



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

By G Powys Jones FRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/25/3369567
6 Strangeways, Watford, WD17 4SP

- 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 Jeff Smith against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00300/FULH.
 - The development proposed is front extension, loft conversion and small rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for front extension, loft conversion and small rear extension at 6 Strangeways, Watford, WD17 4SP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00300/FULH, subject to the conditions set out in the accompanying Schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host property and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow set on a right-angled bend within a secluded cul-de-sac displaying a variety of house types, including bungalows, dormer bungalows, and two storey dwellings. Strangeways and the adjacent cul-de-sac, Hampden Way are comprised within a pleasant suburban residential area. The Council's concerns centre on two matters, being the proposed front extension and the rear dormer.
4. The front extension derives its design cues from the protrusion at the other end of the bungalow, a single storey gabled bay. Whilst wider and with a higher ridge, the proposal's shape and design would strongly reflect that of the existing front protrusion, thus creating a degree of symmetry in the front elevation. Its size would not be excessive, remaining subordinate in mass and scale to that of the host property, taking account of the earlier extension.
5. Such development, as proposed, is evident locally on the opposite side of the street, where a bungaloid structure with two gabled front protrusions stands without causing visual offence. Much of the proposed extension's side elevation would be screened by a luxuriant hedge, and trees in the front garden would provide additional screening. Irrespective of the level of screening, that seen from the street would sit acceptably here without causing visual harm. Ample external amenity area would remain, so I do not consider the proposal to involve overdevelopment. I

have taken account of the Council's guidance¹ which expresses a general antipathy to front extensions. However, where such proposals do not cause harm, it is not necessary to be bound by or slavishly adhere to such guidance. I have therefore treated this proposal on its merits having regard to development plan policies.

6. The Council also relies on its published guidance in its opposition to the proposed dormer. I saw that dormers, either integral or later additions are not an uncommon feature in the cul-de-sac, being clearly apparent in the public realm. However, none that I saw are of a similar design to that proposed. This would be fairly long and flat roofed, possibly better described as a shallow roof extension. It would be set below ridge level, well above the eaves and away from the side extremities of the roof so that much of the mass and shape of the extant roof would remain intact. All in all, I regard this as a proportionate, modest addition of an appropriate design which would not harm the integrity of the host property.
7. Its impact on its surroundings would be restricted to that short length of the street from Strangeways' junction with Courtlands Drive. The footway here is punctuated by trees. These, together with others growing in adjacent, neighbouring front gardens effectively screen the rear of the appeal property for much of the length of this short stretch of highway, so that the dormer would not impact greatly on the public realm. Even when defoliation took place, the trees' branches would still provide a meaningful level of screening. That which could be seen would not in my view prove visually harmful or materially affect local character.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed scheme would not harm the character and appearance of the host property or surrounding area. Accordingly, I find no conflict with those provisions of policies QD6.2 & QD6.4 of the Watford District Local Plan directed to achieving high quality design and placemaking and enhancing character and identity.

Conditions

9. It is necessary that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, and a condition to this effect is therefore imposed in the interests of certainty. A condition in respect of materials is imposed in the interests of visual amenity.

Other matters

10. All other matters raised in the representations have been considered. Whilst not decisive in my considerations I note that none of the several neighbouring residential consultees objected to the proposal. No other matter is of such strength or significance as to outweigh the considerations leading to my conclusions.

G Powys Jones

INSPECTOR

¹ Residential Design guide

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: The location plan and Drawing Refs: 98; 99; 100 & 101.
- 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.