

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4th January 2017

by Alison Roland BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/16/3161922

16 Chester Road, Northwood, HA6 1BQ

- 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 and Mrs Saunders against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref: 38010/APP/2016/2185 dated 6 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is double storey side extension, alterations to the roof raising of the ridge by 550mm, alterations to hip ends both sides, removal of flat roof to the rear with pitched roof over existing and new section.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for double storey side extension, alterations to the roof raising of the ridge by 550mm, alterations to hip ends both sides, removal of flat roof to the rear with pitched roof over existing and new section, at 16 Chester Road, Northwood, HA6 1BQ, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: 38010/APP/2016/2185, dated 6 June 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: SP-01: Site Plan; BP-01 Rev B: Proposed Block Plan; 001: Existing Ground Floor Plan; P001 Rev B: Proposed Ground Floor Plan; 002: Existing First Floor Plan; P002 Rev B: Proposed First Floor Plan; 003: Existing Second Floor Plan; P003 Rev B: Proposed Second Floor Plan; 004: Existing Front Elevation; P004 Rev B: Proposed Front Elevation; 005: Existing Side Elevation; P005 Rev B: Proposed Side Elevation; 006: Existing Rear Elevation; P006 Rev B: Proposed Rear Elevation; 007: Existing Side 1 Elevation; P007 Rev B: Proposed Side 1 Elevation; 008: Existing Roof Plan; P008 Rev B: Proposed Roof Plan.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the implications of the proposal for the character and appearance of the area, having regard to the siting of the appeal property within the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character.
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Reasons

3. The appeal property is an attractive detached dwelling dating from the Victorian era set within a streetscape of properties of similar age, interspersed with more modern infill development. It has a boxy square form when viewed from the street, although the property is actually much deeper than it appears. The two storey articulated front bay window and hipped roof with tall chimney stacks to either side are its main defining features.
4. The proposals would amount to substantial additions to the property, which would be most evident from the street through its increased width, replicating the existing two storey bay window on the left side of the house to impart a double fronted property with a more symmetrical façade. The ridge line would be increased slightly (by around 55 cm) and the flank walls raised to afford better accommodation at second floor level. The resultant roof would be modified from its current hipped form to a half hipped form, resulting in a greater extent of crown roof than exists at present.
5. The Council are concerned that the aforementioned changes, particularly to the roof would render the roof bulky and disproportionately large and furthermore, that the proposed roof form is not typical of Victorian Arts and Crafts houses and would not respect the traditional design of the dwelling. I cannot agree.
6. Firstly, as the proposals would effectively amount to the replacement of the existing roof with a different roof form, the question to my mind is not so much whether the new roof would adhere to some form of historical precedent on the property, but rather, whether the resultant dwelling would appear as an aesthetically harmonious composition in its own right and, perhaps more importantly, harmonise with the other properties in the street.
7. Whether half hipped roofs are typically found on Victorian Properties in the Arts and Crafts style is a moot point, especially as this particular style embraces a whole gamut of architectural forms and detailing. Either way, I take the appellant's point that further examples of part hipped roofs are evident on Nos 41 and 43 Chester Road, a short distance to the East. In this context, I cannot accept that the part hipped roof would look out of place. Crucially, it seems to me that the proposed roof form would appear entirely in scale and proportion with the resultant dwelling and its greater massing merely a reflection of the increased scale of the appeal property.
8. I also cannot concur with the Council's concern about the increased extent of the crown roof, as it would scarcely be discernible to other than the informed observer in the street and closer views would be confined to those from neighbouring upper windows or indeed from the air. The resultant dwelling would be no less attractive to my mind than that which presently exists and arguably its increased scale and frontage width would appear in better balance and proportion to the plot width.
9. In coming to this view, I have studied the other properties in the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character and found that there is a wide variety of house styles and architectural detailing along this section of Chester Road, with some of the more modern infill development appearing less than sympathetic. I see nothing in the appeal proposals that would run counter to the grain of

development in the area and the appeal property would retain its charm and commanding status.

10. Overall on the main issue, I conclude that the proposals would harmonise comfortably with the existing property and wider character and appearance of the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character. I thus find no conflict with Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1-Strategic Policies (2012), Policies BE5, BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Unitary Development Plan (1998) Saved Policies Replacement (2012), which seek to secure a high standard of design in new development, which enhances the local distinctiveness of the area and conserves and enhances Areas of Special Local Character. Extensions should also harmonise with the scale, form and architectural composition of the original building. The proposal would not comply with the advice in Section 6 of the Supplementary Planning Document: Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement: *Residential Extensions* (2008), in that the extensions would not appear subordinate to the original house. Nonetheless, for the reasons given above and as the proposals effectively amount to a re-modelling of the dwelling, I consider they would be acceptable.
11. The neighbouring occupier at No 14 Chester Road has expressed a desire that the existing high brick boundary wall is retained as part of the proposals. Whilst I have some sympathy with this position as it appears to be an original feature, I do not consider that it is of such notable appearance that a condition requiring its retention could reasonably be imposed. Nonetheless, I note it is depicted for retention on the submitted plans.
12. The occupier of No 29 Chester Road has expressed concern about overlooking and loss of daylight. However, having regard to the considerable separation distance between that property and No 16, which is across the public domain, I consider the proposal would be acceptable in these regards.
13. In addition to the standard time limit for commencement of development, a condition confining the approval to the submitted plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt. The Council suggest a matching materials condition, but as this is indicated to be the case on the application forms, this is superfluous and any material deviation therefrom would require further consent. The original Planning Officer report referred to the possibility of side facing windows to No 14 Chester Road being conditioned to be obscurely glazed and fixed shut. However, as these would serve the staircase and bearing in mind the existing side facing windows in the appeal property, I do not consider such a condition necessary.

ALISON ROLAND

INSPECTOR