
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 September 2016

by John Dowsett MA DipURP DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 28th October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/16/3151210

14 and 16 Monmouth Road, Hayes, UB3 4JQ

- 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 Rohit Puri against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref: 71033/APP/2016/686, dated 29 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension to No. 16 and conversion of roofspace to habitable use to include: raising of ridge height; rear dormers; 4 front rooflights; and conversion of roofspace from hip to gable end to Nos. 14 and 16.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey rear extension to No. 16 and conversion of roofspace to habitable use to include: raising of ridge height; rear dormers; 4 front rooflights and conversion of roofspace from hip to gable end to Nos. 14 and 16 at 14 and 16 Monmouth Road, Hayes, UB3 4JQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 71033/APP/2016/686, dated 29 February 2016 subject to the following 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: Location plan; RPA/14/MMR200 Revision A; RPA/14/MMR201; RPA/14/MMR202; RPA/14/MMR203; RPA/14/MMR204 Revision A; RPA/14/MMR205 Revision A; RPA/14/MMR206; and RPA/14/MMR207 Revision B.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extensions hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural matter

2. The planning application form describes the proposed development as 'Single storey rear extension to No. 16 Monmouth Road and loft conversion including raising of existing roof and gable end from hipped end roof' whilst the decision notice issued by the Council describes it as 'Single storey rear extension to No. 16 and conversion of roofspace to habitable use to include rear dormers, 4 front rooflights and conversion of roofspace from hip to gable end to Nos. 14 and 16'. The description used by the Council is more accurate in that it
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includes reference to the rear dormer windows and I note that the appellant has adopted this wording on the appeal form. I have therefore used this description for the purposes of the appeal. However, as the proposal also includes raising the ridge height of the roofs of both properties, I have incorporated that within the description.

3. The planning application was made in the name of Mr Rohit Puri and the appeal was made by Mrs Jai Puri. The latter is the appellant's wife and I have seen correspondence authorising her to act on behalf of her husband in respect of the appeal. I am therefore satisfied that the appeal has been made by the original applicant for planning permission.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - Whether the proposed development would result in suitable living conditions for the existing and future occupants, with particular regard to the provision of external amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 Strategic Policies 2012 (HLP), taken together with Policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 from Part 2 of the HLP which are Saved Policies from the Earlier Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan 1998 (UDP) seek to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design, which has regard to its context, harmonises with the street scene and the scale, form and architectural composition of the original building and complements the character of the area. The Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document 2008 (HDAS), which has to be read alongside these general design policies provides more specific guidance on new development and extensions to existing properties.
6. The appeal buildings are a pair of semi-detached houses situated on a residential street, within a wider residential area. The street is composed of semi-detached houses with primarily two different designs alternating for most of the length of the street. Whilst both house types have a two storey central projection on the front elevation, one has a gabled roof extension above the projecting bay. Many of the houses have had alterations and additions of varying design to the front elevations and, as a result, the original homogeneity of the street has been greatly diminished.
7. Whilst the houses have hipped roofs, the projecting gable on every second house makes this characteristic of the street less obvious. In addition, although there is a relatively strong and evident front building line, the high gabled frontages make a continuous ridge line much less obvious. The proposed development would see the replacement of the hipped roof of the appeal buildings with a new gable ended roof, the ridge of which would be approximately 0.6 metres higher than the original. Although the resulting building would be higher than before, because it is positioned between two pairs of houses with a projecting front gable which breaks up the ridge line

visually, this height difference and the change to a gable ended roof would be markedly less obvious.

8. I saw on my site visit that the houses at 6 and 8 Monmouth Road have been altered in a similar manner to the appeal proposal, and I also saw other examples where roof ridges have been raised in nearby streets. These roof alterations have had only a very minor effect on the overall appearance of the streets where they are located. The HDAS allows for the alteration of a hipped roof to gable ends provided that both houses in a pair of semi-detached properties are altered, however, it is silent with regard to raising the overall roof height.
9. The proposal also includes two, flat roofed, box dormers on the rear roof slope. The guidance in the HDAS is that flat roofs are normally acceptable on rear dormers and that dormer windows should be set 30 centimetres below the ridge of the roof and inset 50 centimetres from the edges of the roof. The proposed dormers would be 30 centimetres below the ridgeline and 30 centimetres from the edge of the roof. The HDAS explains purpose of these insets is to reduce any possible detriment to the living conditions of neighbouring residents and in particular, the appearance of the original house and the character of the local area.
10. The Council recognise in their officer's report that the proposed alterations will not affect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. The proposed dormers would not be widely visible from Monmouth Road due to the intervening roof forms of the neighbouring houses and would only be partially visible in the immediate vicinity of the appeal building. The effect of the dormer windows on the street scene on Monmouth Road would therefore be extremely localised. Whilst they would be visible from the rear windows of a limited number of houses in Crowland Avenue, due to the depth of the garden areas and the distance across the perimeter block, they would not appear intrusive to these properties and a 20 centimetre reduction in the size of the dormers would not materially alter this.
11. The proposed dormers would not occupy the entire rear roof slope, and would be separated by approximately 1 metre. The principal windows in the dormers would align with the windows in the facade below and consequently, although they are relatively large they would not over-dominate the rear elevation or unbalance the rear elevation of the houses.
12. The reason for refusal does not refer to the ground floor rear extension to number 16 which would effectively mirror a similar existing extension on number 14. This extension, taken with the proposed alterations to the roof, would result in a balanced and symmetrical rear façade to the building.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and complies with the relevant requirements of HLP Policies BE1 and UDP Saved Policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 which seek to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design that has regard to its context and the scale, form and architectural composition of the original building.

Living conditions - external amenity space

14. UDP Policy BE23 requires that new residential buildings or extensions should provide or maintain sufficient external amenity space to protect the living conditions of the occupants of the proposed and surrounding buildings, and which is usable in terms of its shape and siting. The development would result in the creation of two four bedroom houses. The HDAS requires that sufficient garden space should be retained as a consequence of an extension and, in the case of a 4 bedroom house, this should be at least 100m².
15. It is not in dispute that at number 16 there is sufficient amenity space. However, the Council contend that at number 14, due to the presence of existing outbuildings within the rear garden only some 40m² of amenity space remains. Whilst this is the case, the proposed extensions would not further reduce the amenity space at number 14 and I saw on my site visit that, despite the presence of outbuildings the rear of the property, is not excessively constrained and the space is of a reasonable quality. Although it does not meet the quantitative requirement of the HDAS at present, the proposed development would not make the current situation worse. In this respect, the proposal meets the requirements of Policy BE23. It would also be consistent with the requirements of the HDAS in so far as it would retain sufficient garden space at the appeal buildings as a consequence of the extensions.
16. The proposal would not alter the amount of external amenity space and therefore would maintain the character of the area and the rear garden spaces. This would comply with the requirements of Saved Policy BE19 of the UDP.
17. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of the appeal buildings and meets the requirements of Saved UDP Policies BE19 and BE23 which seeks to ensure that new development maintains sufficient external amenity space, is usable in terms of its shape and siting and complements or improves the amenity and character of the area.

Conditions

18. In order to provide certainty as to what has been granted planning permission I have attached a condition specifying the approved drawings. In order to ensure that the proposed extensions are in keeping with the existing houses and the surrounding area, it is also necessary to attach a condition requiring that the materials used in the construction of the extension match those of the existing building.

Conclusions

19. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed,

John Dowsett

INSPECTOR