



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 August 2021

by Darren Hendley BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/21/3272704
30 Hillside Road, Northwood HA6 1QA

- 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. Neal Daniel against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref: 33702/APP/2020/4204, dated 17 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a garage conversion into a habitable space, erection of a single storey side, part front and rear extension and loft conversion with a front dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council's reasons for refusal include reference to the London Plan (2016 as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). A new version of the London Plan (2021) has been published since the Council's decision. A revised version of the Framework has also been published. The main parties were given the opportunity to comment on these matters during the appeal and which I have considered in my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (i) the character and appearance of the building and the area; and (ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of 32 Hillside Road (No 32) by way of outlook and visual impact.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property comprises a detached hipped roof bungalow. It contains a garage to the side. The front of the property is clearly visible from the streetscene, not least as it is sited on the crest of a rise along Hillside Road. To the rear, it has been extended by way of a flat roofed extension and a conservatory, beyond which is a spacious garden.
5. The site lies within the Northwood Hills Area of Special Local Character which is afforded protection as a non-designated local heritage asset under Policy DMHB 5 of the Council's Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) (Local Plan Part 2). This designation is characterised by a pleasing

arrangement of hipped roof bungalows that are largely set out in a similar form to the appeal property. The overall uniformity is a strong element of the local character. Some also contain small box dormers which are discretely positioned on the front roof planes. Whilst the neighbouring properties at Nos 28 and 32 Hillside Road (Nos 28 and 32), and others in the immediate vicinity, have been significantly extended, this is not typical of the designation and has not substantively changed the overall prevailing character.

6. When taken together, the proposed extensions would significantly enlarge the size of the appeal property. A resultant effect would be the roof form. The current modest crown would be notably extended so that a larger roof would be formed. In addition, there would be a substantial rear hip to gable conversion. The scale, bulk and massing would result in the loss of much of the existing proportions and architectural composition of the bungalow, as well as the original roof form.
7. The alterations to the front would also be clearly evident from the streetscene and so would appear incongruous and detrimental to both the building and the area. The hipped roof form would be seen to be diluted by the size of the crown. In respect of the symmetrical appearance that would result, this is not an overall feature of the plots in the area, in particular as garages to the side of properties are not uncommon features.
8. The design of the proposed front dormer would also be out of keeping with the area because its pitched roofed form would contrast with the more archetypal small box dormers. Examples of pitched dormers are few and appear in better proportion on the front roof planes than what is envisaged by the proposal.
9. The appellant has placed a good deal of emphasis on the extensions that have taken place at Nos 28 and 32, as well as those at Nos 34 and 38, including the exercising of permitted development rights. As I have set out, they are not characteristic of the Area of Special Local Character. The effect of permitting the proposal would, in my view, result in a small row of dwellings that would not conform to this designation. Hence, it would undermine what Policy DMHB 5 is seeking to achieve and the rationale for the non-designated local heritage asset. The same applies in relation to other properties in the area that I have been referred to that do not strictly conform. The proposed external materials would not be unacceptable but this would not overcome the harm to the local character.
10. That the site does not lie in a conservation area or close to a listed building does not lessen the protection that is afforded to the area's own status. The revised Framework has also placed a greater emphasis on well-designed development, as well as maintaining the protection afforded to such assets.
11. I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the building and the area. As such, it would not comply in this regard with Policies BE1 and HE1 of the Council's Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies (2012) and with Policies DMHB 1, DMHB 5, DMHB 11, DMHD 1 and DMHB 12 of the Local Plan Part 2 where they are concerned with a high quality of design, including for extensions, enhancing the local distinctiveness of the area and harmonising with the local context, and that new development should reflect the character and the original layout within Areas of Special Local Character, amongst a number of other detailed considerations.

12. Taking into account the above, the proposal would also not comply with Policy HC1 of the London Plan (2021) where it states that development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. It would also not accord with the Framework in this regard as it would not conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Living Conditions

13. To the rear of No 32's garage, the side of this property is set in from the boundary closest to where the proposed rear extension would be sited. The open area in between is paved and permits access to this property's rear garden. It provides some beneficial enjoyment in that doors open onto it and as there are planters. The shared boundary itself is defined by a close boarded fence.
14. The proposed rear extension would maintain the same distance to the boundary as the existing house. Whilst it would project back a greater distance, the height of the facing side wall would not be markedly higher than the fence and the roof would then hip back further from the boundary. With this relationship to the open area to the side of No 32, it would not result in an undue sense of enclosure. Thus, the scale, bulk, height and proximity of the proposed rear extension would not be overly dominant, overbearing and imposing.
15. Whilst the overall proportions of the proposed rear extension are significant, the effect on the occupiers of No 32 would only result from the part of it nearest the boundary. For the reasons that I have set out, this would not be unacceptable. The spacing afforded by the width of the rear at No 32 would also mean that cumulative effects with that property's relationship with the rear of No 34 would also be satisfactory.
16. I conclude that the proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 32 by way of outlook and visual impact. Consequently, it would comply in this regard with Policies DHMD 1 and DMHB 11 of the Local Plan Part 2 where they are concerned with a satisfactory relationship with adjacent dwellings, no unacceptable loss of outlook to neighbouring occupiers and that proposals should not adversely impact on the amenity of adjacent properties and open space, amidst other matters.
17. The proposal would also accord with the revised Framework in this regard where it concerns a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

18. The proposal would increase the quality and provision of internal space for a family home. Whilst a largely personal benefit, it attracts some support under the Framework in providing housing for different groups, including families. This would not however outweigh the harm on character and appearance grounds, in particular with the protection that is afforded under planning policy. Nor does Policy D3 of the London Plan favour the proposal because it would not optimise site capacity through a design led approach, with the nature of the harm.
19. The proposal would result in adequate levels of off-street car parking, as well as a commensurate level of private amenity space for the occupiers of the

appeal property. Still, these matters would not address the detrimental effect that would arise. I note that the occupiers of the neighbouring properties did not object. The planning appeal is though to be determined with regard to the totality of the evidence before me.

Conclusion

20. The effect on the character and appearance of the building and the area would be unacceptable and is decisive. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole and there are no material considerations to outweigh this conflict. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Darren Hendley

INSPECTOR