



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 June 2025

by **J J Evans BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F5540/W/25/3359310

53 Oxford Road South, Chiswick, Hounslow, London W4 3DD

- 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 Adam Licudi against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hounslow.
 - The application Ref is P/2024/3106.
 - The development proposed is described as “loft conversion including changing the roof from hipped to gable and roof dormer. This is in addition to alteration of rear elevation window sizes to allow more natural light in the property. The existing property consists of 2 self-contained residential units, ground and first floor unit (No 53) and another lower ground unit (No 53A).”
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed insofar as it relates to changing the roof from hipped to gable and roof dormer. The appeal is allowed insofar as it relates to the alteration of rear elevation window sizes.
2. Planning permission is granted for the alterations to the rear elevation windows at 53 Oxford Road South, Chiswick, Hounslow, London W4 3DD, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref P/2024/3106, so far as relevant to that part of the works hereby permitted and the plans submitted with it, and subject to the following conditions:-
 - 1) The development hereby granted permission shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:- Site and location plan (P-01); Existing elevations (P-03); Existing first and roof plan (P-02); Proposed elevations and section (P-MG-03); and Proposed first, loft and roof plan (P-04).
 - 3) The external materials of the alterations to the rear elevation windows, doors and brickwork hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

3. 53 Oxford Road South (No 53) is within the Wellesley Road Conservation Area. As required by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) special regard has been paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this case are:

- the effect of the scheme upon the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area; and
- the effect of the scheme upon the living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to fire safety.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property is at one end of a short terrace that is within a mostly residential area that comprises predominantly houses. The terrace is positioned on a gently sloping hillside, to one side of the highway behind regularly shaped front gardens. The front elevation of these houses comprises two storeys with brick and render walls under a tiled hipped roof, and to the rear of No 53 there is a basement that is level with the rear garden. The rear garden of the appeal property is at a much lower level than the neighbouring garden of 55 Oxford Road South (No 55).
6. There is a distinct, high-quality, historic character and appearance to the conservation area as a result of it having been developed as a Victorian suburb. The planned nature of the area remains legible with the presence of numerous mostly Victorian houses that form defined lines behind similar sized front gardens that frame either side of the roads. These long lines, and the repeated presence of mostly two storey richly decorated and styled houses gives a harmoniously cohesive appearance to the area. There are long sweeping views of these attractive houses when viewed from the roads, and although this is a densely grained residential area, the presence of front and often generous sized rear gardens creates a verdant setting to the houses. All these features, including the domestic scale of the buildings, are part of the significance of the conservation area.
7. The terrace has a simple, plain symmetrical style and form, with large windows and no articulation, features that reflect its construction in the early part of the twentieth century. Despite the modest appearance of the terrace, its deliberate symmetry, including that resulting from its hipped roof, its palette of materials, and its two storey height, all reflect the qualities of the nearby Victorian houses. In addition, the terrace is set back from the highway behind front gardens, thereby maintaining the long continuity of the building line that exists along the road, as well as allowing the imposing impact of Oxford Mansions to remain as a focal point in the street-scene. Whilst the terrace does not have the ornate Victorian detailing that is a characteristic element of the significance of the conservation area, given the similarities of the building with nearby houses, the appeal property makes a modest positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
8. To the rear of the terrace as a whole there are a variety of alterations and extensions. The proposed rear window alterations would retain the existing position of the openings, albeit inserting broader ones. The style of the windows and doors proposed would replicate those already present. The provision of a Juliette balcony on the ground floor window would not appear overly dominant given that it would retain the style of the existing windows and have a similar size to the altered window in the floor above. The arched headers above each opening would be either maintained or extended, thereby retaining the detailing of the property and its visual focus upon the openings. As such these alterations would

- retain the style and appearance of the existing dwelling and that of the terrace as a whole, thereby preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area.
9. The proposed rear dormer would necessitate the replacement of the hipped roof end with a gable one. Whilst the dormer would be set back from the flank wall and down from the ridge, the alteration of the roof form would disrupt the symmetry of the terrace. The simplicity of the form of the building would be lost, and it would thereby erode the modest contribution it makes to the conservation area. Furthermore, the resultant unbalanced appearance of the building would be apparent from long distances, both from the higher land at the top end of Oxford Road South, and also when approaching the property when travelling from the west.
 10. It might be that the existing trees could provide some screening, but landscaping cannot be relied upon to be retained for the lifetime of the development. The side extension and garage to the property at the other end of the terrace (49 Oxford Road South) have a subservience of form and size as well as being set well down from the roofscape so as not to detract from the symmetry of the hipped roof. When approaching the property from the west, the curve of the road would make the altered roof apparent, and rather than have the recessive appearance of the existing roof, the increased bulk would be conspicuously evident.
 11. The Council's Character, Sustainability and Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (2024) advises that changing hipped roofs to flat gable-ended ones will normally not be acceptable, unless an adjoining house has this type of alteration. Despite No 55 having a gable end, the loss of the hipped roof on the appeal property would harmfully and conspicuously unbalance the terrace, eroding the contribution it makes to the conservation area. Many of the nearby houses have been extended, including some with extensions into the roof, as has occurred at 51 Oxford Road South (No 51). Whilst the dormer would have a size and positioning similar to that present on the neighbouring house, given that this dormer is in a mid-roof position it has not altered the symmetry of the terrace's roof form, nor therefore the contribution the building makes to the street-scene. The rear extensions present on 55, 57 and 59 Oxford Road South include alterations to the rear roofs, but despite their size and form they have largely retained the cohesion of the front elevations and their contribution to the street scene. Given these differences, none of these comparisons form binding precedents for allowing the alterations to the roof.
 12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. In this case the scheme would lead to less than substantial harm given the size of the extension compared to that of the conservation area as a whole, albeit this harm would be at the lower end of the scale. Nevertheless, the Framework requires such harm has to be afforded great weight, and also weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate securing the optimum viable use.
 13. The flat is currently unoccupied, and future occupiers would benefit from the provision of an additional bedroom. However, the extension would not be essential to allow the flat to be occupied to maintain a viable use, and the benefits that arise from the scheme would be personal rather than public ones and would not outweigh the considerable harm to the conservation area.

14. The Council's decision notice refers to harm resulting from the proposed roof windows, which would be positioned within the front facing roof slope. There are several other houses nearby with front facing rooflights, including those within No 51, and those proposed would be to one side of the roof of the appeal property, having a carefully considered position above the large windows within the front elevation. However, the roof windows depend upon the roof alterations, and given the findings on the other elements of this aspect of the scheme, their provision has not been considered further.
15. The alterations to the rear elevation windows would not harm the character and appearance of the area or the terrace and would preserve the conservation area. These works would accord with the Act and the Framework and also with the requirements of Policies CC1, CC2, CC4 and SC7 of the London Borough of Hounslow Local Plan (2015) (LP), as these policies seek amongst other things, high quality design that responds to the site and its surroundings, that which conserves and takes opportunities to enhance the conservation area and also that of areas with a high quality, well established coherent character, and that extensions and alterations complement the original building, harmonise with adjoining properties, and maintain the street scene.
16. However, the alterations to the roof and the provision of a dormer would unacceptably detract from the area, neither preserving nor enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. This aspect of the scheme would be contrary to the Act, to the Framework and also to the above referenced requirements of LP Policies CC1, CC2, CC4 and SC7.

Living Conditions

17. Policy D12 of the London Plan (2021) requires all development to achieve the highest standards of fire safety, in order to reduce the risk to life, minimise the risk of fire spread and provide suitable and convenient means of escape. A Fire Safety Statement (FSS) accompanied the original application, albeit not submitted on the FSS template, and a Reasonable Exception Statement (RES) has been provided for the appeal. The appellant considers the current fire safety measures would be appropriate for a modest residential extension, particularly as additional measures would also be incorporated such as fire doors, smoke and carbon monoxide alarm detectors, and means of escape and evacuation.
18. Despite the provision of the FSS and RES, the Council has not commented upon whether the scheme would provide a safe home for future occupiers. The Planning Practice Guidance advises that fire safety measures should be met for relevant buildings, and these are defined as those that contain two or more dwellings and are 18m in height or are seven storeys or more. The building provides two flats but does not accord with the height requirements. Having regard to this and that the conversion of the loft space is not considered acceptable, the window alterations and proposed fire safety measures would provide future occupiers with the highest standard of fire safety. As there is no evidence from the Council to dispute this, the alterations to the rear windows would thereby accord with the above referenced policy.

Other Matters

19. Local residents have raised concern regarding overlooking from the proposed Juliette window. However, there is already a degree of mutual overlooking

occurring between the properties in the terrace and those nearby. As the alterations would be in the same position as the existing openings, albeit slightly larger, they would not result in a significant loss of privacy to nearby residents.

20. The appellant has raised concerns regarding the Council's handling of the application. Such matters fall to be pursued by other means and have no bearing on the consideration of the merits of the case.

Conditions

21. No conditions have been suggested by the Council. Notwithstanding this, the standard time condition has been imposed, as has one requiring the window and door alterations to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, so as to avoid doubt and in the interests of proper planning. As the new windows and doors would necessitate alterations to the brickwork, a condition requiring matching external materials has also been imposed to preserve the character and appearance of the building and the contribution it makes to the conservation area.

Conclusion

22. The proposed alterations to the rear windows would preserve the character and appearance of the area and that of the conservation area, and would afford future occupiers with acceptable living conditions with regard to fire safety. However, the alterations to the roof and the dormer would result in unacceptable harm to the area and would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. There would be conflict with the development plan taken as a whole, and also conflict with the Act. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Thus, for the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is part allowed and part dismissed.

J J Evans

INSPECTOR