



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 October 2022

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/22/3303448

249 Hempstead Road, WATFORD, Hertfordshire, WD17 3HH

- 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 & Mrs Ashok Samson & Francis Josephine Dinakaran & Thomas against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00342/FULH, dated 14 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 5 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as the erection of a ground floor front extension, right side extension, infill to left side corner and garage conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. There appears to be an inconsistency between the proposed floor plan shown on the site plan (submitted drawing 249-WR-02P) and the proposed front elevation as shown on drawing 249-WR-09P. The floor plan shows the proposed garage as extending rearwards to a point close to the front door, such that one of the pair of side windows, currently existing either side of the door, would be lost. The front elevation drawing shows the existing balanced front door and window configuration as unchanged, with a canopy over. From the information before me, it remains unclear which drawing is intended to be the correct one. In any case, it has not affected my overall conclusion.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the area around Hempstead Road and Glen Way.

Reasons

4. No 249 is a detached house situated on a corner plot at the junction of Hempstead Road and Glen Way. The front door and front gate of the house face Hempstead Road itself and this view of the house is notated on submitted plans as the 'front elevation'. Vehicular access is from Glen Way and the gable end of the house is referred to as the 'left side elevation'. The house is generally rectangular in shape, though it has a shallow extension to the left side elevation beside a projecting garage. The house and garage have pitched roofs with gable ends, while the extension has a simple mono-pitch roof.

5. The proposed extensions would involve the construction of an infill forward projection of the existing extension to correspond to the current front elevation of the garage. The existing garage would be converted to habitable accommodation, and the enlarged side extension would have a crown roof. A new garage would be erected to the east of the extension, projecting beyond the front elevation to a point close to the boundary with Hempstead Road.
6. Policy UD1 of the Council's Local Plan (Core Strategy) (LP) indicates that new development should respect and enhance the local character of the area in which it is located. The Council's Residential Design Guide (RDG) lays down principles relating to residential extensions and alterations. In particular, extensions must respect the character and scale of the host building with regard, amongst other things to its size and shape and the roof form and pitch. Extensions should also respect the street scene while projections forward of a predominant building line should be avoided. On corner plots, a ground floor extension should be set in 2m from the boundary from the street and not affect the street-scene, while developing forward of the front elevation of an existing building will not generally be acceptable.
7. The Council contends that the proposed front/side extension facing Glen Way, owing to its significant width and bulk, would appear dominant on the Glen Way elevation and would fail to respect the proportions of the host building. Furthermore, the crown form and shallower pitch of the extension roof would diverge noticeably from the main roof of the dwelling, which would emphasise the discordant nature of the proposal.
8. The appellants contend that the character of the surrounding area is predominantly made up of houses of eclectic design and varying sizes. They also contend that the Council's description of the proposed front/side extension facing Glen Way is incorrect in terms of its width and forward projection. Moreover, the front/side extension would have limited visibility within the street scene due to existing matured hedgerow, brick wall and trees along the boundary adjacent to Glen Way. Finally, the overall composition is considered to have a balanced and proportioned appearance which would be neutral to the existing character and appearance to the host property and local context. On this basis, it would not be obtrusive, dominant or incongruous.
9. No 249 sits on a narrow corner plot at the junction of Hempstead Road, which is a busy main thoroughfare, and Glen Way, which is a quieter residential road. The opposite corner plot is significantly larger and the dwelling on that plot is set much further back from its boundary with Hempstead Road. Dwellings along this part of Hempstead Road are, characteristically, set well back from the road boundary. No 249 and the neighbouring house to the north appear from the road as more modern houses on smaller plots.
10. The proposed new garage would be sited between the current front elevation and the 1.7 metre high brick wall boundary with Hempstead Road, leaving a gap of only around 1 metre. From this prominent and somewhat incongruous forward position, it would, therefore, be highly visible in the street scene as an uncharacteristic and dominant feature when viewed from the public realm to the front of the house.
11. With regard to the extension at the side of the house, the gable-ended garage, which currently complements the main gable at the southern end of the house, would be removed to a position at the front of the house, where the gable end

would be a less coherent visual feature. Moreover, the side extension would now have a crown roof, unsympathetic to the roof styles in the main house and garage, and resulting in a complex and discordant roof appearance at ground-floor level when viewed from Glen Way. In addition, the crown roof would not respect the context of neighbouring dwellings on Glen Way, where gable elevations facing the road are characteristic features.

12. With regard to the proposed extension on the northern side of the house, the Council has indicated that it would appear subordinate to the existing dwelling, and concludes that this element of the scheme would not, therefore, cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the property. I concur with the main thrust of this view concerning this element on its own, though the use of a crown roof above this element would add to the discordant roof designs that would result from the extensions at the other end of the house.
13. In conclusion, I find that the combination of extensions and new garage at the appeal property would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area around Hempstead Road and Glen Way. The garage would be a prominent and uncharacteristic feature at the front of the house in very close proximity to the front boundary. The combination of the proposed side extension and new garage would add a wide and dominant feature to the view of the house from Glen Way, which would have a complex and somewhat uncoordinated overall roof design and would fail to respect or enhance the form and character of the host property.
14. On the basis of the above, the proposed extensions would conflict with Policy UD1 of the LP and with guidance on extensions given in the RDG. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR