
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 January 2023

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/22/3308681

4 Fuller Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD24 6QQ

- 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 S McGuane against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00844/FULH, dated 28 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of part single and part double storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have used the Council's description of the development in reaching my decision as it more fully describes the details of the development than that given on the original planning application form. The appellant's appeal form also makes reference to the updated description.
3. Since the determination of the application the Council has adopted the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 (October 2022) (LP). The Council has advised that Policies UD1 and SS1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-2031 have now been replaced by Policies QD6.2, QD6.4 and SS1.1 of the LP. I have therefore considered the development against the relevant policies of the LP.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed first floor rear extension on:
 - (i) the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and
 - (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties at Nos. 2 and 6 Fuller Road with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal property consists of a two storey semi-detached dwelling with a single storey flat roofed extension and outbuilding at the rear. It is located in a mature well-established residential area characterised by semi-detached and terraced properties set back from the road behind a front garden/driveway.

Although there is some variation, the surrounding semi-detached properties are of comparable scale and form with distinctive two storey front projecting gables and traditional hipped tiled roofs.

6. The proposal would entail the construction of a part single storey and part two storey rear extension that would project out about 4.3m from the rear elevation of the property. The single storey rear extension extends across the full width of the dwelling. The proposed first floor rear extension would be set in from the side boundary with No. 6 Fuller Road and extends out with a crowned hipped tiled roof in line with the ridge height of the existing roof over the main house.
7. The appeal property is on a relatively spacious plot and as such the extensions would not appear overlarge, relative to the overall plot size. The scale and form of the proposed first floor rear extension would nevertheless still be a significant addition relative to the main property. As such, although set in from the side boundary of the site, the proposed first floor extension would result in substantial bulk at the rear and over the main dwelling that would be out of character with the more modest form and appearance of the host building.
8. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's prominent position, where the proposed first floor rear extension would be visible from a number of public vantage points along St Albans Road that runs along the rear of the site. The proposed first floor rear extension, by virtue of its scale, siting and design, would fail to achieve an appropriate degree of subordination to the host property and would detract from its architectural integrity. As such, I consider that the proposed first floor rear extension would result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that would cause unacceptable harm to the host property and the area.
9. I have considered the appellant's arguments that the design and layout of the proposed first floor rear extension has been carefully considered in order to minimise any adverse impacts on the host property and the area. However, whilst the use of matching materials and fenestrations would assist in integrating the proposal with the host property and the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above.
10. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed first floor rear extension would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. It would be contrary to the overall aims of Policies QD6.2 and QD6.4 of the LP and the Council's Residential Design Guide 2016. These policies and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development and residential extensions are of a high quality design that complement the host property, relate well to the local context and make a positive contribution towards the local character and identity of the area.

Living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties

11. The proposed first floor rear extension would be located adjacent to the two storey semi-detached properties at Nos. 2 and 6 Fuller Road (Nos. 2 and 6), to the south-east and north-west of the site, respectively. The two storey semi-detached properties at Nos. 8 and 10 Fuller Road to the north-west of the site are set further back within their individual plots than Nos. 4 and 6.

12. The adjacent unextended property at No. 2 is set back at a right angle from the side elevation of No. 4. The proposed first floor rear extension would be set back from the nearest ground floor windows to the habitable rooms at the rear of No. 2 and would be separated by an access driveway, outbuildings, vegetation and a high close boundary fence running along the common shared boundary between the properties.
13. The adjoining property at No. 6 has a conservatory leading out to a patio area and enclosed garden area at the rear. The proposed first floor rear extension would be set in from the nearest ground floor windows to the habitable rooms at the rear of No. 6 and would be separated by a high close boundary fence and a line of mature conifers trees running along the boundary between the properties.
14. Whilst I accept that there would be some impact from the development, given the overall scale, design and layout of the proposed first floor rear extension, set in, together with the boundary treatment and the separation distance between the properties, I consider that the proposed first floor rear extension would not significantly dominate the views to cause an overbearing effect and an unacceptable sense of enclosure at the rear of Nos. 2 and 6.
15. The outlook at the rear of No. 2 is already toward the high boundary fence, vegetation and the two storey side elevation of No. 4 and the appeal site is separated by the existing access driveway, garden area and outbuildings at the rear of No. 2. The outlook at the rear of No. 6 is already toward the high boundary fence, line of mature conifers trees and the blank side elevation of the single storey extension at the rear of No. 4 together with the two storey side elevation of the adjacent property at No. 8.
16. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed first floor rear extension would not result in an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties at Nos. 2 and 6 Fuller Road with particular regard to outlook. It would be consistent with the overall aims of Policy SS1.1 of the LP and the Council's Residential Design Guide 2016. This policy and guidance, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development and residential extensions make a positive contribution to high quality design and do not adversely affect the level of amenity enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

17. I have noted the other developments in the area drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, the two storey extensions built at the rear of the properties along Fuller Road have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme and were built some time ago in a different policy context. The various extensions to the properties in the surrounding area relate to a different scale and form of development and have different locational characteristics. In any event, each proposal falls to be assessed primarily on its own merits and I am unaware of the full circumstances associated with these other cases. I therefore accord them limited weight as precedents in this case.
18. I have considered the appellant's comments regarding the lack of formal objections from the local neighbours to the appeal proposal. Whilst this maybe so, this does not preclude the proper planning assessment of the impact of the

proposal on the host property and the area and is not a determinative factor on its own.

19. I note the appellant's comments regarding the various benefits arising from the proposal including the scheme's high quality design and meeting the needs of the appellant's family. While I have given them some weight, these benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified. For all these reasons, there are no other material considerations to outweigh the development plan conflicts identified.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR