
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 May 2017

by Geoff Underwood BA(Hons) PGDip(Urb Cons) MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 25 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/17/3169496
Woodlands, Northgate, Northwood HA6 2TH

- 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 Harrinder Paul Singh against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 18897/APP/2016/3826, dated 17 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is a first floor over existing side extension with part front & rear double storey extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a first floor over existing side extension with part front & rear double storey extensions at Woodlands, Northgate, Northwood HA6 2TH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 18897/APP/2016/3826, dated 17 October 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: 2962-SK1, 2962-01 REV. A, 2962-02 REV. C and 2962-04.
 - 3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on plan no. 2962 02 REV. C.
 - 4) The extensions hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the first floor windows in the side elevations have been fitted with obscured glazing, and no part of those windows that are less than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which they are installed shall be capable of being opened. Once installed the obscured glazing shall be retained thereafter.
 - 5) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no windows on the rear or side elevations of the extensions hereby permitted, other than those expressly authorised by this permission, shall be constructed, and those windows authorised shall not be enlarged.
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Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Harrinder Paul Singh against the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the area, with particular reference to the rear window design, and on the living conditions of future occupiers, with particular reference to outlook from bedroom 4.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is a detached house. It is situated in an area characterised by generally substantial houses set back from tree lined streets in generous gardens and is recognised as the Copsewood Estate, Northwood, Area of Special Local Character (ASLC). Buildings are predominantly two storey and display a variety of styles of suburban architecture. The appeal property is unremarkable in design and appears smaller in size than many other houses in the vicinity and makes a neutral contribution to the area's character.
5. The Council consider that scale and design of the proposed extension is identical to that which was the subject of a recent appeal¹ where the Inspector found that proposal would not harm the existing dwelling, the streetscene or the wider ASLC. The proposal before me differs from that scheme by way of a large, high level window in the rear elevation of the rear extension. It would be symmetrically positioned, reflect the shape of the extension's gable and would harmonise with the building's form, composition and proportions.
6. The cill level of this window would appear just below the lintel level of other windows on the rear elevation. Whilst the area of wall beneath the window would be deeper than that between ground and first floor windows elsewhere on the property, it would be limited in its extent and would not be so expansive as to appear particularly at odds or out of proportion with the existing or proposed composition of the host building.
7. The window's pointed shape would not reflect the design of any existing windows in the house, nor would it be of a design that appears prevalent in the ASLC. However, there are a variety of window designs evident on houses within the ASLC of both traditional and more contemporary design and appearance. I have not been directed to any particular fenestration characteristics that the Council seek to either retain or resist within the ASLC. Furthermore, the window would be located to the rear and, apart from glimpsed views across the gardens of adjoining properties, would not be prominent from public view.
8. This leads me to consider that the window design would not appear incongruous or harmful in the context of either the host building or the wider area. As such the proposal would avoid conflict with the design, visual

¹ APP/R5510/D/16/3151565.

amenity, character and heritage requirements of Local Plan² Policies BE1 and HE1 and saved UDP³ Policies BE5, BE13, BE15 and BE19 including that new development should harmonise with features and styles in ASLC's. It would not be contrary to the Council's design guidance.⁴

Future occupiers' living conditions

9. Bedroom 4 would be served by a side window with obscured glass, two roof lights and the abovementioned large gable window whose sill the drawings indicate would be a minimum of 1.75m above floor level. This would have the effect that occupants of the room would not have a view of neighbouring houses or gardens. However, the room would be well lit by natural light and the gable window would have a view of the sky and the upper parts of mature trees in neighbouring gardens. Combined with views of the sky afforded by the roof lights, this arrangement would avoid the room feeling oppressive or enclosed. Whilst the outlook from the room would not enable a view of ground level surroundings this would not amount to a harmful effect, especially given that occupiers of the house would have the use of many other habitable rooms with unrestricted outlook.
10. The living conditions of future occupiers would not be harmed as a result, and the proposal would not conflict with the housing design and quality requirements of London Plan, 2016 Policy 3.5 or supplementary guidance⁵.

Other Matters

11. I was able to view the site from within the adjoining house and garden at 4 Copse Wood Way from which the rear of Woodlands is visible above the boundary treatment between the two. The rear extension would be closer to No 4 than the existing rear elevation of the house and the large gable window would appear as a noticeable feature in views of Woodlands from the garden of No 4. Nevertheless, due to the proposal's situation relative to No 4 neither the extension nor the first floor window would have an unacceptably overbearing, intrusive or oppressive effect on occupiers within No 4 or its garden. The rear extension would be positioned adjacent to the boundary with Green Acres next door but would not project so far beyond that property's rear elevation as to result in any unacceptable effects.
12. Any potential loss of privacy of any surrounding properties would be avoided by way of the combination of high level and obscure glazed windows, the retention of which could be controlled by way of conditions. The proposal would avoid giving rise to any material harm to neighbours' living conditions and would overcome the adverse effects on privacy raised by the Inspector in the previous appeal. In reaching this view I note that the Council concluded that the proposal would not significantly harm the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties.

² A Vision for 2026 Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies, 2012.

³ London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan, 1998.

⁴ Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Extensions, 2008.

⁵ Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Supplementary Planning Document – Residential Layouts, 2006 and Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, 2016.

Conditions

13. It is necessary to specify the approved plans as this provides certainty. In order to protect the area's character, the materials need to accord with those specified on the drawings. Although the Council have suggested (without prejudice) that all materials should match the existing, I not been presented with any reason why those materials proposed which would differ would be inappropriate.
14. To avoid harm to neighbours' privacy it is also necessary to require that the proposed obscure glazing is installed and retained in those windows indicated and, exceptionally given the relationship between the proposal and surrounding properties, that additional windows are not added or proposed ones enlarged.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, the proposal would not harm the character or appearance of the area or the living conditions of future occupiers and would accord with the development plan. The appeal is therefore allowed.

Geoff Underwood

INSPECTOR