The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 November 2022

by J Wellstead BA(Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/22/3301720
49 Oxhey Road, Hertfordshire, Watford, WD19 4QG

- 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 M Patel against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
- The application Ref 22/00153/FULH, dated 3 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 April 2022.
- The development proposed is roof alterations comprising hip to gable and 2 rear dormers.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has advised that the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 (WLP) was adopted on 17 October 2022. Consequently, I give the policies within that plan full weight in my deliberations and note that Policy SS1 in the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 is replaced by SS1.1 in the WLP, UD1 in the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31 is replaced by QD6.2 and QD6.4 in the WLP.

Main Issue(s)

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the existing property and the wider area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Oxhey Road is a residential street predominantly comprising two-storey detached properties, although there are examples of other styles of detached properties including chalet houses or bungalows. The two-storey detached properties along the eastern end of the street are similar in style and design, featuring hipped roofs. This uniformity of design makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The pattern of development in the immediate area is predominantly uniform in terms of layout following the clearly defined, uniform building lines alongside Oxhey road.

5. The appeal property No 49 Oxhey Road is a two-storey detached property with converted roof space. It is sited within close proximity to Oxhey Road which gives it a prominent position in the street scene. The site is tightly bounded by adjacent residential properties, Oxhey Road to the front of the site and school grounds to the rear. The front of the property is largely unaltered, with the

existing hipped roof contributing towards the uniformity of the roofscape of neighbouring dwellings.

6. The proposed roof conversion would include a hip to gable extension. The existing roof ridge height would remain the same but would be changed in form from hipped to a gable at each end. Given that the prevailing roofscape along Oxhey Road is composed of hipped roofs, with the only exceptions being a small number of semi-detached properties towards the western end of the street and Sheriden Road, the proposed hip to gable extension would unduly interrupt the otherwise uniform roofscape, introducing an incongruous feature within the established street scene.

7. I have also taken No 39A and 45 Oxhey Road, as well as properties in Green Lane and Nancy Downs, into account when assessing the existing character and appearance of the area. Due to their location, form and scale they exercise only a limited influence on the existing street scene. Their presence would not therefore outweigh the harm that I have identified in respect of the proposed alterations and extensions to the roof of the appeal property.

8. The appellant has drawn to my attention paragraph 8.11 of the Watford Borough Council Residential Design Guide (amended 2016) (RDG). There are no exceptional circumstances before me that make it possible to extend the roof from hip to gable in this instance. Roof treatments in the immediate area are predominantly hipped formation in appearance, so the proposal would alter the plane of an existing roof slope which directly fronts onto Oxhey Road. The proposed gable-ended extensions would not be consistent with the detailing of the host property and as the proposed proportions are significant in size and form, they would contrast significantly with the pitched roofscapes of the immediate area.

9. The highest part of the extensions proposed to the roof of the property, which includes new dormer windows to the rear, would be set below the main roof ridge line and therefore subservient in this respect. However, the bulk of the two large dormers would extend across the majority of the rear roof slope, and in doing so would unduly dominate the rear roof plane, resulting in a form of development which would not appear to complement the design and appearance of the existing building. The multiple dormers would also exceed the recommended maximum of half the width of the existing roof as set out in the RDG.

10. Although harm would be localised given the position of the proposed dormers to the rear of the property, it would still be visible from adjacent properties and also the school grounds. I accept that the two dormers, although large in proportion, would not be visible from the road and thus would not affect the street scene. However, this would not outweigh the harms outlined above.

11. I conclude that the development would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the existing property and the wider area. As such. there would be conflict with Policies SS1.1, QD6.2 and QD6.4 of the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038, Policies 8.2, 8.3, 8.11 in the RDG, and also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks well-designed places. These policies and guidance require extensions to respect the character and scale of the host building and also be appropriate for the street scene.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, having regard to the development plan as a whole, including all other relevant material considerations, the appeal is dismissed.

J Wellstead

INSPECTOR