
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2025 by E Clifford BA (Hons) MA

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/Y1945/D/25/3371232

1 Duke Street, Watford, Hertfordshire WD17 2PB

- 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 Essy Golestani against the decision of Watford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00321/FULH.
 - The development proposed is described as the “erection of single-storey rear extension. Rear side extension on the first floor.”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The application form sets out some additional detail in terms of the description of development. It refers to some internal alterations, including windows to the roadside and that the stability of the wall is to be checked by an engineer. It also mentions the options of keeping the existing wall or removing and rebuilding it. For ease I have omitted these from the description of the works for which planning permission is sought as they are explained above but have taken them into account in making my recommendation.

Main Issue

4. Whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Estcourt Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. As one of Watford’s oldest residential areas, the CA derives significance from the preservation of the mixed-use character showing the areas growth following the new Watford Junction railway station opening in the late C19. The area was defined by terraced housing such as the appeal site mixed in with workshops, public houses, and public buildings. The surviving street and roofscapes depicting this interspersal is an important feature of the CA. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6. The appeal building is a semi-detached two storey dwelling on the corner of Loates Lane and Duke Street. It has a side entrance, hipped roof, and chamfered edge to the side elevation. To the rear, there is a two-storey outrigger which forms a gable with the corresponding rearward projection of the adjoining neighbour. A single storey flat roofed infill extension leads into the brick boundary wall which is finished in English garden wall bond. The dwelling is covered in a pebble-dash render.
7. Flat roofs across the ground and first floor additions would be unreflective of and awkwardly jar against the more traditional gable and other pitched roofs of this and other local frontage terraced dwellings. The area of coverage thereof and the use of one at first floor level would exacerbate their discordance with the established roof form for dwellings in the area. The latter would also all but obscure the period characteristic outrigger extension as it is shared with the adjoining neighbour.
8. The size and elongated nature of the ground floor element, despite effectively disguising it as part of the garden wall, would unacceptably spread the building out, further diluting its more restrained traditional proportions and frontage siting. Whilst using a facing brick instead of matching materials to the host dwelling does appear to seek greater assimilation into the Duke Street scene, it would actually result in a divorced appearance, highlighting the poor visual relationship of the alterations as a whole with the appeal building. The visual effect of these and the above matters would be heightened by the obviousness of the appeal building's corner location. They would also, for the same reasons, neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the CA.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset (CA in this case), great weight should be given to its conservation. Given the scale and location of the proposed works, the harm arising would be to the lower end of less than substantial. Under such circumstances, the Framework further explains that it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
10. The appellant has presented no case suggesting that the proposed scheme would result in any public benefit. There may be some associated with the construction and occupation phases, but these would be minor given the scale and nature of the scheme. I am aware of a similar single storey extension to the neighbouring building at no. 73 Loates Lane, but the evidence suggests it is more historic and dating from before the designation of the CA. It would not lead me to recommending the appeal be allowed.
11. The appeal scheme would thus fail to satisfy the requirements of Policies QD6 and HE7 of the Watford Local Plan (2022) which requires development to reflect the character and wider objectives for the area and relate to local context and to enhance the setting and understanding of the historic environment and designated heritage assets. Furthermore, it would not satisfy the requirements of the Watford Residential Design Guide (2016) having regard to the scale of rear extensions or the stance of the Framework in regard to the conservation of heritage assets.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has requested a refund of the planning application fee if the appeal is dismissed. An application for an award of costs has not been submitted, nor any unreasonable behaviour on the Council's part been alleged. I have not therefore considered this matter further.

13. I have seen the extensions to the rear of no. 15 Earl Street, but they do not bear sufficient similarities to the appeal scheme to suggest it would be acceptable. I am unaware of when/if they were granted planning permission and what circumstances were applicable at the time.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan and material considerations (including the Framework) do not indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance therewith. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Clifford

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR