

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 November 2023

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15.12.2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/23/3330324

10 Langwood Gardens, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 4PD

- 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 Neil Chakrabarti against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00444/FULH, dated 17 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 11 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is a roof extension over an existing single storey side extension, approval 18/01148/FULH, to include a loft room and front and rear dormers.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the house and the local area.

Reasons

3. 10 Langwood Gardens is a 1½ storey bungalow on a leafy suburban cul-de-sac of other bungalows. In its position at the end of the street it forms a focal point in views along Langwood Gardens and can also be seen from the street to the rear, Grandfield Avenue. The building has a long box dormer structure to the front, 2 smaller box dormers to the rear and a flat roofed, single storey side extension. The proposal would add a first floor over the side extension, extending the box dormers on both the front and rear roofs.
4. Paragraph 8.12 of the Council's Residential Design Guide (RDG) advises that dormer windows must be in proportion to the size of the original roof and should not exceed half the height or half the width of the roof. The proposed dormer structure, in conjunction with the existing dormers, would go substantially beyond this guidance. To the front the extended dormer would combine with the existing dormer to form a single box stretching almost the full length of the very long roof and rising to nearly the full height of the roof. This would heavily dominate the front roof slope. To the rear the extended dormer would also stretch nearly to the edge of the building and would be almost as

high as the main roof. Although there would be 2 separate dormer structures on the rear roof, the overall effect would again be visually dominant.

5. The resulting dormer structures would occupy so much of the roofs, especially at the front, that No 10 would take on the appearance of a 2 storey flat roofed building. This would contrast significantly with the other bungalows on the street, which are more articulated in form with pitched roof structures containing occasional, much smaller dormer windows. The proposal would thus be unsympathetically designed for this prominent location.
6. The appellant cites 11 Langwood Gardens as an example of a similar development allowed by the Council. It appears, however, that No 11's much smaller box dormers at the front remain inset within the roof slope, in contrast to the proposal for No 10. I understand that a larger box dormer has been approved at the back of No 11, but that rear elevation is much less publicly visible than No 10's. The dormer windows of the other examples cited by the appellant, from other streets, are much smaller and better inset in the roofs. None of these examples demonstrate that the appeal proposal would fit well within its context.
7. I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the house and the local area. It therefore conflicts with Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 policies QD6.2 and QD6.4, the RDG and the National Planning Policy Framework, which aim to achieve high quality design and visually attractive buildings.
8. I have considered all other matters raised. I recognise the appellant's reasonable wish to improve his home, in particular to provide accommodation for a full-time carer for a relative. I take this into account in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. On a proportional assessment I do not find it sufficient reason to allow this particular scheme. I also note that the proposal would enable working from home, but again do not find this to be an overriding factor.
9. I agree with the appellant that the development would bring some economic and social benefits. My concern, however, about the environmental impacts in regard to local character and appearance - and the consequent conflict with the development plan - are the crucial factors in this case. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR