



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2025

By Michael Evans BA MA MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/25/3364484
22 Swiss Avenue, Watford WD18 7LN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Syed Tufail Haidery against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01149/FULH.
 - The development proposed is described on the planning application form as “Demolition of two no. existing single storey extensions; Construction of new part ground, part first floor extensions to single dwelling”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect on the streetscene and the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

3. The appeal concerns a two storey semi-detached dwelling on a corner plot that fronts onto Swiss Avenue. It has its side elevation facing Swiss Close where there is a flat roof single storey garage that is therefore fairly low. This is set back a relatively modest distance from the boundary. It is also reflected on the opposite corner by a similar garage, which despite the absence of any gap to the boundary is also relatively low. Because of the height of the garages and the set back of the main two storey parts of these properties there is a pleasant sense of openness. This serves to prevent an overly built-up appearance.
4. The extension at first floor level to the side would be set down from the ridge of the main roof and back from the front elevation, while its hipped roof form would match that of the host dwelling. There would only be a relatively modest increase in the footprint of the dwelling, which is set in a fairly wide plot similar to that on the opposite corner. However, despite these matters the proposal would result in the dwelling projecting unduly close to the street at two storey height.
5. Consequently, and despite projecting no further to the side than the garage, the openness of the streetscene would be unacceptably diminished. It would also provide a jarring and discordant contrast with the set back first floor part of the dwelling on the opposite corner. Moreover, the width of the extension at the front would be a particularly high proportion of that of the existing property at this height, resulting in a disproportionate enlargement highlighting the extent of the reduction

in openness. As a result, it would be an overly bulky and unduly dominant feature in the street.

6. The Appellant refers to extensions that have been permitted at other dwellings in the vicinity. However, most of these are not on corner plots and are therefore in a significantly different and less prominent context. The property at 2 Swiss Avenue is on a corner plot but this is one of a pair of properties that have their front elevations angled towards the junction rather than being broadly parallel to the adjacent streets as at the appeal site. This gives these dwellings a different setting at the front that is particularly open. The flank of the dwelling at 124 Cassiobury Park Avenue is set back appreciably from the street. In consequence, I saw at my site visit that in these cases there is a noticeable degree of openness in contrast to the unduly cramped appearance that would result should this appeal be accepted.
7. Moreover, I have not been provided with the full details and background to these cases. I do not know the reasons the Council granted permission and I have no drawings. In all the above circumstances, the developments referred to should not be used as a precedent for such a detrimental proposal.
8. It is therefore concluded that the streetscene and the character and appearance of the locality would be harmed. The proposed development would conflict with Watford Local Plan 2021-2038 Policies QD6.2 and QD6.4, which seek high quality designs and streetscenes with attractive buildings.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) indicates that decisions should ensure that developments satisfy a number of considerations. These include adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive, which would not be achieved in this case.
10. The Council's Residential Design Guide, Adopted 2014 and Amended 2016, includes the advice that due to their prominence in the streetscene, side extensions must be carefully designed and their scale carefully considered with a rear extension likely to be preferable. Other parts referenced by the Council in the reason for refusal are not relevant as they concern ground floor extensions.
11. It is argued that the proposal would be beneficial in relation to matters such as the local economy, making more efficient use of land and improved accommodation. However, in this case benefits such as these would be achieved at the unacceptable expense of the quality of the built environment. There have been no objections to the proposal from local residents. However, this does not confer acceptability and I must consider the appeal on its own merits. Acceptability in relation to matters that include living conditions and highways are neutral factors that weigh neither for nor against the proposal.
12. Taking account of all other matters raised, because of the harm that would arise and conflict with the development plan and Framework the appeal is dismissed.

M Evans

INSPECTOR