



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2023

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/23/3320592

24 Cassiobury Park Avenue, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 7LB

- 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 and Mrs Patel against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01422/FULH dated 7 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is a two storey rear extension, demolition of existing garage and construction of a new store at reduced width of the existing garage, alterations to the front fenestration to include a dormer window and extension of the roof above the new store and increase in ridge height.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property comprises an asymmetrically designed, detached, part one and a half and part two storey dwelling. The one and a half storey part of the dwelling has a hipped roof and appears subservient to the main two storey element, which has a prominent gable-front. The dwelling has an attached single storey garage.
 4. It is located within the Cassiobury Park Estate, which in this area largely comprises detached dwellings, modest in size, set back from the road behind low walls and front gardens and/or parking areas. The presence of street trees, front gardens and glimpses through to large rear gardens provides for a pleasant green and spacious character.
 5. The appeal property is a non-designated heritage asset and it is distinguished by a number of features, including its modest scale, prominent gable, asymmetry, half-timbering, decorative brickwork, distinctive and intricately designed roof, casement windows, projecting eaves, a hipped porch cover on timber brackets above the front door, and two large, prominent and decorative chimneys.
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6. Like those of a number of other dwellings along Cassiobury Park, the architectural features of the appeal property combine to make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Indeed, the appeal property and many of its neighbours comprise period dwellings that, together, provide for an attractive sense of the area's early to mid-20th Century heritage.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) recognises heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and requires them to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (Paragraph 189). In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, the Framework requires a balanced judgement, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
8. Whilst the appellant's heritage statement considers the appeal property to be of low (if any) overall significance, taking the above into account I consider that its overall appearance results in it making a notable positive contribution to local character.
9. The proposed development would result in the loss of the appeal property's modest scale and asymmetrical design. The harm arising from this would, I find, be exacerbated as a result of the loss of distinctive period features, including the replacement of the porchway and the replacement of the attractive period chimney with a chimney that would appear disconnected from, rather than relate well to, the redeveloped roof.
10. Further to the above, the scale of the development proposed and notably, the raising of the ridge height and the introduction of an overly complex and bulky roofscape, would result in the proposal failing to appear subordinate to the host dwelling. The proposal would overwhelm the modest size and features of the appeal property and would result in a dwelling that would appear unduly dominant in its surroundings. This would be to the harm of the identified qualities of the surrounding area.
11. Taken together, I find that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the NPPF and to Watford Local Plan (2022) 2021-2028 Policies QD6.1, QD6.2, QD6.4, HE7.1 and HE7.3, which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Other Matters

12. In support of the proposal, the appellant draws attention to other developments elsewhere in the vicinity. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate that any of these examples comprise development so similar to the proposal before me as to provide for direct comparison and notwithstanding this, I have found that the proposed development would result in harm and hence the decision below.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR