
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2021

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 DECEMBER 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3282065
135 Ridge Lane, Watford, Herts WD17 4SX

- 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 Graeme Tearle against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00435/FULH, dated 23 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of part single, part double storey rear extension, front extension and new front and rear dormer projections.
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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 fully describes the details of the development than that given on the original planning application form. The appellant's appeal form also makes reference to the updated description.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached extended chalet style bungalow with flat roofed dormers to the front and rear and an attached garage to the side. It is located in a mature well-established residential area with a mixture of properties of varied styles and design set back from the road behind a front garden/driveway within relatively spacious landscaped plots, which add to the open and verdant character and appearance of the area.
5. The proposal involves the construction of a part two storey/part single storey front and rear extension. The front extension, including a front extension of the attached garage, would project forward in line with the existing front bay window and would be extended up over the porch to create a centrally positioned first floor dormer extension with a gabled pitched roof. The single storey flat roofed rear extension would project out about 5m from the rear elevation of the property and would be extended up to create a centrally

positioned first floor dormer extension with a gabled pitched roof. The proposal would also incorporate new additional front and rear pitched roofed dormers that would be inset from the edges and eaves of the roof and stepped down below the ridge line of the host property.

6. The appeal property is on a relatively spacious plot and as such the extensions would not appear overlarge, relative to the overall plot size. Furthermore, in elevational terms, I do not see the small additional pitched roofed dormers as proposed at the front and rear of the property nor the replacement of the existing pebble dash finish with a painted smooth render finish on all the walls as being materially harmful to the appearance of the property or undesirable in the streetscene in this suburban area.
7. Given the site's location and boundary treatment along the side and rear boundaries, the proposed part two storey/part single storey rear extension would only be visible over short distances from the adjacent properties. Although the proposed part two storey/part single storey extension would extend the rear of the appeal property, the degree of projection would not appear excessive due to the staggered built form along the rear of the properties on Ridge Lane. The rear extension would be seen in the context of the current varied architectural styles at the rear of the host property and surrounding properties and would project out broadly in line with the existing rear elevation of the adjacent chalet style bungalow at No. 133 Ridge Lane.
8. Against this backdrop, the scale, form and siting of the part two storey/part single storey rear extension would not look significantly out of place or excessive in relation to the built form of the host property and the adjacent properties. The overall scale and proportions of the rear extension set back from the site boundaries, together with use of matching materials and fenestrations would ensure that this part of the development would sit relatively unobtrusively against the built form of the host property. The proposed rear extension would therefore achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and as such would limit any significant adverse impacts on the street scene in the surrounding area.
9. The scale and form of the proposed part two storey/part single storey front extension built in line with the front of the main dwelling would nevertheless still be a significant addition relative to the main property. As such, although it would be set back and stepped down within the staggered built frontage along Ridge Lane, the proposed front extension, coupled with the awkward design and unsympathetic appearance of the central first floor dormer extension, would result in additional bulk at the front of the property that would be out of character with the more modest form and appearance of the host building.
10. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's position, where the proposed front extension would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Ridge Lane. The proposed front extension and central dormer extension, by virtue of their scale, siting and design, would fail to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property. As such, I consider that the proposed front extension and central dormer extension would result in incongruous and out-of-keeping additions 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 extensions has been carefully considered in order to take into account and makes improvement to the character and appearance of the host property and to minimise any impacts on the area. However, whilst the use of matching materials and fenestrations together with 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 proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It would be contrary with the overall aims of Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 and the Council's Residential Design Guide 2016. 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 not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that developments should seek to secure a high quality of design (paragraph 126) that are sympathetic to the local character (paragraph 130).

Other Matters

13. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the various residential properties within the surrounding area have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme. 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.
14. The appellant considers that the proposal would provide a sustainable form of development in accordance with the Framework. I have considered the various benefits put forward by the appellant that the proposal would bring arising from the scheme's 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

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

David Troy

INSPECTOR