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above.
8. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of 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 Council's Residential Design Guide 2016. These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that developments are of a high quality design that 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

9. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, whilst there is some variation in the properties along Holtsmere Close they have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme. 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.
10. I have noted the appellant's comments regarding the Lawful Development Certificate granted for a loft conversion at the existing property including a change from a hipped to gabled end roof. Whilst this maybe so, this does not set a precedent for such an inappropriate development in this location for the reasons set out above. I therefore accord this matter limited weight in making this decision.
11. I have considered the various benefits put forward by the appellant that the proposal would bring arising from the additional dwelling, the scheme's design, sustainable construction measures and the efficient use of land on a small site within an accessible location. While I have given them some weight in favour of the appeal, 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

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

David Troy

INSPECTOR