
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2022

by R Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3286250
43 Chestnut Walk, Watford WD24 6NS

- 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 Asad Khan against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00406/FULH, dated 18 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 8 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of front porch, single storey rear, part double storey rear extension and loft conversion (retrospective).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for erection of front porch, single storey rear, part double storey rear extension and loft conversion at 43 Chestnut Walk, Watford, WD24 6NS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00406/FULH, dated 18 March 2021, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: A021HS-V3-5 Rev 3; A021HS-V3-6 Rev 3; A021HS-V3-7 Rev 3; A021HS-V3-8 Rev 3; A021HS-V3-9 Rev 3; A021HS-V3-10 Rev 3; A021HS-V3-11 Rev 3; A021HS-V3-13 Rev 3; 021HS-V3-15 Rev 3; and A021HS-V3-16 Rev 3.

Preliminary Matter

2. Aside from the loft conversion (rear dormer and 3no. front rooflights) all of the proposed works have been granted planning permission by the Council under application ref. 20/00944/FULH. I saw on my site visit that the works described in the banner heading above have been completed and the planning application was made retrospectively. Accordingly, I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed loft conversion (rear dormer and 3no. front rooflights) on the character and appearance of the host house and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. No.43 Chestnut Walk (No.43) is a two-storey, semi-detached house. To the rear, No.43 has a gable extension of a depth of around 3m from the original

rear elevation. The pitch of the gable extends well above the eaves of the original roof and the rear dormer extension wraps around this.

5. The guidance in the Council's Residential Design Guide (adopted 2014, amended 2016) (RDG) is that a dormer must be in proportion to the size of the original roof. It should not exceed half the height of the roof (measured from the eaves to the ridge) and should not be more than half the width of the existing roof. The original roof of No.43 is a traditional, fairly shallow pitch roof. The dormer is almost full width, offset only slightly from the flank elevation of the house and extends up to the chimney stack on the party wall with its adjoining neighbour at No.41 Chestnut Walk. It is around 2.3m in height extending almost to the ridge of the roof. The dormer all but fills the original roof plane and there is, therefore, a clear conflict with the guidance in the RDG.
6. However, the guidance in the RDG should be considered in the context of the individual circumstances of a site. The gable extension, principally due to its height, already significantly increases the massing to the rear of the house and would (on its own) dominate the original roof form. The dormer wraps around this and although it would further increase the proportions and massing, I found it appears a well designed composition subordinate to the gable. It does not appear disproportionately large or cause harm to the character and appearance of the host house. To the contrary, I found the extended house to have an attractive, contemporary appearance.
7. I saw on my site visit that the cheek of the dormer is just visible from Chestnut Walk between No.43 and its non-attached neighbour at No.45 Chestnut Walk. The dormer and gable extension is also seen as you turn the corner into Woodside and the rear elevation of houses on the north side of Chestnut Walk become visible. The dormer is not however particularly prominent, from either vantage point, nor does it appear an incongruous addition. Consequently, it does not cause harm to the character or appearance of the surrounding area.
8. It therefore accords with the overall aims of Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy 2006-31 (2013) which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that development and residential extensions are of a high quality design that complement the host house and respect and enhance the local character of the area. The proposal would also accord with guidance in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework that developments should seek to secure a high quality of design, sympathetic to the local character.

Conditions

9. Because the proposed development has already been built, it is not necessary to impose the standard time limit for implementation or a condition requiring the materials used to match those existing. In the interests of certainty and clarity, a condition is however required to specify the approved drawings.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR