



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 20 September 2021

by G Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th October 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/21/3278603

60 Copse Wood Way, Northwood HA6 2UA

- 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 Raj Grewal against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 49901/APP/2021/675, dated 19 February 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is part two storey part single storey side/rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a part two storey part single storey side/rear extension at 60 Copse Wood Way, Northwood HA6 2UA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 49901/APP/2021/675, dated 19 February 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drwg No: 2859/1 – Property as Existing and Drwg No: 2859/2 – Proposed Side & Rear Extension.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the conclusions, measures and recommendations set out within the GHA Trees Arboricultural Consultancy document 'Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report: 60 Copse Wood Way, Northwood HA6 2UA' (dated 28 June 2021, Ref: GHA/DS/122760:21), with particular regard to the 'Tree Protection Measures', 'Preliminary Method Statement for Development Works' and 'Recommendations' set out within that document.
 - 5) Within the first planting season following the removal of tree T1: Silver Birch, details of a replacement tree shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The specification shall include the species, size and position of the replacement tree to be planted, how it will be planted and protected and the proposed time of planting. The tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved specification.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal submission was accompanied by a document entitled 'Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report: 60 Copse Wood Way, Northwood HA6 2UA'¹ (APIR). This document had not previously been part of the planning application submission and had not therefore been considered by the Council at the time of the planning application. The Council have however subsequently been given the opportunity to comment on the content of the APIR as part of the appeal process and I have taken those comments into account in reaching my conclusions on this matter, which I deal with below.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effects of the proposed development upon:
 - The character and appearance of the appeal property and the surrounding area; and
 - Protected trees.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The Copse Wood Estate is designated as an Area of Special Local Character (ASLC). The supporting text to Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (LP2) policy DMHB5 states that these areas have a character and identity valued by local residents and which the Council wishes to preserve or enhance. They are, the supporting text goes on, chosen on the basis of local architectural, townscape or historic quality where new development should complement existing materials, design features and architectural styles. Extensions in these areas should also respect the symmetry of the original building, be subordinate in nature and conform to vernacular styles predominant in the area.
5. In the context of some of the dwellings within Copse Wood Way, the appeal property is a rather more modestly sized detached dwelling set within a large residential plot. However, there are a wide range of architectural styles within the wider Copse Wood Way area, as well as variety in the scale, bulk and massing of houses.
6. There is therefore no single, defining vernacular within the Copse Wood estate. The appeal property shares some similarities with the dwellings on either side of it and, occasionally, with other properties elsewhere within the estate. Thus, such features as No. 60's prominent projecting two-storey peaked bay, distinctive tall chimney stack and steeply pitched hipped roof leading to a cat-slide roof over a single storey side element to the building are features seen to varying degrees of other nearby properties.
7. The Council are concerned that the side extension would exceed half the width of the existing property's front elevation, contrary to the guidance set out within the Council's 'Householder Development Policies' document (HDP)² and LP2 policy DMHD1. It is not clear, however, whether the Council consider this

¹ GHA Trees Arboricultural Consultancy, dated 28th June 2021 (Ref: GHA/DS/122760:21)

² LP2: Appendix A: Householder Development Policies

to be the case based on the existing property's width at ground floor or at first floor.

8. The appellant has however provided comparison in relation to both, indicating an increase in both instances of less than half the overall width of the existing house. Whilst the property's roof width would increase significantly, and would not be set-down from the existing house's roof pitch as sought by the HDP, the projecting peaked bay would retain its primacy and the extended frontage would be pleasingly well balanced. In the prevailing context of large, detached dwellings, the extended property's roofline with the absence of a set-down would not in my judgement be fatal.
9. The HDP sets out further guidance to help ensure that an extension reads as a subordinate element to the main house. The proposed extension would be set back from the now central projecting bay at first floor level. Although not set back at ground floor level, the area of pitched roof between ground and first floor would reflect the existing porch's pitched roof and maintain the sense of balance across the façade introduced elsewhere by the proposed extension.
10. The proposal would, I accept, alter the character and the appearance of the appeal property. The existing cat-slide roof would be lost and, as a feature also present to varying degrees on the properties on either side of the appeal property, its loss would be noticeable. However, cat-slide roofs are not a defining or distinctive characteristic of the Copse Wood estate as a whole, nor are they particularly widespread in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site beyond those on either side of it. However, the limited harm that would arise from the loss of this feature would be offset by the positive elements of the proposed extension noted above.
11. The proposal would also retain the primacy and prominence of the projecting peaked bay, would incorporate a fully hipped roof when viewed from the front and would retain, unaltered, the distinctive chimney stack. Whilst the extent of the extension would increase the scale of the appeal property, I am satisfied that it would do so in a manner conversant with, and respectful of, existing elements and features of the property. Nor would the extended property sit incongruously amongst its neighbours, where variations in architectural style contribute to a coherent and broadly consistent wider character. The proposal would, I am satisfied, achieve a well-balanced extended property in keeping with others and, more importantly, with the character and appearance of the Copse Wood estate ASLC.
12. No objection is raised to the proposed extension in terms of its single and two storey elements at the rear. Having carefully considered the proposal and the nature and context of the appeal plot and neighbouring plots, I agree and, taken as a whole, add weight to my conclusions regarding the acceptability of the proposed extension. The variety in architectural styles is as much a defining characteristic of the area as the consistent building lines and verdant, sylvan settings of the large, detached houses along Copse Wood Way and other nearby streets. Taking the various elements of the extension together, I am satisfied that the proposal would result in an enlarged dwelling entirely consistent with the scale, form and massing of properties within the Copse Wood estate.
13. With regard to the extension's siting in relation to the plot boundary, I accept that it would encroach on the 1.5 metre stand-off distance advocated by LP2

policy DMHD1(C)(iv). In this instance, the extent to which the proposal would encroach into this stand-off zone would be limited. Moreover, the layout and relationship of the neighbouring buildings to each other would retain a reasonable gap at ground floor level, a sizeable gap at first floor level and, by virtue of the extension's hipped roof form, a sufficiently large gap so as to appreciate the verdant, sylvan backdrop to the appeal property. Such glimpsed views between and above houses along Copse Wood Way are a key factor in the pleasant, verdant setting, character and appearance of the Copse Wood ASLC.

14. The appellant seeks to make the case that this encroachment is not critical since it would still exceed the 1 m stand-off sought for extensions outwith the Copse Wood and Gatehill estates. However, whilst I give this particular argument little weight, the proposal's encroachment into the larger stand-off distance sought within the Copse Wood estate is not critical to my assessment of the proposal's suitability. The failure to achieve a 1.5 metre stand-off would not in this instance, for the reasons set out, be critical, nor would it be harmful to the character or appearance of the area or to the aims of LP2 policies DMHD1 or DMHB5 and their approach to the ASLC.
15. For these reasons, I am satisfied that the proposed extension would be of a scale, form, massing and design consistent with the generally mixed architecture of the Copse Wood Estate ASLC. It would maintain a broad sense of spaciousness around the appeal property and between it and its neighbours whilst still ensuring that the verdant sylvan backdrop to houses in this part of the estate would be maintained. The encroachment into the stand-off distance advocated by LP2 policy DMHD1(C)(iv) would amount to a technical breach of that part of the policy, but I am satisfied for reasons set out that the proposal would be consistent with the wider aims, intentions and provisions of LP2 policies DMHD1, DMHB5, DMHB6, DMHB11 and DMHB12 which together seek to ensure design of the highest quality and which respects and reflects local character and context, layout, scale and architectural styles.

Protected trees

16. There are a number of trees within the appeal site which are protected by virtue of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)³. The appeal scheme proposes the removal of one tree located at the front of the property, close to the boundary between Nos 58 and 60. The appellant's APIR considers the tree in question, a silver birch, to be in a poor overall condition, a conclusion shared by the Council in their later comments on the APIR.
17. I agree. The tree would be reasonably close to the front corner of the proposed extension and its poor form and condition, together with more substantial trees along the property frontage are such that it contributes little to the overall streetscene and its loss would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
18. A second tree, a large oak to the rear of the property, would also be close to the proposed extension. The APIR concludes that only a limited portion⁴ of that tree's Root Protection Area would come within the proposed footprint area of the appeal scheme. It goes on to recommend a range of working and

³ TPO 399 – 38074 Copse Wood Way – A1

⁴ APIR paragraph 6.5 3.5%

structural precautions with specific reference to that tree as well as more general measures such as appropriate tree protection.

19. The Council has confirmed that the measures outlined within the APIR would address the second reason for refusal and thus are satisfied that it has been demonstrated that the trees would be unaffected by the proposed development. I have no substantive evidence before me which would lead me to reach a different conclusion and, in light of the Council's confirmation that the second reason for refusal would be satisfactorily addressed, I conclude that there would be no conflict with LP2 policies DMHB6 or DMHB14.

Conditions

20. I have considered the Council's suggested conditions in light of the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to time limit and plans conditions, which are necessary in order to provide certainty and in the interests of good planning, I agree that a matching materials condition is necessary and reasonable. I have attached a condition to this effect in the interests of character and appearance.
21. In response to the Council's comments regarding the APIR, I agree that a condition to ensure that the development is undertaken in accordance with the precautions, mitigation and measures set out therein is necessary in the interests of character and appearance and the integrity of the retained protected trees. The appellant has confirmed that a replacement tree planting condition would be acceptable following the proposed removal of one of the trees. I agree, and have attached a condition to this effect.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal be allowed.

G Robbie

INSPECTOR