



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: 31ST October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/22/3303120

46 and 48 Parkgate Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD24 7BP

- 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 Efford and Langdale against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00658/FULH, dated 18 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 29 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is roof alterations to create a loft extension with dormer to rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for roof alterations to create a loft extension with dormer to rear at 46 and 48 Parkgate Road, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD24 7BP, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00658/FULH, dated 18 May 2022, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the roof alterations on the character and appearance of the area around Parkgate Road.

Reasons

3. Nos 46 and 48 are mid-terraced properties situated on the eastern side of Parkgate Road. The proposed roof alterations and rear dormers have already been constructed in their entirety and the planning application therefore takes the form of a retrospective application. There is a Lawful Development Certificate (LDC) in existence at both properties which indicates that roof alterations and rear dormers could be constructed as permitted development.
4. The appeal properties are brick built with new tiled roofs. The dormers are flat-roofed with tiled cheeks and they extend over most of the rear roof slope and the roof slopes of the rear outriggers at the properties. In common with other houses along this and neighbouring roads, there is a parapet dividing the properties that extends above the roof slope and a chimney at each end of the pair.
5. 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. In addition, Section 8.12 of the RDG sets out the limits for development for dormers on residential dwellings with regard to size, position and harmony.

6. The Council contends that the proposed rear roof dormer extensions do not conform to the plans submitted with the LDC application. On this basis, they would, therefore, be subject to Council adopted planning policy and guidance. The Council considers that they would not be subservient within the roof-scape by virtue of their overly large scale and massing nor would they be in keeping with the character and appearance of the properties or the surrounding area. The Council also contends that an increase in height of the roof ridge to accommodate a roof dormer extension is unacceptable on mid-terrace properties.
7. The appellants contend that the roof alterations and extensions conform to the plans approved with the issue of the LDC. Moreover, each property in the terrace has a dividing boundary parapet and no ridgeline exceeds the parapets. The ridgeline detail at the appeal properties is not detrimental to the neighbouring properties as the line is not consistent and is broken by the chimneys and varying levels of the properties along the street. The roof slopes and ridgeline are, therefore, not out of keeping with the street scene or the properties themselves. Finally, the appellants point to a number of roof alterations and rear dormer extensions in the vicinity that are similar to those at the appeal properties.
8. The area around Parkgate Road is characterised by brick-built terraced houses with a mix of slate- and clay-tiled roofs. The roof-slopes are typically split by raised parapets and shared chimneys. I have noted the other examples of roof alterations identified by the appellants, though I have no detailed information about whether they have been subject of an LDC or planning permission. Moreover, the situation of some of these examples are not sufficiently similar to consider them as precedents for the appeal proposal.
9. With regard to roof height, the appellants have submitted photographic evidence to show the maximum roof ridge heights before and after the roof alterations, and it would appear that there is minimal difference in roof ridge height as a result of the development. In any event, the plans submitted with the LDC application, which were agreed by the Council, appear identical in terms of roof-ridge height to those submitted with the current proposal, with any minimal variations having insignificant actual effect on the visual impact of the developments in the street scene. Moreover, from the information before me and from my site visit, the plans also appear to match the roof alterations and dormer extensions as built, with regard to roof height and set-in/set-back from the eaves.
10. In the light of the above, I conclude that the roof alterations and dormers as built do essentially conform to the plans approved with the issue of the LDC, subject to reasonable building tolerances, and that the provisions of the LP and RDG are not, therefore, relevant for consideration in this particular case. In the event that there had been significant non-conformity, I concur with the Council that the dormers would not be subservient within the roof-scape by virtue of their overly large scale and massing nor would they be in keeping with the character and appearance of the properties or the surrounding area.

However, the existence of the LDC and the general conformity of this scheme with it overrides these opinions.

11. The Council also contends that an increase in height of the roof ridge to accommodate a roof dormer extension is unacceptable on mid-terrace properties. However, as stated above, from the photographic and other drawn evidence before me and from my site visit, it would appear that there has been minimal, if any, increase in the height of the ridge. Moreover, given the minor variations in roof ridge heights along the road and the visual impact of the mid-roof parapets and chimneys in the surrounding area, there is no significant adverse impact on the appearance of the roofs in terms of size and scale, as now altered, in the street scene as a whole.
12. Given the existence of the LDC as a fall-back situation, I am satisfied that, even if subsequent detailed measurements indicated minor infringement of the approved plans, such an infringement would be so minimal as to have no effective adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area around Parkside Road over and above the impact of the LDC scheme.
13. Finally, I note the comments of the inspector in the earlier scheme as quoted by the Council (ref: APP/Y1945/D/21/3275038), but there would appear to be differences between that scheme and the current appeal proposal, particularly in terms of the increase in height of the roof ridges, and I have, in any case, considered this development on its own merits.
14. In conclusion, I find that the roof alterations and rear dormers, as constructed, do not significantly vary from the approved LDC scheme and, given the existence of this scheme as a relevant and reasonable fall-back situation in any case, the current proposal as built is not harmful to the character or appearance of the area around Parkside Road. In the light of this and taking into consideration the fall-back situation, I find that the scheme does not conflict with Policy UD1 of the LP and does not effectively conflict with guidance in the RDG.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR