

Appeal Statement

40a Windmill Hill Ruislip, HA4 8PX

Conversion of roof space to habitable use to include a rear dormer and 3 front rooflights



1.0 Introduction:

This appeal relates to a refused decision against application 15193/APP/2021/2180 at 40a Windmill Hill, Ruislip, HA4 8PX. The application proposed the following:

“Conversion of roof space to habitable use to include a rear dormer and 3 frontlights”

The reasons for refusal were as follows:

1. *The roof alterations/extensions by reason of the size, scale, bulk and design of the rear dormer window would fail to harmonise with the architectural composition of the original property and would be detrimental to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the streetscene and the surrounding area. Therefore the proposal would be contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One Strategic Policies November 2012 and Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12, and DMHD1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part Two- Development Management Policies (January 2020).*

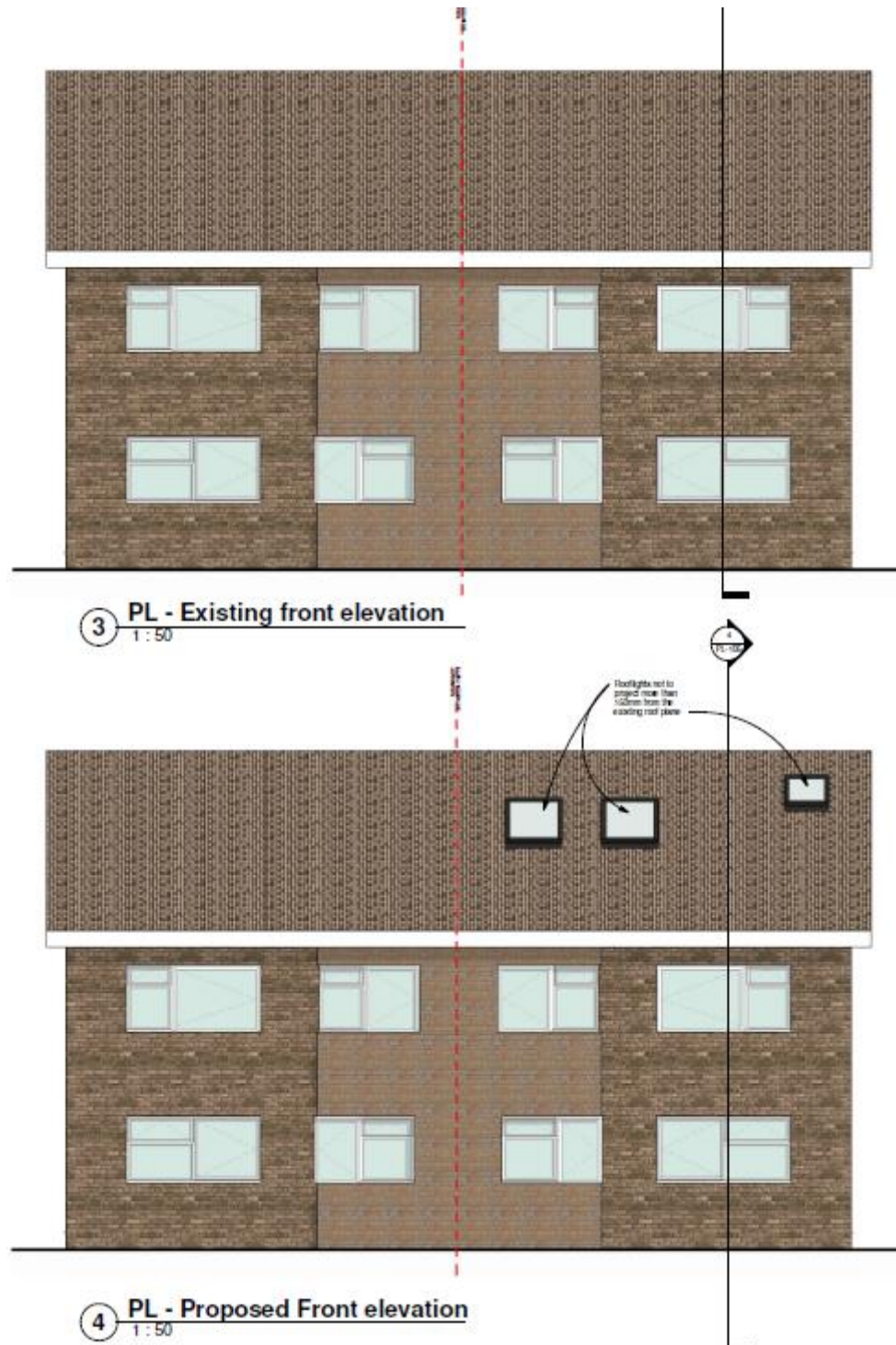
Obviously this case is a matter of judgement and design subjectivity. Throughout this appeal statement we will seek to outline that the proposed rear dormer extension front rooflights whilst it is acknowledged adds a form of bulk and design alteration to the rear roof ultimately does not cause unacceptable visual harm to the property or the adjoining area. There are a number of similar dormer style extensions in the area and we fail to see how this additional dormer would create such additional harm to warrant refusal. The dormer would be very well shielded from view from the main front streetscene and would only be visible from the rear communal area and the neighbouring rear gardens. Overall it is considered it would have an acceptable planning and design impact and should have been allowed.

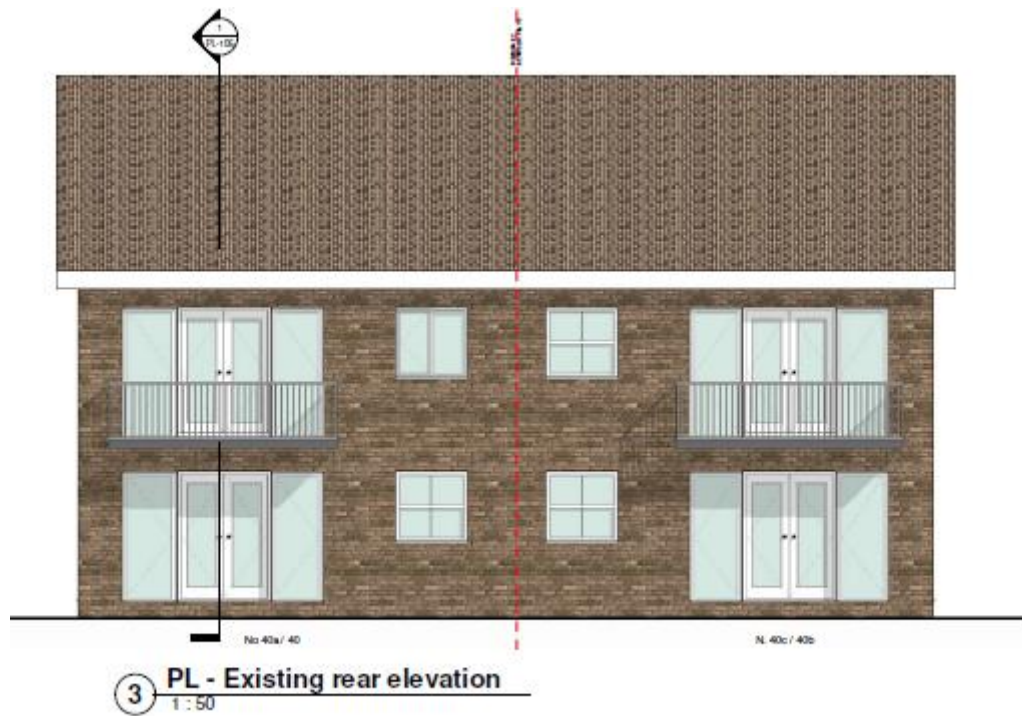
2.0 Site and Surroundings

The appeal site is a 2 storey detached building with a pitched roof addressed as 40a Windmill Hill. It consists of 4 flats 2 on the ground and 2 on the first floors with the roofspaces over each flats demised to the two upper floor flats. The property subject of this application is the upper first floor flat 40a that is located on the right hand side of the building as one looks at it from the front streetscene. The site is directly accessed from the street, there is a communal rear garden and parking area. The surrounding area is predominantly residential consisting of houses or residential flat building, although shortly down the road is Manor Way and Ruslip Manor High Street a mixed retail and residential area. The site is not located in a Conservation Area nor is it Listed.

3.0 Proposal

As referred to earlier the application proposed a Conversion of roofspace to habitable use to include a rear dormer and 3 front rooflights. Elevation image of the proposal have been outlined ad below cropped from the proposed drawings:





4.0 Relevant Planning History

There is no relevant planning history on the site with the exception of this application.

5.0 Relevant Planning Policies

The following Local Plan Policies are considered relevant to the application:-

Part 1 Policies:

PT1.BE1 (2012) Built Environment

Part 2 Policies:

DMHB 4 Conservation Areas

DMHB 11 Design of New Development

DMHB 12 Streets and Public Realm

DMHB 18 Private Outdoor Amenity Space

DMHD 1 Alterations and Extensions to Residential Dwellings

DMT 6 Vehicle Parking

LPP D6 (2021) Housing quality and standards

6.0 Grounds for Appeal

The application has been refused for one reason as referred to as below:

The roof alterations/extensions by reason of the size, scale, bulk and design of the rear dormer window would fail to harmonise with the architectural composition of the original property and would be detrimental to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the streetscene and the surrounding area. Therefore the proposal would be contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One Strategic Policies November 2012 and Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12, and DMHD1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part Two- Development Management Policies (January 2020).

From assessing the reason for refusal and from reading the officer's report, the objections to the application are with regards character and the perceived impact of the proposed rear dormer to the character and of the original building and the outlying area as a whole. As a starting point it should be noted that the applicant is not just looking to extend the property for the sake of it, they are a young family with children and relatives regularly visiting in what is essentially a small two bedroom flat with only 2 proper usable bedrooms at first floor level. Whilst we realise that this is not a specific planning argument it is considered important to outline the personal justification for the proposal and the need for the extra space.

Also we have had email correspondence and numerous unreturned phonecalls and the council don't seem to be willing to enter into any form of dialogue or constructive

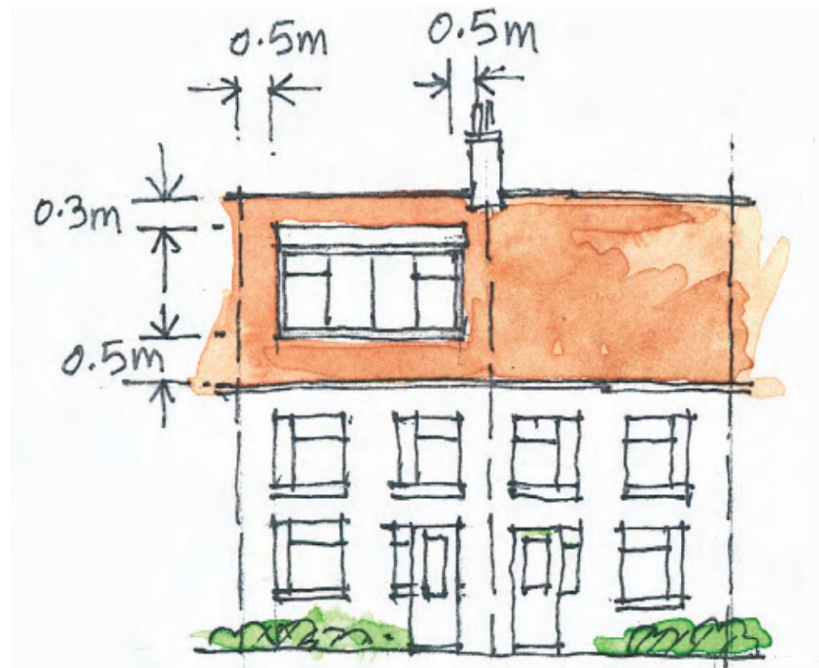
feedback and essentially the answer we have received is that they don't consider that any form of roof extensions or even the insertion of rooflights is acceptable. This has led to this appeal just seems ridiculous frankly when one walks around the area and can see numerous dormer extensions and rooflights. There are rooflights directly onto the busier retail parade on Manor Way which are all located in a much more noticeable location.

The officer's report criticises the proposed development, stating that the dormer would *"not be centrally positioned on the roof and that the introduction of a dormer roof extension would unbalance the symmetry of the building"*.

From a practical perspective the applicant owns their own flat which includes the roof area above that flat which is to the left side of the building when viewed from the rear. Therefore practically this issue of centrally locating the dormer is not feasible as the area to the right is not within the demise of the ownership regardless of planning considerations.

In addition to this issue of symmetry whilst one can understand where the officer is coming from this is mainly due to the fact that the building remains unaltered from its original construction. Whilst we acknowledge that the building is a purpose built block of 4 flats and whilst somewhat symmetrical, it is of a traditional build design of the residential character of the area which is predominantly houses in semi-detached or detached form. Whilst acknowledging that the building is a block of 4 flats, due to this symmetry visually it would also easily appear as a symmetrical pair of semi-detached houses. As such one has to question whether the council would look to refuse planning permission outright or completely disregard a dormer on a similar setting of 2 semi-detached houses. They definitely would not and even in Conservation Areas as an agent with experience in the borough over a number of years we have had a number of approvals for roof extensions including on a number of semi-detached houses in Conservations Area mainly around Ruislip.

As such this stance of rejecting the principle of a dormer outright in this case is unreasonable in our opinion. The dormer was designed in accordance with the council original residential design guidance for such extensions. The residential design guidance specifically the section in relation to roof extensions states paragraph 7 "that roof extensions should be secondary to the main roof and be set in 500mm from the sides and 300mm down from the ridge line". An image of the sketch on the council's guidance from page 29 is shown as below in comparison to our proposed rear elevation.



It is considered that the proposed dormer is acceptable and in general accordance with the councils guidance for extensions, it is well set in from all edges of the roof set down from the ridge and up from the eaves and away from the sides of the roof an overall in our professional opinion appears subordinate and proportionate to the

roof and in general accordance with the other dormers that have been approved adjacent the site on Manor Way which can be seen from the rear of the site.



Image of similar rear dormer on Manor Way adjacent the site.

In addition to this and whilst the dormer could be seen from the rear, it would have little or no impact when viewed from the main front streetscene on Windmill Hill, due to the fact that the dormer is subordinate and set in from the side of the roof it would not be visible on the northbound approach from Ruislip Manor or southbound on Windmill Hill. Therefore it would not have an impact onto the streetscene to Windmill Hill. Please see images as below for clarification of this.



View of site across Windmill Hill heading northbound



View towards the site on the southbound approach on Windmill Hill.

Substitute Drawings

Whilst we consider in our opinion that the proposed application is acceptable, we are minded that it has been refused on design grounds which is subjective. However the fact remains that the council are not willing to grant any dormer according to the officer Kelly Sweeney, therefore we are left with no option only to appeal. We would sooner just deal with it directly with the council.

However the applicant just wants the benefit of the space for their growing family and as such if the Inspector is minded to consider the current dormer is too large a substitute set of drawings with a dormer reduced even further has been submitted as part of the appeal documentation for their consideration. These are the set we would have resubmitted to the council but as earlier stated they don't consider any form of dormer is acceptable. An image of this rear elevation is included as below for the Inspectors perusal.



Image of the Rear Dormer on Substitute Appeal Drawings.

Front Rooflights

Whilst the rooflights have not been specifically referred to in the reason for refusal, they are referred to in the officer's report where the officer has raised objection to their inclusion and how they unbalance the appearance of the front of the property. To be honest of this the case that rooflights are now even unacceptable then the council might as well change their policy that no alterations to roofs are allowed at all. At present there is nothing in the councils policy that warrants the refusal of front rooflights or not allowing any rooflights.

These rooflights are considered appropriate to the appearance of the building and are essentially a pretty standard roof alteration nowadays. They are a small Standard rooflight MK4 Velux. The site is not in a Conservation Area, there are a number of properties in the area that contain rooflights. In addition to this there is a large tree to the front of the site and for the majority of the year proposed rooflights would be barely visible. Please image below:



Image of the site with the tree to the front.



Image of Rooflights on Manor Way



Image of rooflights on Manor Way.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is respectfully requested that this appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted. As an ex council officer myself with a number of years' experience I understand and acknowledge that councils have planning policies and guidance that must be followed.

But in this case it is considered that this decision is mis- judged and incorrect. The council's stance on the case that no alterations or roof additions are acceptable at all just seems completely unreasonable based on the relatively low architectural merits of the building in addition to the fact that the area is a relatively standard residential area with examples of a number of other roof dormers, alterations and rooflights. In the area. One only has to stand on the opposite side of the street on Windmill Hill and see how very shielded from view the building is from the street via the large tree to the front, but at the same time in almost the same eyeline see a number of dormers backing onto the site from Manor Way and then a number of rooflights on the frontage of Manor Way.

In addition to this and whilst every case is assessed on its own merits it is considered the dormer proposed to the rear is proportionate to the building and for the most part it would only be visible from the rear garden and not from the front streetscene at all. Overall it is considered to have an acceptable impact on the character of the building.

As referred to earlier in the appeal statement the applicant has submitted a substitute set of plans with a reduced dormer for the consideration of the Inspector if they are minded to consider the original dormer too bulky.

Therefore on the balance of all that has been referred to in this appeal submission we request that the appeal is allowed and look forward to meeting the Planning Inspector on site. Should you require any additional information from us please don't hesitate to contact us on the details on the appeal forms.