



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2022

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/W/21/3281645

85B Gammons Lane, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 5HU

- 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 & Ms Clifford & Aquah against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00939/FULH, dated 18 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and area.

Reasons

3. The appeal proposal includes the addition of a rear dormer to a first-floor flat within a terraced property close to the junction of Ashby Road with Gammons Lane. Guidance on dormers within the Council's Residential Design Guide adopted 2014 and amended 2016 (RDG) includes that they must be in proportion to the size of the original roof. It further advises that dormers should not exceed half the height or width of the host roof, and that they should be set a minimum of 0.5m below the ridge-line and a minimum of 0.5m above the eaves.
4. The proposed dormer would exceed all of these guidelines, occupying nearly the full height and width of the main roofslope, and would further extend beyond the rear of the main roof over a two-storey outrigger projection. The resulting scale and bulk of the development would substantially alter and dominate the profile of the host roofslope. Moreover, the rear section of the dormer over the outrigger would project conspicuously above the height of this part of the building. As a consequence, I find that it would be a jarring and awkward addition which would detract from the character and appearance of the host building.
5. In addition, the appeal dwelling sits within a terrace of buildings of generally similar appearance, including to the rear where there is a consistent pattern of two-storey rear outrigger projections and prominent chimneys. Whether or not it would be possible for neighbouring properties in the terrace to carry out loft conversions with dormers, they have not done so, and there is presently a

consistent roofscape and distinctive rhythm to the group. The development would not be visible from Gammons Lane, but there would be some views of it from Ashby Road, as well as from the surrounding buildings and gardens. In these views, it would disrupt the regular pattern of the established roofline, and the effect would be particularly pronounced where the rear section of the dormer would rise above the height of the surrounding outrigger projections.

6. I note that the appellant advises that permission is sought because the appeal building contains two flats and therefore does not benefit from permitted development rights, but I must consider the proposal on its merits taking into account relevant guidance and policies of the development plan.
7. In this light and for the reasons above, I conclude that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host building and area. As a consequence, it would conflict with Policy UD1 of the Core Strategy 2006-31 which broadly seeks high quality design and which requires development to respect and enhance the local character of the area within which it is located. It would also be contrary to the specific guidance on dormers within the RDG, as well as more general guidance setting out that extensions should respect the character and scale of the host building.

Other Matters

8. I am sympathetic to the appellant's desire to provide additional space which I do not doubt could improve living conditions and facilitate home-working, and in this regard I note the appellant's comments regarding their current employment. However, the appellant indicates that the increase in usable floor area resulting from the proposal would be significantly above a suggested current shortfall against standards set out within the London Plan. I do not consider that these standards would be directly applicable given the location of the site outside of London. Nevertheless, I therefore have some doubt that the above benefits could only be realised through a dormer of the scale and design proposed, and I do not find that they are sufficient to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the host building and area.

Conclusion

9. 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