



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2020

by William Cooper BA (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/20/3255321

16 Hopwood Close, Watford WD17 4LJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Dale against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 20/00233/FULH dated 26 February 2020 was refused by notice dated 19 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is a front porch extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey dwelling within a terraced row, located in a residential cul-de-sac. It sits between two other terraced houses which at the front share characteristics of a brick ground floor storey, a rendered upper storey and a recognisably complementary fenestration pattern. This host row of three dwellings from Nos 15 to 17 Hopwood Close is bookended by a brick gable-fronted dwelling set forward of the row and by a larger dwelling at No 18 which is set back from the row.
4. The materiality and proportions of the front elevations of the dwellings within the host row from Nos 15 to 17 echo each other, with a sense of progression from one end to the other. As such, harmony of proportion and materials is evidently part of the design rationale across the central host row of three dwellings. Among other elements, this harmony is articulated through the front porch design. Each of these porches on the three dwellings in the host row has a tiled roof, is of modest width and depth and is open to the sides and front. The roofs are supported by white painted wooden posts. These elements give the porches a 'light touch' feel which visually sits comfortably within the compact terraced row and does not over dominate.
5. Furthermore, the appeal property's porch roof and the neighbouring one to the north have similar white gable panels. While the porch at No 15 is 45 degrees to the facade, its style and proportionality harmonise with the other two in the host row. A similar pattern recurs elsewhere in the cul-de-sac from Nos 6 to 8. Therefore the appeal property's front elevation, including its front porch, are

part of a recognisable, distinctive architectural rhythm in the Close. The presence of various porch styles on various house styles in the Close does not suppress this recognisable repetition of pattern and material.

6. The proposal would appear overly dominant and disrupt this architectural rhythm through the following combination of factors. It would increase the property's porch width from around two fifths to around two thirds of the front elevation's width. This would compete with and crowd out the ground floor fenestration pattern of the host row. The proposal would also more than double the porch depth on the property. The change from an open to an enclosed porch and introduction of steps parallel rather than perpendicular to the building would further emphasise the discord with the distinctive architectural rhythm of the host row.
7. Paragraph 8.10.1 of the Watford Residential Design Guide (2016) (RDG) sets out that porches will not be acceptable where they disrupt the symmetry of a property or the character and appearance of the streetscene. Given the above, the proposal would not accord with section 8.10 of the guidance in the RDG.
8. I appreciate the appellant's intention to echo the larger porch on No 18 Hopwood Close. However, the latter dwelling is noticeably wider and differs in architectural style and set-back from the appeal property and its host row. As such, echoing No 18's porch would not diminish the identified discord.
9. In conclusion, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the host building, the streetscene of the cul-de-sac and the area. As such, it would conflict with Policies SS1 and UD1 of Watford's Local Plan Part 1 - Core Strategy 2006-31 (2013). Together the policies seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development complements local character.

Other Matters

10. The proposed development would provide additional living space within the appeal property. However, the benefit would be limited by the scale of development and would not outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusion

11. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

William Cooper

INSPECTOR