



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 February 2023

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/22/3313212

12 Garston Drive, Watford, WD25 9LB

- 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 Suresh Naidu against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01152/FULH, dated 28 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a new front porch, first floor side extension, part ground floor rear extension and first floor rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to a new front porch and a part ground floor rear extension and first floor rear extension and planning permission is granted for a new front porch and a part ground floor rear extension and first floor rear extension at 12 Garston Drive, Watford, WD25 9LB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/01152/FULH, dated 28 September 2022, subject to the following conditions:-
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: AT1025/001/GD Rev A; AT1025/002/GD Rev A; AT1025/003/GD; AT1025/005/GD Rev B; AT1025/006GD Rev B.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building, other than where indicated on the plans referred to in condition 2) in respect of the proposed porch and the existing garage.
2. Insofar as it relates to the first floor side extension, the appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. The development plan includes policies QD6.2 and QD6.4 in the Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 which together seek to ensure that new buildings are well designed and visually attractive. In particular, policy QD6.2 requires that the scale and massing of proposed buildings will need to relate to the local context and policy QD6.4 requires that the proportions of new buildings need to be appropriate to the

existing or emerging character of the area. The Watford Residential Design Guide (2016) and national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework also seek to encourage high quality design.

4. The appeal site comprises a two storey detached dwelling which appears to date from the inter-war period. Garston Drive has mainly detached and semi-detached dwellings built in the same period. Many have been extended over the years but the most successful extensions are those in which the main hipped roofs and projecting gables are retained and remain as the principal features typical of that period. In recent years the appeal dwelling has been fully rendered and this, together with the attached flat roof garage, gives it a more contemporary appearance. However, it retains its L-shaped form, main hipped main roof and projecting gable which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene.
5. The proposed development comprises two main elements, a rear part ground and first floor extension and a side first floor extension, in addition to a small porch extension. I have noted that the Council has not objected to the porch extension and as its design would match that of the existing garage and would introduce cedarwood cladding which would bring some relief to the existing render, this would be acceptable.
6. The proposed rear extension would extend across the width of the original part of the house, projecting to the rear from the existing wall at first floor by some 5.1 to 5.6m. It would have a crown roof with a lower, slightly projecting gabled roof. Whilst the rear extension would be large, this is a large plot which is surrounded by other large plots and dwellings. The depth of the projection to the rear would not exceed that of the existing dwelling and it would not be unduly excessive in scale. At my visit I could see that the property is surrounded by high hedges. The scale of the extension and the crown roof would not, therefore, be readily apparent in views from the street or from neighbouring properties. I find then that the proposed rear extension would be acceptable and would accord with the policies referred to above.
7. However, the width of the proposed side extension at some 4.5m would be greater than both the widths of the projecting gable and the recessed part of the dwelling and as such would be disproportionate to the scale of the dwelling. It would sit flush with the main wall of the projecting gable and the main ridge would continue above the extension.
8. The appellant has said that the alignment with the main wall would enable the new space to be a useable addition but I am not persuaded that there is no alternative, more visually appropriate means of providing additional accommodation. He has also pointed out that this would create a more symmetrical design but in this style of house, symmetry is not a key feature of the front elevation. Rather, it is the L-shaped form and prominence of the projecting gable that form the basis of the design. Despite the recess of the right hand part of the existing elevation by some 4m from the projecting gable, the size, scale, form and siting of this extension would severely diminish the prominence of the gabled projection which should remain the dominant feature of the dwelling. This proposal has failed to overcome the Council's concerns regarding a previous scheme which was refused for the same reason.

9. The size, scale, form and siting of this extension would, therefore, significantly harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area. It would be contrary to the development plan policies referred to earlier.

Conclusion and conditions

10. As the porch and rear extension are clearly separate elements from the side extension, I shall issue a split decision. In addition to the standard commencement condition, a condition is necessary requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans (insofar as it relates to those elements only), in order to provide certainty. A condition requiring matching external materials (other than the porch and garage) is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area.
11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, insofar as it relates to the porch and rear extension only. Insofar as it relates to the side extension, given the significant harm that would arise to the character and appearance of the dwelling and the area, the appeal should be dismissed. There are no material considerations that would justify determining the appeal otherwise.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector