



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2022

by Eleni Randle BSc (hons) MSc FRICS FAAV MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th January 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3286149

30 Beechpark Way, Watford, Herts, UK, WD17 3TY

- 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 and Mrs Andrew and Jo Crocket against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00943/FULH dated 16 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is two storey side extension together with internal alterations.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact of the proposal upon the host dwelling and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a two storey, link detached, dwelling on a corner plot at the end of a cul-de-sac as can be seen from the submitted plans. At the time of my site visit I found the appeal site to be prominent in its location due to its location off a central area of green open space highly visible upon entering the circular part of Beechpark Way. The space to the side of the host dwelling, upon which the extension is proposed, I find to contribute to the general spaciousness which is characteristic for the area.
4. The Residential Design Guide 2014 (amended 2016) (RDG) is clear that maintaining these characteristics is key to respecting the existing street scene and that where regularity and uniformity do not exist, each proposal will be considered on its individual circumstances/merits. The development within the area is notably uniform and is based upon a generic house design.
5. I note that there is one property, no. 45 Beechpark Way, which now benefits from a double storey side extension. The appellant has submitted further details and plans relating to that property and places reliance on this example on the basis that it could have been objected to by the Council on the basis of not being in keeping with the surrounding area. Despite this, I have no evidence as to the basis of determination, or reasoning for the decision made, before me which limits the weight I can place on the appellant's contention.
6. I note, from the submitted photographs, my site visit and also the submitted plans that the design for no. 45 Beechpark Way was, I find, much better

balanced than the proposal before me and that it is not as prominent upon entering this part of Beechpark Way due to the central trees on the open space. The proposal at no. 45 Beechpark Way was also granted prior to the current Local Plan documents which are the basis for the determination of this appeal. As result of these factors I attribute limited weight to the proposal at no. 45 Beechpark Way.

7. The proposal would be set back from the front building line by 1m but when viewed from the front elevation I find that the proposal would not present as subordinate, mainly as a result of the lack of set down from the main roof ridge. The overall proposal I find, as a result of bulk, scale and massing would not be a sympathetic addition to the host property. It would look out of proportion when considering the overall balance of the proposal in relation to the existing front gable projection, which would then look offset, as result of the proposed gable extended over the extension.
8. Taking into account that the host dwelling is linked detached I find this interrupt the pattern of development resulting in a wide, continuous, block of development with no visual break in the ridge line which would be uncharacteristic. This would result in the appeal site being visually dominant from much of Beechpark Way, particularly upon entering the area within which it is located, as well as being out of character with the street scene itself due to the overall architectural uniformity found.
9. I find that the proposal would have a poor relationship with (and would unbalance) the host property. This would result in a bulk of built form which I find would negatively impact upon the character of the area and which would be visually prominent having a negative impact upon the appearance of the surrounding area.
10. The proposal would be contrary to Watford's Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy 2006 2013 (CS) Policy SS1 which places emphasis on making sure that new development protects and enhances the character of the area and CS Policy UD1 which requires that development respect and enhance the local character of the area within which it is located. The proposal is also contrary to the RDG which requires that extensions respect the character and scale of the host building as well as respecting the scale and character of properties within the street scene as a whole.
11. The Council's refusal reason is assumed to have made reference to paragraph numbers from the previous Framework and not the latest Framework. The proposal would also be contrary to National Planning Policy Framework 2021 paragraph 126 which notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, paragraph 130 a) which aims to ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area and c) which seeks to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

12. I note the appellant's letter to the Council, dated 13 September 2021, which raises concern with regard to how the application was handled and a commentary regarding potential alterations to the scheme which the appellant considers could have overcome the basis for refusal. Concerns regarding the application process are outside the scope of this appeal.

13. With regard to potential alterations, such as a crowned front gable, it only falls to consider the plans which upon which the Council made their decision on their own merits within this appeal. A lack of objection from neighbouring properties and third parties is a neutral consideration.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons outlined above, and taking account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Eleni Randle

INSPECTOR