
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/21/3275038
324 Whippendell Road, Watford WD18 7PD

- 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 Nudim Akhtar against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00060/FULH, dated 18 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2021.
 - The development is Loft conversion (Retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council's decision letter describes the loft conversion as retrospective. It is clear from the evidence provided and my site visit that the loft conversion with a rear roof dormer extension had been constructed. I shall determine the appeal on this basis accordingly.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property consists of a two storey mid terrace dwelling with a loft conversion with a dormer roof extension at the rear. The property is located in a mature well-established residential area within a row of terraced properties that are of comparable scale and form, with two storey rear outriggers and traditional gabled pitched roofs with raised parapet walls between each of the roofs. There is a slight variation in the overall ridge heights of the roofs along the front of the adjoining terrace of properties in this location.
5. The appeal site has an extensive planning history relating to proposals to extend the property, including a Certificate of Lawfulness issued for a loft conversion with front rooflights and associated internal works in 2020¹. The appellant indicates that the overall roof ridge height has been raised approximately 230mm higher as compared to the scheme approved under the Certificate of Lawfulness as part of the loft conversion building works.

¹ 20/00716/LDC

6. The development involves the retention of the property with a raised roof and a rear flat roof dormer extension that extends up to the rear building line of the main property and over the rear two storey outrigger projection. The dormer extension is inset from the eaves along the rear of the outrigger and projects above the ridge line of the host property.
7. Although the raising of the roof results in a slight overall increase in the ridge height of the appeal property, it is seen in the context of the current varied height roof height and raised parapet walls between each of the roofs at the front of the surrounding properties. Against this backdrop, the scale, form and design of the raised roof ridge height does not look significantly out of place or excessive in relation to the built form of the adjacent properties and sits relatively unobtrusively against the built form of the appeal property.
8. The scale and form of the rear dormer roof extension would nevertheless still be a significant addition to the appeal property in this location. As such, although set in, the awkward design and appearance of the rear dormer roof extension results in substantial bulk over the appeal property that is very much at odds with the more traditional gabled pitched roof and outrigger over the original dwelling and the surrounding terrace properties.
9. The consequential harm would not in my view be sufficiently resolved by the limited effect of the rear dormer extension on the street scene. In any case, the dormer extension is visible at the rear from the surrounding properties. I therefore consider that the rear dormer, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, fails to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and detracts from the architectural integrity of the host property. As such, I consider that the rear dormer extension results in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that causes unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the area.
10. I have considered the appellant's arguments regarding the design and layout of the dormer roof extension and that the proposal has been carefully considered in order to take into account the character of the host property and the other roof extensions in the area. Whilst the use of matching materials and fenestrations assists in integrating the extension with the host property, these aspects again do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above.
11. Consequently, I conclude that the development has a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It is contrary to the overall aims of Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 and the Council's Residential Design Guide 2016 (Section 8.12). This policy 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 (the 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

12. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the loft conversion and rear dormer at No. 318 Whippendell Road has different development characteristics to the appeal scheme. The various roof alterations and 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.

13. I have considered the appellant's arguments regarding the type of roof extensions and loft conversions that can be built on a dwellinghouse under General Permitted Development Rights. Whilst this may be so, this does not set a precedent for such an inappropriate development in this location for the reasons set out above.
14. I note the appellant's comments regarding the context provided in the Framework for opportunities to support the effective use of airspace above existing residential properties and good design, but I find that the development does not achieve the standards the Framework seeks.
15. I note the appellant's comments regarding the various benefits arising from the development including the scheme's high quality design and to create additional accommodation to meet the needs of the appellant. 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