
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 June 2021

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 July 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3272301
63 Third Avenue, Watford WD25 9QD

- 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 Mrs Donna Harris against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00140/FULH, dated 1 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of double storey side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the Council's description of the development in reaching my decision as it more clearly describes the details of the development than that given on the original planning application form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling that occupies a prominent corner plot at the junction of Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue. The proposal would involve the construction of a two storey side extension that would project out by about 3.0m from the side elevation of the property. It would extend across the full width of the house and would be constructed with a hipped tiled roof.
5. The appeal site is located in a mature well-established residential area, typically characterised by two storey semi-detached dwellings with bay window frontages set back from the road behind front gardens/driveways. The properties are relatively evenly spaced, of comparable scale and form, with uniform separation distances between them. No. 63 Third Avenue (No. 63) being situated on a corner plot has more expansive grounds, which add to the open character and appearance of the street scene.

6. The Council's Residential Design Guide 2016 (RDG) states that extensions should be subordinate to and harmonise with the scale and architectural style of the original building and the character of the area, which is broadly in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and national policy guidance.
7. The RDG states that side extensions should be subordinate to the original dwelling in terms of their height, scale and bulk and should generally not be more than half of the width of the original house. The RDG specifies a minimum set back of at least 1m for a 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 (Paragraphs 8.7 and 8.8). In this case, the proposed side extension would be over half the width of the host property and would be set back from the side boundary that tapers at an angle alongside the property.
8. The proposed extension would not appear overlarge, relative to the overall plot size. Equally, the closing of the gap between No. 63 and the public highway at the side would not appear out of character to some degree. From my site visit I noted a number of properties in the surrounding area that had modest scale extensions and garages that have been built to the side boundaries or in close proximity to such. The reduced space between the extended house and adjacent highway would be offset to some degree by the boundary treatment around the appeal property.
9. The scale and form of the proposed two storey side extension built in line with the front of the main house would nevertheless still be a significant addition relative to the main property. The proposed two storey extension would result in substantial bulk at the side and over the main dwelling that would be out of character with the more modest form and appearance of the host building and would compromise the sense of space and openness in this particular location.
10. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Third Avenue and Fourth Avenue. The proposed extension, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would fail to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and would result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that would cause unacceptable harm to the host property and the area.
11. I have considered the appellant's arguments 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.
12. 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

13. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the two storey extensions at Nos. 28 Second Avenue and 49 Fourth Avenue have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme. The various extensions to the properties in the surrounding area relate to a different scale and form of development and have different locational characteristics. 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.
14. I have considered the appellant's comments regarding the lack of formal objections from the neighbours or third parties to the appeal proposal. Whilst this maybe so, this does not preclude the proper planning assessment of the impact of the proposal on the host property and the area and is not a determinative factor on its own.
15. I note the appellant's comments regarding the various benefits arising from the proposal including the scheme's high quality design. 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

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

David Troy

INSPECTOR