

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2021

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10TH December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/D/21/3281441

White Lodge, 96 Gordon Avenue, Stanmore HA7 3QS

- 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 V Kotecha against the decision of Harrow Council.
 - The application Ref P/1553/21, dated 13 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is a two storey rear extension and loft enlargement; front gable and alteration to fenestration.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey rear extension and loft enlargement; front gable and alteration to fenestration at White Lodge, 96 Gordon Avenue, Stanmore, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P/1553/21, dated 13 April 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 3 years beginning with the date of this permission.
 - 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: Location Plan 96GORD-SPLP01 and Proposed Plans and Elevations 96GORD-EPE01.
 - 3) The materials used in the construction of the external surfaces of the works hereby permitted shall match those of the existing dwelling.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The proposal would result in a complete remodelling of this detached dwelling. The Council are concerned that the scale and depth of the proposal, including the need for a crown roof, would be unsympathetic and incongruous, detracting from the character, composition and design of the host and neighbouring properties, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
 4. The existing property is a large imposing detached house. It is set well back in the plot, in common with the similarly large neighbouring properties. The
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appeal property has an uncharacteristic front dormer window together with a flat roof single storey front extension and attached covered porch which are not in keeping with the original design. The side cheeks of a large rear dormer are also visible from the street, although these are of limited prominence.

5. The changes proposed to the front elevation would result in a property of significantly different character. The new feature gable would alter the perceived proportions of the dwelling, providing a new and dominant vertical emphasis. This would be supported by the revised window sizes and details. The roof would have a marginally steeper pitch bringing the ridge forward, although at the same height. This would not materially alter the perception of the frontage of the dwelling. The works would result in the dwelling having a contemporary appearance that would be a significant improvement. The proposed small dormers would not be at odds with these details overall and would not detract from the composition.
6. The proposal would include a two-storey extension across most of the rear elevation. The relatively narrow plan of the first floor of the building would be lost. The side elevations and the hipped roof above are evident within the street scene. In views from the west, the side elevation is clearly apparent beyond the large steeply pitched roof of the neighbouring property (98). From the east, although visible, the side elevation is less prominent given the screening afforded by the relatively closely related neighbouring property (94), which similarly has a substantial roof return covering a similar depth of rear extension. Given the relationship with 94 Gordon Avenue, the proposed depth of the extension would have little wider impact.
7. The depth of the extended side elevation would be more noticeable when approaching from the west. This would result in a perceived reduction in the scale of the separation between the buildings at roof height in specific views. It would also result in the loss of the form and roof structure of the original dwelling. The crown roof would not be discernible as the roof form would be no different, in views from the street, to a rear extension of narrower form and a fully gabled roof. I am also mindful that this proposed roof form is not an uncommon feature in this particular area.
8. Whilst I agree that this deep return to the roof would not be a positive design change, it would not be out of keeping in this area. It would be of limited prominence in longer views given the position of the neighbouring house (98) and given the intervening mature vegetation in some views. It would facilitate the removal of the rear dormer. A more subservient two storey rear extension, set in from the side elevation, would retain the form of the side elevation but would not be dissimilar in overall impact and would not achieve the unified design solution proposed. The form of the existing side elevation and hipped roof do not represent special or valued features and are not of any particular wider importance. Despite the bulk of the return, when considering the composition and design of the property overall, the works would improve the appearance of the property within the street scene.
9. The proposed overall scale would subsume the existing house but the appearance of the re-modelled building overall would improve upon the appearance of the existing property and would remain in keeping with the character of the area. Given this, there would be no conflict with the design

objectives of Policy D3 D (1 & 11) of the London Plan (2021); Core Policy CS1.B of the Harrow Core Strategy (2012); or Policy DM1 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Local Plan (2013). As these policies accord with the design aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework, I afford them full weight.

10. With regard to the Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guide (2010), this accepts front extensions that reflect and compliment the scale and design of the property and wider area. There is some conflict with the guidance as it advises that two storey rear extensions should be designed to respect the character and scale of the original house and garden. The hipped roof proposed would reflect the character of the dwelling and those adjoining but it would depart from the original narrow form of the property. It would not respect the scale of the house although it would not exceed the height of the highest part of the roof and it would not significantly reduce the scale of the large garden. The detailed design requirements for rear extensions provide advice with regard to neighbouring amenity issues which have not been raised as a concern. Overall, although there is some conflict with the design aspirations, as the proposal would provide an improved appearance and have a character similar to many nearby properties, it would not be at odds with the overall objectives of the guidance.
11. In conclusion, the proposal represents a comprehensive remodelling of the existing house. Whilst there would be some conflict with the Council's Design Guide, this anticipates extensions rather than remodelling. The house would be substantially larger but would continue to sit comfortably within its large plot and would not be out of keeping with many of the other properties and extended properties in the immediate area. Although some positive elements of the character of the building would be lost other negative elements would also be replaced. The final overall composition of the property would result in improvements to the overall appearance of the house and it would continue to contribute positively to the wider area. Whilst I have considered the concerns expressed by the Council, the proposal would be of a design that would contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area. I therefore allow the appeal.
12. I have imposed conditions that refer to the timetable for commencement and make reference to the plans, for the avoidance of doubt. A condition to require that the materials match those of the dwelling is also necessary to ensure that the development would have a satisfactory appearance.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR