



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 10 August 2021

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3273553

89 Balmoral Road, Watford WD24 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 Mrs Roberts against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00196/FULH, dated 10 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension, double storey side extension and new dormer to loft space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. In the period since the appeal was submitted, the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The main parties were given the opportunity to comment on any implications for the appeal of this change, and I am satisfied that no prejudice would be caused by my consideration of the appeal in light of the revised Framework

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and area.

Reasons

4. The appeal relates to a semi-detached dwelling at the junction of Balmoral Road with Munden Grove. Notwithstanding some extensions and alterations, these streets are predominantly characterised by semi-detached dwellings of generally similar appearances and scale. For the most part, the dwellings are positioned reasonably close together on strong building lines, but spacing to the sides of buildings on corners is typically greater. Together with the relatively deep rear gardens to dwellings, this results in an impression of spaciousness, and there is an overall rhythm to the street scenes and an attractive sense of coherence to the area.
5. The proposed side extension would be set back from the front of the appeal dwelling and would have a hipped roof that would be lower than the main ridge line. It would therefore appear generally subordinate to the host dwelling in views from Balmoral Road. However, separation between the extension and the boundary of the site with Munden Grove would be only around 1m, contrary to the Council's Residential Design Guide 2016 (RDG) which seeks a set in of 2m on corner plots. The extension would infill much of the space to the side of the dwelling leading to a significant reduction in openness on the site, and it would also step notably forward of the established building line along Munden Grove.

6. The proximity of the extension to the boundary at the side of the site and the resulting relationship with dwellings to the rear would not be dissimilar to that found at 87 Balmoral Road opposite the site and at 151 Balmoral Road nearby. However, the Council indicates that these examples were approved prior to adoption of the RDG and the current development plan. In any event, they are the exception rather than the rule, and while it would not be wholly remarkable, the limited separation to the side of the dwelling would be at odds with the more typically generous spacing that I saw at corner plots in the vicinity.
7. Moreover, the appeal before me additionally proposes a dormer and single-storey rear extension. The set down of the dormer from the roof of the side extension would be minimal, and while the set down from the existing roof would be increased, the dormer would still have a height more than half that of the main roof. It would also have a width greater than half the width of the host roofslope and would occupy a substantial proportion of the roof overall. In these regards, the dormer would conflict with guidance within the RDG, and I consider that it would be disproportionate. The single-storey rear extension would also be of fairly significant depth, and though I note a previous prior approval application for an extension of similar depth, the development now proposed would also span the side extension to be wider than the existing dwelling.
8. In combination with the side extension, the dormer and rear extension would add substantial bulk and mass to the dwelling and I find that the scale of the development as a whole would be dominant and disproportionate to the host property. The development would as a result be highly prominent and intrusive in views from Munden Grove, drawing attention to the unsympathetic relationship of the dwelling with its side boundary and neighbours to the rear, and exacerbating the visual impact of the loss of openness on the appeal site.
9. Although the appellant refers to other similar extensions nearby, no examples of directly comparable developments on corner plots have been brought to my attention. Accordingly, I do not find that extensions in the locality would justify the harm that would be caused by the appeal proposal which I have in any event considered on its own merits.
10. For these reasons, I conclude that the development taken as a whole would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies SS1 and UD1 of Watford's Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy 2013 which together broadly seek high standards of design and development that respects and enhances the character of the area in which it is located. There would also be conflict with the Framework which seeks new development of high quality design which is sympathetic to local character and adds to the overall quality of an area.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when it is read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that a decision contrary to the development plan should be reached. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR