



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2023

by P D Sedgwick BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th December 2023

APP/R5510/D/23/3327580

25 Micawber Avenue, Hillingdon, Middlesex, UB8 3NY

- 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 Miss Karen Wilson against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref 1687/APP/2023/1371, dated 11 May 2023, was refused by notice dated 5 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is loft conversion and creation of a dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development upon:
 - the character and appearance of the building and surrounding area; and,
 - the living conditions of occupiers of Nos 23 and 27 Micawber Avenue, with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Micawber Avenue is a residential street with detached bungalows set back from the pavement edge behind front gardens and drives. Most houses are orientated with their gable ends facing the road and forming their front elevation. Some houses have one or more side dormers, including the appeal property, and in a few cases where houses are laid out with the main roof facing the road, there are front dormers. However, for the most part the roofscape within the street remains unaltered.
4. The appeal property has a flat roofed side dormer facing 2 side dormers on the neighbouring house, No 23. The proposal is to extend the existing dormer and add one on the other side of the roof. The proposed dormers would fall below the maximum size limits set out in Policy DMHD 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) (DMP) which states that extensions should not exceed more than two thirds the average width of the original roof. Nonetheless, they would substantially exceed the guideline in the policy supporting text which suggests that new roof extensions should not cover more than a third of the main roof.

5. There are several examples of large flat roofed side and front dormers within the street, including on 2 houses opposite the appeal site. However, these are conspicuous because of their scale and bulky appearance, in contrast to the smaller more discrete side dormers and unaltered roofscape elsewhere in the street. The proposed side dormers would be smaller than those on the houses opposite, but they would be significantly larger than on No 27 and other houses further along the road. They would appear top heavy and bulky and harm the appearance of the house and wider street scene. The proposal would thus conflict with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (2012) and Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the DMP which require extensions to be subservient and to harmonise with the local context.

Living conditions

6. The existing side dormer on the appeal property already faces directly onto bathroom windows in the side dormers of the neighbouring house, No 23. Those bathroom windows are obscured glazed, although not to a level consistent with providing a good degree of privacy. Nonetheless, the proposed development would not significantly add to the level of overlooking beyond that which already occurs and thus would not result in an increase in harm to the living conditions of occupiers of No 23.
7. No 27 has 2 rooflights. A chimney in front of one of them would obscure views between the proposed dormer windows and the room the rooflight serves. The high position of the other rooflight, relative to the proposed dormer windows, and its angle, would restrict overlooking and ensure the privacy of occupiers of No 27 would not be significantly reduced. I therefore conclude on this main issue that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of 23 and 27 Micawber Avenue and the proposal would not conflict with Policies DMHB11 and DMHD1 of the DMP which seek to prevent development from harming neighbours' amenity.

Other matters

8. The appellant has referred to a larger dormer approved by the Council at 32 Micawber Avenue, opposite the appeal site. I have no details as to when that development was approved or whether it was assessed against the policies in the current Development Plan. In anycase, I have come to my own view regarding the proposed development rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P D Sedgwick

INSPECTOR