



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 November 2020

by Graham Wraight BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/20/3245815

5 Watford Heath, Watford WD19 4EU

- 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 & Mrs Sean & Rachel Carter against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01255/FULH, dated 29 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 24 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey rear extension; hedge to the south-west boundary; insert roof-light to the existing roof; insert new window to the side flank wall; re-build an existing chimney; replace UPVC windows with timber sash windows and lay patio and path paving.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two-storey rear extension; hedge to the south-west boundary; insert roof-light to the existing roof; insert new window to the side flank wall; re-build an existing chimney; replace UPVC windows with timber sash windows and lay patio and path paving at 5 Watford Heath, Watford WD19 4EU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/01255/FULH, dated 29 October 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not 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: 192005-D-01-B, 192005-D-30, 192005-D-31, 192005-D-32, 192005-D-33, 192005-D-34 and 192005-D-35.

Procedural Matter

2. In accordance with the statutory duty set out in Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Watford Heath Conservation Area.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Watford Heath Conservation Area (CA) and on the host dwelling as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

4. The significance of the CA lies at least in part in the arrangement of a number of period properties around the attractive central heath, which provides an area of public open space. As a property of considerable character, the appeal dwelling is a contributor to this significance. It sits in a prominent position within the CA and is visible in views taken from and across the heath.
5. The significance of the host property as a non-designated heritage asset is related primarily to its architectural interest, having been designed by an architect residing locally and with links to other buildings in Watford, its functional and historical interest as a former school building, and its streetscape quality in conjunction with the similar buildings adjacent to it and in terms of its contribution to the semi-rural character surrounding the heath.
6. The proposed two storey rear extension would be modest in its overall scale in relation to the host dwelling and it would be set well back from the elevation closest to the public highway. Although it would be clearly visible in a number of views taken from the surrounding area, it would assimilate well with the host dwelling and would not have a dominant or compromising visual impact upon it. This would ensure that the original host dwelling would retain its visual importance and positive contribution to the CA.
7. A reasonable separation would be maintained between the proposed two storey rear extension and Vera Court and, together with its positioning in relation to the public highway and the presence of a substantial landscaped area between the appeal site and the road, there would not be a harmful visual impact when viewed from the wider surrounding area and in particular in views taken from the heath.
8. Overall, by reason of its limited scale and its positioning, the proposed two storey rear extension would integrate with the host dwelling and within the context of the surrounding area in a visually acceptable manner. As a result, it would not cause harm to the building's architectural interest, its functional and historical interest or its streetscene quality.
9. The appeal proposal includes a number of additional elements which relate to minor works to the dwelling itself and to works within its curtilage. I am satisfied that, individually and cumulatively, these works would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA or to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, and I note that the Council did not raise a concern in this respect.
10. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA, and consequently that its character and appearance would be preserved. There would also not be harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. Therefore, the proposed development would accord with Policy UD2 of Watford's Local Plan 2013 which seeks to safeguard built heritage. There would also be no conflict with The National Planning Policy Framework where it seeks to meet the same aims.

Other Matters

11. Representations from interested parties have raised objection with respect to a loss of light, privacy and outlook as a result of the proposed development. However, the degree of separation and relationship between the proposed two

storey rear extension and the building at Vera Court and its garden area would be adequate to ensure that there would not be harm from a loss of light or outlook. There would not be new first floor windows facing in that direction. The proposal would not be likely to give rise to an increase in noise from the appeal dwelling. Therefore, taken as a whole, there would not be a harmful impact upon the living conditions of the residents of Vera Court.

12. The outdoor amenity space available at the appeal property consists of a lawned garden area and a hard-surfaced area to the other side of the building. An adequate provision of outdoor amenity space would be retained to serve the needs of the occupiers of the appeal dwelling.

Conditions

13. A condition confirming the approved plans is required to provide certainty. However, the plans clearly show the materials to be used on the proposed development and these would be acceptable to ensure an appropriate visual appearance. Therefore, a separate condition relating to external facing materials is not necessary.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should, subject to conditions, be allowed.

Graham Wraight

INSPECTOR