



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 April 2022

by F Cullen BA(Hons) MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/22/3293418

4 Hillside Rise, Northwood HA6 1RR

- 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 Ms Anna Sabau against the decision of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref: 18129/APP/2021/3562, dated 21 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is conversion of garage into habitable room, loft conversion, front porch and single story rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. At the time of my site visit the appeal site was enclosed at the front by tall wooden panels and work to the property appeared to have commenced. Nonetheless, I am satisfied that I was able to consider all of the potential effects of the proposal and I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.
3. Having regard to the submitted evidence and my observations on site, I have taken the appellant's reference to Lynhurst Gardens/Lyndhurst Gardens in their grounds of appeal to be the property adjacent to No 2 Hillside Rise which is named 'Lyndhurst'.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of No 4 Hillside Rise and the Hillside, Northwood Hills Area of Special Local Character.

Reasons

5. No 4 Hillside Rise (No 4) is a fairly modest, detached bungalow, which dates from circa 1940s. It is constructed of brick with a part painted render finish and has a tiled roof. The original property has been altered in the past, including the addition of a single-storey garage at the side, a single storey extension at the rear and a small front dormer window. Nevertheless, key architectural elements, such as the front projecting gable and pyramidal shaped roof, survive and are legible within the street scene.
6. The property is located within the Hillside, Northwood Hills Area of Special Local Character (the ASLC). The ASLC is a non-designated local heritage asset that

has a character and identity which local residents value and the Council wishes to preserve or enhance¹. The special quality of the ASLC and thus its significance as a non-designated heritage asset, mainly stem from the regular pattern and largely harmonious form, design and materials of the area's residential dwellings, which pleasingly accommodate the steeply sloping land of the locale. Whilst it is apparent that a number of individual properties in the area have been altered and/or extended, these changes have not undermined the townscape value of the ASLC as a whole.

7. No 4 displays key characteristics of the built form and pattern of development which are typical of the area. As such, it positively contributes to the townscape merit and significance of the ASLC.
8. The proposal would maintain the height and pitch of the appeal property's existing roof. However, it would convert the roof's distinctive pyramidal shape to a large deep crown form, detrimentally altering a characteristic architectural element of the building. Moreover, it would appreciably increase the bulk and massing of the roof at the rear, transforming the existing property's modest form and scale to a harmful degree. In these respects, the proposal would not be subservient to or respect the architectural style of the original building.
9. In adversely altering the characteristic form and design of a property which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the area, it logically follows that the proposal would undermine the special quality of the ASLC. In doing so, it would harm the significance of this non-designated heritage asset.
10. Given the topography of the area, I am not persuaded that the proposal and its harmful effects on the property and the ASLC would be sufficiently screened and/or mitigated by the property of No 2 Hillside Rise. Rather, they would be unduly conspicuous and readily perceived when viewed from adjacent public routes.
11. In undertaking a 'balanced judgement'², whilst the proposal would create additional accommodation within the property, this is not sufficient to justify or outweigh the identified harm to the significance of the ASLC.
12. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of No 4 Hillside Rise and the Hillside, Northwood Hills Area of Special Local Character. As such, it would be contrary to Policy BE1 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1- Strategic Policies, 2012; and Policies DMHD 1, DMHB 5 and DMHB 11 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2- Development Management Policies, 2020. Together and amongst other things, these policies require new development to improve and maintain the quality of the built environment; be subservient to and respect the architectural style and design of the original house; ensure that there is no adverse cumulative impact of the proposal on the character, appearance or quality of the existing street or wider area; and be designed to the highest standards, incorporating principles of good design. It would also not accord with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework which seek to achieve well-designed places.

¹ Supporting text to Policy DMHB 5 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2- Development Management Policies, 2020.

² Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

13. In support of the appeal the appellant has drawn my attention to alterations and extensions to other properties in the vicinity of No 4, namely 'Lyndhurst'; No 2 Hillside Rise, allowed at appeal in 2017³; No 5 Hillside Rise, granted by the Council in 2005; and No 8 Hillside Rise, granted by the Council in 2009.
14. I viewed these properties when on site. However, I do not have the full details of the appeal and applications, or the circumstances that led to those developments being accepted. Moreover, I note that the character and appearance of No 2 Hillside Rise or the area are not cited by the appellant in relation to the appeal; and that the developments at No 5 Hillside Rise and No 8 Hillside Rise were granted under a previous development plan. As such, I am unable to draw any meaningful comparisons and they attract little weight in favour of the appeal.
15. In any event, the fact that apparently similar alterations and/or extensions exist is not, in itself, a reason to allow unacceptable development. I have considered this appeal proposal on its own planning merits and the specific context of the appeal site and found that it would cause harm as outlined above.
16. The appellant refers to a 'fall-back position' of a 'lawful development certificate for a rear gable and two large side dormer' which, they consider, would be more obtrusive within the street scene. It is not clear whether the appellant has applied for and/or obtained such a certificate. Even if the appellant is correct in their assertion on this matter, in the absence of any details of such a proposal, I cannot evaluate its effects in comparison to the appeal proposal before me. Moreover, there is no evidence that there is any greater than a theoretical possibility that such a development might take place or that it would be a realistic alternative to the appeal development. This severely limits the weight I can attach to this matter as a fall-back position.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan taken as a whole and there are no other material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

F Cullen

INSPECTOR

³ Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/17/3166702, 2 Hillside Rise.