



**Statement of Case of the
Appellant**

Development at:

**34 Watford Road
Northwood
London
HA6 3NT**

Prepared By

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Mr & Mrs Lothian

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1.0 Introduction & Background

Planning Base Ltd have been instructed to prepare a householder planning appeal following the decision of London Borough of Hillingdon to refuse planning permission for ***single storey rear extension and first floor side extension to include a front dormer and 2 rear rooflights*** at the property known as 34 Watford Road, Northwood, London HA6 3NT

This is a simple proposal to provide better living arrangements at what is a residential property located in a highly sustainable and accessible location. The purpose of this Statement of Case is to respond to the issues raised in the case officer's report and to prove that there is compliance with the development plan.

2.0 Site & Surroundings

The appeal site is located on the south side of Watford Road (A4125) which connects the A404 with the centre of Watford. More specifically, the appeal site is one of a pair of detached properties that share the same access close to the junction with Elgood Avenue. There is a bus stop directly outside of the access drive to 34 & 36 Watford Road. This part of Watford Road has an avenue feel with relatively wide pavements accommodating a line of deciduous trees.

The character of the area is very much one of mixed dwelling types. Directly opposite from the appeal site is Chesham Court which is a mid-twentieth century flat roofed terraced development of little architectural appeal. The remaining dwellings within a 50 metre radius are largely detached and semi-detached properties. As Watford Road continues in a north-easterly direction, the land rises and also properties are naturally set back in a dip either side of the highway. That is the case with the appeal site – when

viewing from the entrance to the site it is evident that the existing dwelling sits on significantly lower ground with eye-level almost level with the ridge height of the garage at 34 Watford Road.



Figure 1 - Chesham Court - directly opposite to the appeal site

In addition to the prevailing topography, both 34 and 36 Watford Road are particularly well screened and therefore are not dominant within the street scene. Both properties are bordered by a close boarded timber fence and in the case of 34 Watford Road, there is a row of evergreen trees that further reduce the visibility of the subject appeal property from the public domain. To the south of the appeal site are those properties at the cul-de-sac of Brookdene Drive. Again, the Inspector will note at the site visit that there is excellent natural screening between the rear garden of the appeal site and those properties backing on to the appeal site at Brookdene Drive. The appeal site is well-screened from Brookdene Drive itself with extremely limited views available. It is fair to say that only glimpsed views are possible of the appeal site from the public highway and even from close neighbouring properties, visibility is limited.



Figure 2 - View from Watford Road looking at appeal property (red arrow)

The tree officer confirms that the ‘mature woodland / tree screen’ along the frontage of the property is protected by group Tree Preservation Orders - whilst the proposal does not impact upon any of the trees, it is welcome to

know that the trees are protected in law and will therefore continue to maintain natural screening along the frontage of the appeal site.

The planning officer considered that there is an existing 'visually open gap' between 34 and 36 Watford Road and that the proposal would result in a closure of this 'gap'. The area in question, effectively the two garages attached to 34 and 36 Watford Road, is set out in Figure 3.



Figure 3 - 'The Gap'

3.0 Main Issues

It is common ground between the local planning authority and the appellant that there are no concerns with the impact upon the residential amenity of neighbours. This appeal is purely with regard to whether the 'closing of the open gap' would give rise to a cramped form of development or cause harm to the character of the area.

4.0 Development Plan

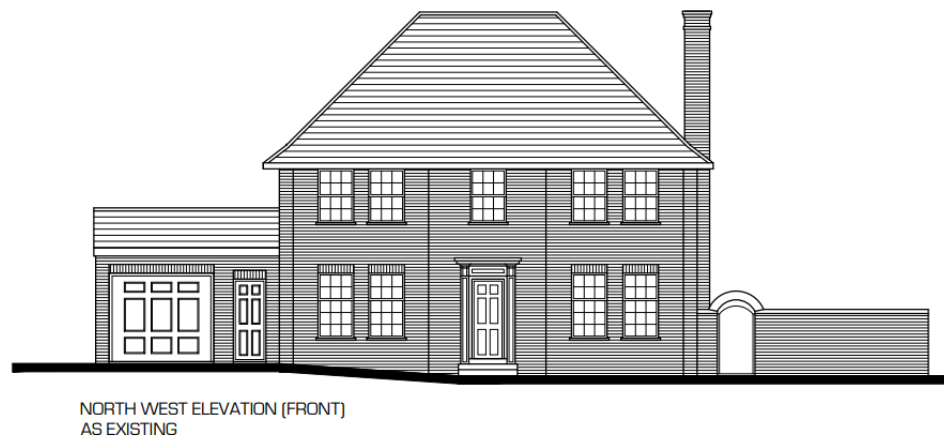
The local planning authority, in making the decision to refuse householder planning permission, consider that the proposal is contrary to Policies BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies (adopted November 2012) and Policies BE13, BE19 and BE 22 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two – Saved UDP Policies (adopted November 2012) and the adopted Supplementary Planning Document HDAS: Residential Extensions.

It is of vital importance to note that the appeal site does not lie within a Conservation Area and that there are no listed buildings in the near proximity of the site. Nor is the site located within any special character areas and the views through the site are not designated or protected in any way. This is an urban location afforded no special protection in the Development Plan.

Policy BE1 concerns the built environment and eleven criteria are listed to which all development must adhere. It is considered that only the first two criteria are relevant to this appeal. The others relate to cases involving more than 10 dwellings; lifetime homes standards; minimising crime; tall buildings; reducing climate change and so forth.

1. Achieve a high quality of design in all new buildings, alterations, extensions and the public realm which enhances the local distinctiveness of the area, contributes to community cohesion and a sense of place;
2. Be designed to be appropriate to the identity and context of Hillingdon's buildings, townscapes, landscapes and views, and make a positive contribution to the local area in terms of layout, form, scale and materials and seek to protect the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential properties;

In terms of the two relevant elements of the Policy set out above, the proposal is considered to represent a high quality of design. The scheme has been produced by a RIBA architectural practice and comparison of the existing and proposed principle elevation confirms that the side extension will continue to be subservient to the main part of the property and that this will not lead to a significant loss of 'the gap'.



In addition, the proposal materials will be similar to that already in evidence. There is considered to be zero impact upon Hillingdon's '*buildings, townscapes, landscapes and views*' as set out in BE1. The existing garage structure element is an important consideration – this already forms part of the street scene and closes any 'gap'. The first floor addition is modest and with a pitched roof design sloping away from 36 Watford Road. It is telling that there were no letters of objection to the planning application. It is considered that the proposals serve to enhance local distinctiveness – and must be read in the context of surrounding development. The application property does have some architectural merit compared with neighbouring developments and the architect has taken great care in ensuring that the additions are sympathetic.

Policy DMHB13 of Part Two (termed BE13 in the decision notice) is very similar to BE1 and concerns design.

Policy DMHB13: Design of Development

A) Development will be required to be designed to the highest quality standards, incorporating principles of good design including:

- i) harmonising with the existing street scene and setting taking into account the surrounding:**
 - **scale, height, mass, bulk and form of development;**
 - **building plot sizes, plot coverage and street patterns;**
 - **building lines and setbacks, rooflines, streetscape rhythm and other streetscape elements;**
 - **architectural composition; and**
 - **natural environment.**
- ii) ensuring the use of high quality building materials and finishes;**
- iii) ensuring that the internal design and layout of development maximises sustainability and is adaptable to different activities; and**
- iv) protecting features of positive value within the site.**

In terms of (i), the officer alleges that the size of the extension close to the boundary with 36 Watford Road is a cause to create cramped development.

The appellant disputes this as the garage building is already in situ and therefore the footprint of development is already established – whilst there is a minor increase in footprint to the rear (the officer accepts that this is not an issue in the report), the footprint does not shift closer to 36 Watford Road. The proposal is not considered to be excessive in terms of scale, height, mass or bulk – see previous comments about the maintenance of subservient development and area in the detailed design of the roof pitch. As such, there is very little additional visual impact as can be noted by comparing the existing and proposed elevations. The building plot size and coverage remains the same, building lines aren't impacted upon and there is no harm to the natural environment – therefore criteria (i) is passed. The proposal seeks to utilise the same high quality materials in evidence in the existing dwelling and this proposal will create additional habitable floorspace in a sustainable manner. Therefore criteria (ii) and (iii) are complied with. Criteria (iv) discusses features of positive value. It is under this heading that the officer might set out the issue concerning the 'gap'. The garage already reduces the 'gap' and the additional built form has a negligible impact with regard to through-views. At present all that can be seen is the backdrop of tall trees both within the garden of the appeal site and those gardens at Brookdene Drive. Those trees will continue to be visible from Watford Road and as noted previously, there are only limited views through the site due to the prevailing topography and screening.

The remaining Part 2 policies relate to alterations and extensions to residential dwellings. It is common ground that there are no amenity impacts to neighbours and that accounts for the majority of the criteria set out within BE 19 and BE22.

Planning applications relating to alterations and extensions of dwellings will be required to ensure that there is:

- i) no adverse cumulative impact of the proposal on the character, appearance or quality of the area;**
- ii) no adverse effect on the character of the existing street;**
- iii) A satisfactory relationship to any adjacent dwellings must be achieved;**
- iv) Provision of subservient extensions will be required, to allow an appreciation of the original built form and surroundings;**
- v) No loss of outlook;**
- vi) The retention of an adequate amount of garden space;**
- vii) The retention of adequate off-street parking; and**
- viii) The retention of trees, hedges and other landscaping features.**

It is considered that there will be impact upon character as already addressed. A satisfactory relationship between 34 and 36 Watford Road is maintained due to the care taken in the design process by the architect. The extension is subservient and allows an appreciation of the original built form. As such all of the criteria is once again adhered to. Within this policy there is also special provision for side extensions.

B) Side Extensions

- i) Side extensions should not exceed half the width of the original width of the application property;**
- ii) Two storey side extensions should be set in a minimum of 1 metre from the side boundary or in the case of properties in Copse Wood and Gatehill Estates, 1.5 metres;**
- iii) Two storey side extensions to detached and semi-detached properties should be recessed a minimum of 1 metre behind the main front elevation; and**
- iv) Where hip to gable roof extensions exist, a two storey side extension will not be supported.**

There is already a ground floor side element (garage) and in any case this is not half of the width of the main house. The two storey element will not increase the footprint upon which the garage sits (closer to number 36) and so there is no contradiction with criteria (ii). The side extension will continue

to be recessed behind the main front elevation in accordance with the existing garage. The proposal does not constitute a hip to gable roof extension and therefore all of these elements are complied with. Crucially, the existing garage footprint is respected and therefore there is no additional incursion towards the neighbour at number 36.

Further amplification of this policy is set out within the Supplementary Planning Document (pages 20 to 23). There are examples of good and bad practice contained within the document and the proposal is very similar to the good practice example set out at paragraph 5.10 (reproduced below).



Of course, all of the examples don't take account of having an existing first floor side extension as is the case at the appeal site.

5.0 Summary

It is respectfully requested that this appeal be allowed. The issues should be dealt with on a case by case basis and the fact that there is an existing ground floor side extension is an important material consideration when assessing character impact and any issues relating to the closing of the gap. The proposal does not constitute a cramped form of development as evidenced

by the fact that it is in total compliance with each of the development plan policies. There is only a limited gap through the site already (and that is only from glimpsed views) and the modest first floor element will not cause any harm to the character of the area. The appellant has assessed the development plan policies and considers that the scheme is in compliance with all of the criteria set out – the Design Guide is more relevant to linear forms of development of set character. The loss of a small gap at first floor level is not considered to result in material harm to the character of the area. The scheme will provide much needed additional habitable space for a family home without impacting upon neighbouring residential amenity.