



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2020 by Scott Britnell MSc FdA

Decision by Anne Jordan BA(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/19/3241251

12 Meadow Close, Ruislip HA4 8AP

- 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 & Mrs Follows against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 74125/APP/2019/2912, dated 2 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is alterations to main roof to create loft conversion and front storm porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matters

3. Following the decision on the planning application, the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon adopted a new Local Plan (LP)¹. During the appeal process, the parties were asked to confirm which policies they considered were relevant to the determination of the appeal, and I have taken their comments into account.
4. The Council's reason for refusal refers to the adopted Supplementary Planning Document HDAS: Residential Extensions (SPD). Within its policy update the Council confirm that the Local Plan Part 2 Saved UDP Policies (2012) against which the planning permission was initially determined have now been withdrawn and that they rely only on Policies DMHB11, DMHB12 and DMHD1 of the new LP. While no reference is made to the SPD, I understand that it has also been withdrawn. I have therefore proceeded on this basis.
5. During the course of the assessment of the application, the description of development was revised to reflect the development that required planning permission. The Council refer to the development as "conversion of roof space to habitable use to include 2 x rear dormers and 3 x front roof lights, porch canopy to front." I note that this is how the appellants describe the proposal

¹ London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 Development Management Policies Adopted Version 16 January 2020

within their appeal form and appeal statement. As such, I have assessed the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

7. The appeal site comprises a bungalow located on the north side of Meadow Close, a t-shaped cul-de-sac within a built up residential area. Meadow Close has a mix of bungalows and chalet bungalows with the properties at the head of the cul-de-sac set within sizeable plots. There is no uniform building line in respect of these properties and the appeal dwelling is set considerably further back than its neighbour at No 13 Meadow Close. At the time of my visit, works were being carried out to extend the appeal dwelling to the rear and the side, and I note that the Council issued a Certificate of Lawful Development for a Proposed Development on 19 September 2018 for a number of works including single storey side and rear extensions².
8. The proposal includes a porch canopy to the front of the dwelling. The Council has no objection to this element and I consider that it would be an acceptable addition having regard to its scale, form and design. The matter in dispute therefore relates to the proposed roof alterations, including the dormers.

Host property

9. The alterations would effectively replace the existing pyramid hip roof with a higher and much wider roof. By virtue of its scale, design, massing and bulk the proposed roof alteration would be a disproportionate addition that would visually dominate the dwelling. This would be exacerbated by the two rear dormers, which although set down from the (proposed new) ridge and back from the eaves, would dominate the rear roof plane due to their width and scale. They would appear as incongruous additions to the property and would add to the overall bulk and scale of the proposal, imbuing the property with a top heavy appearance.

Surrounding area

10. I acknowledge that public views of the appeal site are only readily available from the western end of Meadow Close. However, due to its design, scale, bulk and massing, the proposal would appear discordant and incongruous within this particular part of the Close. The host property has a pyramid hipped roof form which is a character of properties in Meadow Close. Although a number of properties appear to have had roof alterations undertaken, this distinctive roof shape remains apparent. While there are exceptions, such as at No 8, which is close to the appeal site, and No 18 at the eastern end of the cul-de-sac, I consider that the regularity of this roof form contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area and would be eroded by the proposal.
11. The proposal would also be highly visible from neighbouring and nearby properties and their gardens. In views into the site the roof alterations would form overly prominent and unsightly features which would fail to assimilate

² 74125/APP/2018/3262 – Details taken from the Council's officer report.

comfortably with the more balanced proportions of neighbouring dwellings. The contribution that the host property makes to the character and appearance of the area would therefore be significantly diminished by the proposal and would be likely to reduce the appreciation of the quality of the environment in which nearby occupiers live. As such, harm, albeit limited, would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.

12. In reaching this conclusion, I have noted the examples of other roof extensions and alterations referred to me by the appellant. However, the developments at Willow Grove, Eversley Crescent, Keswick Gardens and The Greenway are located some distance away from the appeal site. As such, they are viewed in a different context and are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal. I therefore attribute limited weight to the presence of these developments and do not consider that they justify the unacceptable development proposed.
13. The appellant has also referred me to roof extensions at Nos 1 and 27 Meadow Close, which are at the junction with Evelyn Avenue and are viewed in a different context to the appeal site. I also observed that the works reported to have been carried out at these properties are not directly comparable to the appeal proposal. Extension works have also been carried out at Nos 8, 14 and 18 Meadow Close, which I observed at my visit. While I acknowledge that these form part of the wider context of the appeal site, each case must be considered on its own merits and these examples would not, in any case, negate the harm that would arise under this proposal. Consequently, I afford the presence of the developments within Meadow Close limited weight and do not consider that they justify the proposed unacceptable development.
14. I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the host property and the area. There would be conflict with Policies DMHB11 and DMHD1 of the LP. These seek, among other things, to ensure that all development, including extensions and alterations will be required to be designed to the highest standards, incorporate principles of good design including harmonising with the local context and be well integrated with the surrounding area. With specific regard to roof extensions, policy DMHD1 states that the Council will not support poorly designed or over-large roof extensions and that the raising of a main roof above the existing ridgeline of a house will generally not be supported. The proposal would also conflict with guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks development that is sympathetic to local character and which advises that permission should be refused for development which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area.
15. The Council also refer to Policy DMHB12 of the LP. However, as this relates specifically to streets and the public realm I consider it to be of limited relevance in this case.

Other Matters

16. The appellants suggest that refusing the application on the grounds of design is contrary to the Framework. They refer to paragraph 130 of the Framework which states that, "Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development". However, for the reasons I have given, I consider that the proposal does not accord with the

plan policies. Moreover, the Framework is clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development³.

17. The absence of objections from local residents, or any identified harm to living conditions are neutral factors which does not weigh in favour of the proposal. I note the appellant's comments with respect to their family circumstances and needs and their desire to capture natural resources of renewable energy. I also note their comments that the alterations would result in higher levels of insulation at the property. While these matters weigh in favour of the development, there is no evidence before me that these benefits could not be achieved by alternative development. I therefore afford them limited weight and do not consider that they overcome or justify the harm identified.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Scott Britnell

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

19. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Anne Jordan

INSPECTOR

³ Paragraph 124.