



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2021

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 February 2021.

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/20/3261787

34A Diamond Road, Watford, WD24 5EW

- 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 Michael Mascoll against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00570/FUL dated 6 June 2020 was refused by notice dated 28 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion incorporating dormers and velux's.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a first floor flat which has been created within a mid-terrace property, with a two-storey rear outrigger projection, on Diamond Road. The appeal site is not subject to any designations. The proposal seeks to undertake a loft conversion incorporating two rear dormers, on the main roof and the outrigger projection, which would accommodate two bedrooms and an en-suite.
4. The Residential Design Guide 2016 (RDG) advises that a dormer should be in proportion to the size of the original roof, not exceed half the height of the roof and should not be more than half of the width of the existing roof on which it is intended to be situated. The guidance goes on to outline maximum sizes of dormer windows including being set a minimum of 0.5m below the ridge-line and a minimum of 0.5m above the eaves as well as generally encouraging pitched roofs to be in harmony with the roof of the host building. I agree that there can be some flexibility in the application of design guides, however, their overarching objective is to achieve high quality, appropriate, design.
5. The proposal notably exceeds all of the above guidance within the RDG. This results in the proposed dormers presenting as excessive in scale taking into account both the RDG and the host dwelling itself. The roof would essentially be engulfed and over-dominated. The dormers would completely detract from the host property's original character and appearance as a result of excessive scale due to being full width and extending from the existing eave to ridge height. The use of a flat roof, directly over the outrigger projection, would look

at odds with the host building given the existing pitched roof it would stand upon on the original outrigger. Overall I find the proposal would look overly dominant, top-heavy and this is exacerbated by the open vehicular access under part of the appeal site. I find the proposal would fail to respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling. The appellant acknowledges that the box style dormer is not sympathetic to the appearance of the original house.

6. Given that the proposal is to the rear of the property I find that its impact upon the street scene is limited given that it would not be visible from Diamond Way itself. The proposals impact upon the appearance of the area would be to an extent limited to private views from the properties in the immediate area and from those facing it from Jubilee Road. Notwithstanding this, a proposal which completely fails to take account of design guidance and which I find to be detrimental to the host property, as outlined above, would cause unacceptable harm to the character of the area and contribute to a gradual deterioration in the quality of the built environment.
7. The appellant's statement lists properties which are stated to benefit from large box style dormers. Each case must be considered on its own merits but unfortunately only the reference numbers for the properties are submitted. As a result of this I have no information or evidence before me, such as plans or the Council's assessment for those sites, to enable me to consider their relevance within this appeal or the scale of the "large" dormers referred to which are considered by the appellant to be part of the character of the area.
8. Notwithstanding this I note that all, bar one, are LDC references. This suggests they were granted Lawful Development Certificates for the stated dormers meaning they would have fallen within the limitations of permitted development¹ (PD). In any case, this proposal is not one which falls to be considered under PD given that the proposal does not benefit from PD rights meaning this carries little weight. As a full application it is a policy based assessment taking into account matters such as the RDG and host building.
9. The proposal would be contrary Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 Policy UD1 which seeks to deliver high quality design and requires development to respect and enhance the local character of the area within which it is located. The proposal would also be contrary to the guidance within the RDG which requires that extensions should complement the shape, size and character of the property and should normally be subordinate to it as well as being contrary to the general guidance for roof extensions: dormer windows.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR

¹ The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GDPO) as amended (or equivalent legislation of this nature in the case of earlier applications)