



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2022

by Mrs Chris Pipe BA(Hons), DipTP, MTP, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/22/3290603

160 Queens Road, Watford WD17 2NT

- 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 Imran Rathore against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01495/FUL dated 8 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as single storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to the proposed loft conversion with rear dormer.
2. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the single storey rear extension. Planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension at 160 Queens Road, Watford WD17 2NT in accordance with the terms of the application, 21/01495/FUL dated 8 October 2021, and the plans submitted with it.

Procedural Matter

3. At the time of my site visit, the single storey rear extension was in place. Whilst the application form did not make it clear that part of the proposal had been carried out, the Council's Delegated Report confirmed that part of the proposal had been commenced. The proposal before me is in part retrospective and I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the loft conversion with rear dormer on the character and appearance of the conservation area and the appeal property.
5. The Council considered the effect of the single storey rear extension during the determination of the application and on balance considered that the extension would not harm the character and appearance of the property or the conservation area, from the information I have before me I do not disagree.

Reasons

6. The site is within a predominantly residential area within the Estcourt Conservation Area. In accordance with the statutory duty imposed by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; I am

- required to have special regard to the effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of the area.
7. Neither party have provided any substantive details relating to the significance of the conservation area however during my site visit I noted that the immediate area was characterised by predominantly two-storey properties which have a continuity in terms of roof types including the two storey outrigger projections. Whilst some of the original features appear to have been lost, the harmony in built form adds to the significance of the area.
 8. The scale and design of the proposed dormer would introduce a prominent form of development in the immediate area covering the majority of the roof and exceeding the roof ridge of the outrigger. The dormer would be dominant and incongruous in the streetscene and would be a bulky addition to the appeal property.
 9. My attention has been drawn by the appellant to similar developments, however substantive details have not been provided to allow me to assess these schemes against the proposal before me. Notwithstanding this I did not observe any similar dormers on properties near the appeal site. The design before me does not appear to be a common feature and I am not persuaded that this form of development would conserve or enhanced the area. In any event each development must be considered on its individual merits, and I have reached my conclusion based on the individual merit of the appeal proposal.
 10. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework) states that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposal on such an asset. This is irrespective of the level of harm. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification based on Framework paragraph 200
 11. I find that the proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm of the significance of the Conservation Area. Paragraph 202 of the Framework states that where a development leads to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asst this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. I find that there are no public benefits which would outweigh the harm caused by the proposed development.
 12. The proposed development would be an unsympathetic addition to the host property and immediate area. I find that the proposed development would diminish unacceptably the character and appearance of the conservation area and would be out of keeping with the appeal property.
 13. There is conflict with Policies UD1 and UD2 of the Watford Local Plan, Part 1 – Core Strategy 2006-31 (2013) which seek amongst other things to ensure development is of high standard of design responding positively to the character of an area ensuring the historic environment is conserved.
 14. There is conflict with the Watford Borough Council, Residential Design Guide (2016) which seeks to ensure that the design and scale of a dormer is appropriate to the host property and the surrounding area.

15. There is also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) which seeks amongst other things to ensure developments are of good design appropriate and sympathetic to their surroundings and that the historic environment is protected.

Conclusion and Conditions

16. I find the proposed single storey rear extension is clearly severable both physically and functionally from the proposed loft conversion with rear dormer. I conclude that the appeal should succeed in relation to the single storey rear extension. However, in relation to the proposed loft conversion with rear dormer, the appeal should be dismissed.
17. In respect of the single storey rear extension conditions relating to standard time limit for commencement of development, plans to be adhered to and materials to be used are not relevant or necessary as the extension is complete.

C Pipe

INSPECTOR