



## Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 25 May 2021

**by Luke Simpson BSc MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 7 June 2021**

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/21/3270212**

**6a & 8a Highfield Road, Northwood, HA6 1ET**

- 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 Linval Anderson and Mr Shahid Butt against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
  - The application Ref 64689/APP/2020/3495, dated 9 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 4 February 2021.
  - The development proposed is described as 'Loft conversion including formation of gable end roof from roof hipped end roof & addition of a rear dormer & rooflights.'
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. There is a discrepancy between the address shown on the appeal form and that shown on the application form. However, the appellant and the Council have confirmed that the correct address is '6a & 8a Highfield Road, Northwood, HA6 1ET'.
3. Reference is made in the Council's reasons for refusal to the policies in the London Plan (March 2016). Since the appeal application was decided, the latest version of the London Plan (2021) has been published and is now part of the development plan for London. Therefore, the Council have clarified that the previous London Plan Policies, 3.5, 5.3 and 7.8, as referred to in the reasons for refusal, have been replaced by policies D6, SI2 and HC1 respectively. This appeal is therefore determined having regard to the most recently adopted London Plan policies. The Appellant has confirmed that they do not consider that any of the new policies require further representations.

### Main Issues

4. The main issues are as follow:
  - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host properties and surrounding area, including the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character (ASLC).
  - The effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of future occupiers of the host properties, with specific regard to daylight and outlook, as well as the associated effect on energy efficiency.

## Reasons

### *Character and Appearance*

5. The appeal site consists of a two-storey property, which comprises of four flats. This appeal relates to the two first floor flats and the roof form of the properties. During my site visit, I noted that the appeal properties have a distinctive roof form, with front facing gables set within a hipped roof. There are also three tall chimneys, two to either side of the appeal properties and one set centrally within the rear facing roof slope.
6. The proposed development would alter the roof form from a hipped roof to a gable roof. I consider that this would result in an appearance which would jar with the original and distinctive architectural features of the dwelling. In particular, the gable roof extension would not sit well with the front facing gables and would have the effect of reducing their prominence, which I have found is a key feature of the design of the original properties. The Council has outlined that the removal of the chimneys would be acceptable. I find that the adverse visual impact that would result from the creation of the uncharacteristic gable ends would only be exacerbated by the loss of the chimneys; another feature which typifies the building's original design.
7. The site is located within the Old Northwood ASLC. The Council has confirmed that the ASLC, which covers much of the surrounding area, is a non-designated heritage asset. The ASLC largely derives its significance from its historical architectural merit, predominantly comprising of attractive Edwardian and Victorian buildings. During my site visit, I noted that most of the dwellings retain their original appearance to the front, or have been updated sympathetically. In contrast, the appeal development would not be sympathetic to the original design of the host properties and would therefore harm the character of the ASLC.
8. I note that there is variation in the character of development in the surrounding area, with some properties incorporating gable roof forms. However, in this case, the proposed development would not be sympathetic to the original design of the building and I have found that this would be harmful to the character of the ASLC. The fact that the character of the surrounding area is varied does not outweigh these findings.
9. The proposed development would therefore conflict with Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (Local Plan Part 1) HE1 and BE1, which seek in part to conserve and enhance the borough's heritage and ensure high quality design. The development would also be contrary to Local Plan Part Two - Development Management Policies (Local Plan Part 2) DMHB 1, DMHB 5, DMHB 11 and DMHB 12, which seek in part to ensure that development: sustains and enhances heritage assets; harmonises with local context; and where located within an ASLC, respects the style of original buildings. The development would also conflict with London Plan (2021) Policy HC1, which seeks to ensure that development conserves the significance of heritage assets.
10. Furthermore, National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 197 states that a balanced judgment needs to be taken where a proposal would harm a non-designated heritage asset. In the case of the appeal development, I have found that there would be significant harm to the setting of the ASLC. This harm is

not outweighed by the proposed increase in living space at the appeal properties or any other matters raised.

*Living conditions and Energy Efficiency*

11. The proposed development includes two bedrooms in the front of the roof space. These bedrooms would each be served by two roof lights. I consider that it is not uncommon for living space within the roof to be served by roof lights, as is the case with many dwellings within the surrounding area. Within this context, the roof lights would provide adequate levels of daylight to the bedrooms and would not be obstructed by any other part of the proposed development. Therefore, there would not be any significant harm to the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed development, with regard to natural light provision.
12. Given my findings on this main issue, I conclude that there would not be an over-reliance on artificial means of light and, in turn, there would be no harm in relation to energy efficiency objectives. In addition, I conclude that outlook achievable from these proposed windows would not have a harmful impact upon the future occupiers of the appeal properties. In reaching these conclusions, I also note that planning permission was granted in January 2021 (Reference: 31042/APP/2020/4025) for conversion of the roof space to habitable use and a rear dormer extension at 8a Highfield Road. If implemented, this development would result in a similar arrangement, with regard to natural light and outlook, when compared to the currently proposed development.
13. The proposed development would therefore comply with London Plan Policy D6, which seeks in part to ensure that new development provides sufficient daylight, appropriate to the context of the development. The proposed development would also comply with Local Plan Part 2 Policy DHMB 11, which in part seeks to ensure that the internal design and layout of development maximises sustainability.
14. Local Plan Part 2 Policy DMHD 1 is not relevant to this main issue and neither is London Plan Policy SI2, which relates to major developments.

**Conclusion**

15. I have not identified any harm in relation to living conditions or energy efficiency. However, this does not outweigh the visual harm that the proposed development would cause to the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area, including the harm to the character of the ASLC, which is a non-designated heritage asset. There are no other matters raised which outweigh this harm. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

*Luke Simpson*

INSPECTOR