



The Planning Inspectorate

An Executive Agency in the Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office

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Mr G A Rogers
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Your Ref:

Our Ref:
T/APP/C1950/A/97/278513/P2

Date: 31 JUL 1997

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6
APPEAL BY MR T DECESARE
APPLICATION NO: S6/0731/96/FP

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine this appeal against the decision of Welwyn Hatfield District Council to refuse planning permission in respect of an application for single storey front and rear extensions and dormers at roof level at 44 Theobalds Road, Cuffley. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council. I inspected the site on 17 June 1997.

2. From my inspection of the site and the surrounding area and from the representations made, I consider that the main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the streetscene.

3. The only part of the development plan to which my attention has been drawn is the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (DP) 1993. DP Policy BEV 8 states that, within Cuffley, development will normally only be permitted where it reflects the character of the built environment and the pattern of development. This is also reflected by General Criteria 1 which states, amongst other matters, that development should not be intrusive in the streetscene, and should pay particular regard to the position and massing of adjoining buildings.

4. The Council's detailed approach to extensions and dormer windows is set out in Residential Criteria 26 and 28. These state that front extensions should not project beyond the front wall in such a way as to produce a building which is overprominent and obtrusive in the streetscene. Dormer windows should be as far below the ridge as possible, and be subordinate to the overall design of the roof. Wherever possible, they should be on rear elevations, and should be a minimum of 1 metre from the eaves and the flank walls.

5. The advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) is that obviously poor designs should be rejected, particularly where the Council has clear design policies. PPG1 notes that poor designs may include those which are out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings.

6. The general pattern of development on this side of Theobalds Road appears to have been largely unaltered since the dwellings were built. This pattern is, in part, characterised by the varied set back of the detached bungalows from the road, which serves to give the area a feeling of spaciousness. No.44 is the central property in a group of three dwellings which are set back

further from the road than their neighbours, and the resulting area in front of the buildings is clearly visible from both directions. There are no significant front or roof extensions to the dwellings near the appeal site along this side of Theobalds Road.

7. The proposed front extension would be significantly further forward than the adjoining bungalows. Although I appreciate that this would bring the property into line with those further along the road, the building would be most readily perceived in comparison with its immediate neighbours. I consider that the front extension would therefore be an obtrusive feature in the local streetscene and would intrude significantly into the open area in front of the bungalows.

8. The proposed dormer windows would add substantially to the bulk of the building, both as a result of their size and the extent of their forward projection. In addition, they would extend upwards almost to the ridge line, and would therefore dominate the flank elevations of the building. The resulting building would appear more as a two storey property than a bungalow with accommodation in the roof, and this would be at odds with the modest scale of the adjoining buildings. The proposed dormers would be clearly seen from the road, and would be viewed in the context of the unaltered roofs of the adjoining dwellings, which would emphasise their impact on the streetscene.

9. You suggested that additional planting could screen the proposal. However, given the overall height of the proposed extension and dormers, I do not consider that planting would achieve any significant reduction in the harm which the proposal would cause to the streetscene.

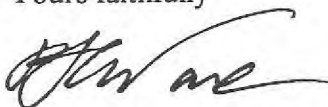
10. I have also considered your evidence of other dormers and front extensions in the wider area. The Council have stated that many of these were undertaken under a different regime of permitted development, and that they did not have any control over these works. In any event, each application and appeal must be considered on its merits, and I do not find the evidence of similar schemes in the area, whatever their status, to be sufficient to outweigh the harm which the current proposal would cause.

11. I am aware that there is no dispute between the parties in relation to the proposed rear extension. However, I consider that the proposed front extension and dormers would be out of scale and incompatible with their surroundings, and would be intrusive features in the area. For this reason, I consider that the proposal would conflict with the policies which I summarised above, and would harm the character and appearance of the streetscene.

12. I have taken account of all the other matters raised, including your client's wish for additional space to accommodate his family. However, the works are likely to remain long after they are needed by your client, and I do not attach any great weight to this argument. I do not find this factor, or any of the others which have been put before me, to be sufficient to outweigh the considerations which have led me to my decision.

13. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal.

Yours faithfully



Phillip Ware BSc DipTP MRTPI
Inspector