



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 May 2025

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M5450/W/25/3359170

1 Ford Close, West Harrow, Harrow HA1 4AX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Gaurav Raheja against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Harrow.
 - The application reference is PL/0006/24.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of a single-family dwelling house into 2 no of self-contained flats and the erection of rear and side extension (as per planning approval).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the conversion of a single-family dwelling house into 2 no of self-contained flats and the erection of rear and side extension (as per planning approval) at 1 Ford Close, West Harrow, Harrow HA1 4AX in accordance with the terms of the application reference PL/0006/24 subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Procedural matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development in the above heading, which is taken from the application form, the submitted plans and accompanying details show that the proposal has 3 main elements. Firstly, the erection of a part 2-storey, part single storey side extension and a single storey rear extension. Secondly, the conversion of the enlarged building to form 2 self-contained flats. Thirdly, several external alterations are proposed including the removal of a chimneystack, the application of render to the principal elevations of the building, and the erection of new fences. I have assessed the proposal on that basis.
3. The reasons for refusal refer to the porch in place at the front of the building, various changes to the detached garage and the outdoor space around it, and a veranda structure. From the description of development given on the application form and my inspection of the plans, these changes form no part of the proposal before me. For the same reason, I reach the same conclusion in relation to the existing metal railings and gate along the highway frontage of the site. I have not, therefore, considered these matters any further.
4. I saw that the proposed development is partly complete, with the rear extension in place, chimneystack removed, internal works to the building underway, and the side addition under construction. While some elements of the appeal scheme were broadly in accordance with the plans, some differences were also evident in relation to the side and rear extensions. For the avoidance of doubt, I have

assessed the proposal as it is shown on the drawings because it is on that basis that planning permission is sought.

5. An interested party raises concern about the accuracy of the drawings that show the existing dwelling and garage. I have taken these concerns into account in my assessment of the proposal, which is based on all the evidence before me and an inspection of the site and its surroundings. On that basis, I am satisfied that the details of the appeal scheme as shown on the plans and detailed in the written evidence allow a reasonable assessment of the development sought.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development firstly, on the character and appearance of the appeal building or the local area; secondly, on vehicle parking; and thirdly, whether the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for the future occupiers of the new ground floor flat with regard to privacy and potential noise and general disturbance.

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal property is a 2-storey semi-detached house at the entrance to a residential street along which 2-storey semi-detached properties and terraces predominate. The proposal is primarily to enlarge and subdivide the appeal property into 2 self-contained flats with a shared front entrance and small hallway.
8. Although the proposed use of No 1 as flats would differ from nearby houses, there would be few, if any, obvious visual clues within the public realm that would disclose this. Despite the conversion and the introduction of extensions, as proposed, the completed building would still resemble a family-sized house in the street scene. The Council has approved side and rear extensions to the main house and the arrangements to store outdoor items such as bins within the site would not necessarily differ to those associated with a single dwelling. From what I saw, the principal elevations of other dwellings along Ford Close include painted render and so the outward appearance of the completed building would not be a discordant or uncharacteristic feature within the local area.
9. An additional household would be introduced, and more people may occupy the new building compared to the appeal property as a single-family house, even with the side and rear extensions in place. Consequently, the proposal could lead to some additional activity, such as the general coming and going of people and their visitors to the new flats. Even so, I am not convinced that these activities would manifest themselves significantly differently from the use of the property as a single dwelling in terms of the effect on the visual character of the local area.
10. On the first main issue, I conclude that the proposed development would not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the appeal building or the local area. As such, it does not conflict with Policy CS1 of the Harrow Core Strategy (CS) or Policies DM 1 and DM 26 of the Harrow Development Management Policies Document (DMPD). These policies promote high standards of design and aim to ensure that development enhances the local context. The appeal scheme also complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that development should be sympathetic to local character.

Vehicle parking

11. The site is within an area with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 5, which indicates a location with good connections to public transport services. Within such areas, Policy T6 of The London Plan (TLP) states that car-free development should be the starting point for all development proposals. As there would be sufficient space in front of the finished building for some off-road vehicle parking, the proposal would be at odds with this policy and TLP Policy T6.1.
12. The plans show no significant change is sought to the forecourt within the site. On that basis, off-road car parking would still be available to the occupiers of No 1 if it were it to remain as a single dwelling. From what I saw, the site is within a short walking or cycling distance of Harrow town centre and with its wide range of shops and services, several bus services and a train station. Future occupiers of the new flats would therefore have a genuine choice of transport other than the private car. As a result, not all future occupiers will necessarily have regular access to a car, nor would the proposal lead to an increase in the demand for vehicle parking. In other words, a car-free lifestyle would be a realistic option for future residents.
13. Taking car-free development as a starting point, the local circumstances in this case mean that the provision of off-street parking would be acceptable. Accordingly, there is no conflict with TLP Policies T6 and T6.1, CS Policy CS1 or DMPD Policy DM 42 insofar as they require car parking to be restricted in sustainable locations that are well connected and accessible by public transport.

Living conditions

14. Because the front bedroom of the new ground floor flat would face the road and be close to the main entrance to the building, there could be some overlooking and potential noise and general disturbance from people arriving and leaving the property. In my experience, some overlooking of this type and pedestrian activity around main entrances are often characteristics of properties containing ground floor flats. In this instance, the level of activity related to the new first floor flat is likely to be modest and it is not unusual for residents to be aware of comings and goings around a building containing flats. In that context, the overlooking possible and the potential for noise and general disturbance would not be so great as to significantly diminish the enjoyment of the new ground floor flat by its occupiers.
15. On the third main issue, I conclude that the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers. As such, it does not conflict with TLP Policy D6, CS Policy CS1, DMPD Policies DM 1 and DM 26 or the Council's Supplementary Planning Document, *Residential Design Guide* insofar as they aim to safeguard residential amenity.

Other matters

16. Each of the new flats would exceed minimum space standards and the enlarged building would continue to stand comfortably within a good-sized plot. As such, the proposal would not amount to an overly intensive use of the building nor represent over development of the site. There is no persuasive evidence that the proposal would cause or lead to fly tipping or a significant increase in the demand for car parking compared to the use of No 1 as a single dwelling. In the absence of any persuasive evidence to the contrary, I find that the proposal would not cause or exacerbate local on-street parking problems, to which an interested party refers.

Conditions

17. The Council has not suggested any conditions be imposed if the appeal were to be allowed. Nevertheless, several conditions are necessary to ensure that the development is acceptable. As works on site have started, the standard time limit condition is not required. It is, however, necessary to impose a condition that requires the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for certainty.
18. It is important to ensure that the finished building has a unified appearance and full details of the materials to be used such as the precise colour of the render and the type of roof tile have not been provided. Given that development has started, this can be achieved if details of the external materials are submitted for approval within 3-months of this decision. It is necessary to impose a condition to this effect, in the interests of achieving a satisfactory appearance for the development. For the same reason, and to facilitate and encourage cycling, a condition is imposed requiring details of refuse, recycling and cycle storage.

Conclusion

19. Overall, there are no material considerations that indicate the development should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR

Schedule of conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PN-001, PN-002, PN-003 Rev 3.0, PN-004, PN-005 Rev 3.0, PN-006 Rev 3.0, PN-007, PN-008, PN-009, PN-010, PN-011 Rev 3.0 and PN-012.
- 2) Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, no flat hereby permitted shall be occupied until cycle storage and refuse and recycling storage facilities have been provided in accordance with a scheme that has previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved cycle storage and refuse and recycling storage facilities shall be permanently retained thereafter.
- 3) Within 3-months of the date of this decision, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted for approval by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.