



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2021 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3273242

20 Cassiobury Park Avenue, Watford, WD18 7LB

- 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 A. Hadawi against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00136/FULH, dated 30 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is an extension to the existing kitchen and lounge by 5m.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. The Government published on 20 July 2021 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Accordingly, and in light of the reference made to the previous iteration of the NPPF within the submitted evidence, the parties have been provided with a further opportunity to make submissions in respect of the publication. In this respect, I am mindful that neither the appellant nor the Council have made any further submissions regarding the revised NPPF. However, in light of this re-consultation, I am satisfied that any references made to the revised NPPF within this decision would not be unreasonable to the parties.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises a detached two-storey dwelling located on the southern side of Cassiobury Park Avenue within an established residential area. The property features an existing two-storey rear extension as well as two rear dormer extensions which span across practically the full width of the house. The two neighbouring properties lie in close proximity to the shared eastern and western boundaries of the appeal site.
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6. The depth of the development across the full width of the property would be considerable and the resultant bulk to the rear of the dwelling, when viewed in conjunction with the existing rear extensions, would appear unduly excessive and would fail to harmonise with the dwelling as a whole. The scale of the proposed extension would fail to be sufficiently subservient and would therefore unbalance the appearance of the appeal property.
7. Furthermore, it is considered that the resultant profile of the appeal dwelling's rear elevation would appear awkwardly stepped due to the use of flat roofs for the dormers, the two-storey extension as well as for the proposed single-storey extension. This would contrast with the front of the property which has a visibly pitched roof and protruding front gable. I find the proposal would thus unreasonably harm the architectural character and design of the host building.
8. Whilst I note that the development would not be visible from the road and that vegetation along the eastern and western shared boundaries would offer some degree of screening, I find that it would still be visible from the neighbouring properties' upper floor windows as well as from their rear gardens.
9. The proposal would therefore harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. In light of this, the development would conflict with Policies SS1 and UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy, and the Watford Residential Design Guide 2016 which together seek to ensure developments are well-designed, proportional and do not harm their surrounding contexts.

Other Matters

10. The appellant contends the Officer Report contains errors and that the Council did not act proactively and positively, and that the proposal may not therefore have been properly assessed. However, whilst I acknowledge the appellant's clarifications and sympathise with the appellant's frustration in this regard, this has not had any significant bearing on my decision-making which has focussed on the planning merits of the proposal.
11. The appellant has emphasised the fact that the appeal dwelling gained planning permission for a single storey rear conservatory in 2020 (ref. 20/00329/FULH) which has not been implemented. However, as the previously approved extension only spanned across half the width of the property, it is not directly comparable to the current scheme. Similarly, the proposed development would be attached to an existing two-storey extension which differs significantly from the allowances afforded through the permitted development process. These points have therefore not been attributed any significant weight in the decision-making.
12. I also acknowledge that the proposal would benefit the living conditions of the current occupiers by allowing more internal space although I am not persuaded this outweighs the harm I have identified.
13. I recognise that the occupant of No.22 expressed support for the scheme, but I must assess the development by considering its effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, and have found that it would have an adverse impact. I have therefore not attributed any significant weight to this point.

Recommendation

14. The development would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
15. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR