

Revised Planning Application

*for the demolition of the existing dwelling and
the erection of 4 flats in a 2½ storey building with
forecourt car parking, cycle parking, new vehicular
access and amenity space*

at:

11 Sandy Lodge Way Northwood HA6 2AH

Planning & Design Statement

3 November 2020

Robin Bretherick Associates

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

**Woodbank The Ridgeway
Gerrards Cross Bucks SL9 8NP**

Ph: 01753 887745 M: 07710 215913
E-mail: mail@robinbretherick.co.uk

Contents

Introduction & Brief History	3
The Property and its Location	3
The Proposal	3
Changes from Refused Scheme (Jan 2019)	4
Addressing the Policy Issues	5
National Planning Policy Framework (Revised)	5
The London Plan	6
LBH Local Plan Part 1 - Strategic Policies	8
<i>Design Policies & Density</i>	8
LBH Local Plan Part 2 - Dev Management Policies	9
<i>Housing Mix & Residential Floorspace Standards</i>	9
<i>Amenity Spacing & Access</i>	9
<i>Accessibility, Parking and Servicing</i>	10
<i>Landscaping, Trees and Bio-diversity</i>	10
<i>Flood Risk, Hydrology & Drainage</i>	10
Hillingdon Design & Access Statement SPD	10
Conclusion	11

Introduction & Brief History

1. This statement is prepared to support a revised planning application for the redevelopment of 11 Sandy Lodge Way, Northwood. Permission was granted in May 2018 for the demolition of the house on the site and its replacement by 4 flats in a building designed to a 2-storey scale but making use of part of the roof-space and having a partial basement beneath. Six parking spaces were proposed on the forecourt.
2. A revised proposal, of the same visual scale and design but with certain changes, was refused in January 2019. This included an enlargement and greater use of the roof-space and rear first floor balconies. In discussion with the LBH Case Officer (Liz Arnold) at the time, the concerns were explained. Matters were then put on hold for various reasons, most recently Covid limitations.
3. I have been retained to advise and report on the planning issues. I have been fully involved in the evolution of this scheme, with detailed input on matters of design, layout and other planning issues. The officer's views, and my own, have been taken on board in the preparation of the now amended drawings, and other improvements have been included as set out below. I am therefore able to fully support the proposal in its newly revised form.

The Property and its Location

4. Sandy Lodge Way is a residential distributor road, running northwards from Northwood town centre to Batchworth Lane. The site lies just 450m to the north of the town centre (Green Lane) with its shops, services, buses and station.
5. The road is of a mixed character. Opposite the site are a number of 3-storey blocks of flats interspersed with detached houses. Two of these houses, nos 8 & 10, are also to be redeveloped as flats following a permission in 2018, so the character of the road continues to evolve in response to housing pressures. This western side includes detached properties of various sizes, on plots of varying widths and depths. There are also a variety of design styles reflecting their different dates of construction from the 1920s to recent times.
6. The site stands on the corner of Sandy Lodge Way and Grove Road. It has an area of some 0.12 ha with a frontage of more than 19m to Sandy Lodge Way and a return frontage of over 50m to Grove Road. It currently includes an older chalet-bungalow style detached property with front and rear dormer windows and a substantial rear garden. There is just one tree of significance – an imposing mature Oak tree in the rear, north-west corner.

The Proposal

7. As previously permitted, the existing house will be replaced by four flats in a single building having a two-storey character but with greater use of the roof-space. The opportunity has been taken to omit the previously permitted partial basement under, which will minimize disruption and project length.

8. The revisions now propose two 2-bedroom units on the ground floor and two (one 2-bed & one 3-bed) duplex units on the first floor extending into the roof-space. Six parking spaces are again shown in front of the building with cycle parking and bin stores repositioned in the large rear garden.

9. The design concept remains unaltered from the last (May 2018) permission, with its suburban inter-war 'mock-Tudor' character, its half-timbered gabled bays and its asymmetric 'Arts & Crafts' detail. The elevations and materials continue to reflect the detail on some of the other long-established buildings in the road, while the increased use of the roofspace involves internal changes to the upper floors. I comment on the detailed changes below.

10. Overall, the two-storey scale is retained, visually disguising the existence of the roof accommodation and crown roof detail. The external footprint and spacing also remain unchanged but with soft planting shown. The established old Oak tree in the north-west corner is also retained.

Changes from refused scheme (Jan 2019)

11. The May 2018 permission for 4 flats established the external scale of the current proposal, but the Jan 2019 refused scheme was criticised for its rear first floor terraced balconies and its roof scale on the Grove Road frontage. The balconies have now been deleted and certain stretches of the eaves and ridge lines have been lowered on the Grove Road elevation.

12. In detail the changes from the Jan 2019 refused scheme are as follows:

- The front elevation is unchanged in height, design and detail. Previously improved porch detailing is retained in Arts & Crafts style.
- The proposed crown roof has been reduced in height, lowering the ridge line along the Grove Road frontage. This is now set just below the return ridges to the side hipped bays which remain as previously and as approved in the 2018 permission. The crown (flat) roof detail will not therefore be readily visible in the public domain or in the angled views along Grove Road, and the main ridge line is largely masked given its relationship with the surrounding hips and ridges. The principle of crown roofs is established locally by other development and proposals allowed in the surrounding roads (see below) including the 2018 permission for a similar detail at 8 - 10 Sandy Lodge Way.
- A short stretch of lowered eaves line on the Grove Road frontage (previously included on the 2018 approved scheme, but raised in the 2019 scheme) has now been reinstated, ie lowered once more. This has been made possible by a realignment of the wall beneath and by introducing a further fall on the roof itself.

- The terraced balconies have been deleted from the first floor (above the roof of the single-storey rear extensions) avoiding any overlooking of the neighbouring garden at no.9. The related obscure-glazed screens and railings are also deleted, tidying up the rear and side elevational detail in the views along Grove Road from the west, and from houses opposite. The balconies are replaced by a 'Green Roof' detail to be finished in Sedum, or similar. Juliet balconies are added to two of the first floor rear windows for which there is a precedent on the adjoining property (no.9).
- Recessed balconies, previously added within the apex of the rear gables (also see approved scheme for 8-10 SLW) and tucked under the main roof slope, are retained. They were considered acceptable in the last (2019) scheme for this site.
- The basement accommodation has been deleted, with the ground floor flats adjusted and limited to one storey. Ground floor flank windows are repositioned and redesigned, for practicality and consistency.
- A further en-suite bathroom has been added to flat 1.
- A disabled parking bay has been added to comply with Bdg Regs Part M4(2) (former Lifetime Homes).
- Bin and cycle store locations have been adjusted and landscaping detail revised.

Addressing the Policy Issues

13. The planning officer is familiar with the policy context and with the relevance and current evolution of the Local Plan, London Plan and NPPF. Policies are explained in some detail in the previous Committee reports. I will not repeat all that is said therein, but I will identify and comment on certain new and emerging policy issues plus other points of particular relevance, as follows.

National Planning Policy Framework (Revised)

14. The Government's NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It was first published in March 2012 and updated in July 2018 and Feb 2019. More detailed 'practice guidance' (PPG) is also available and is updated more regularly.

15. The revised NPPF introduces more emphasis on making effective use of land, including a Chapter under that title. Among other things this makes clear that policies and decisions should "*promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes*" (para 117).

16. It goes on to say that:

"decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where available sites could be used more effectively" (para 118).

17. A similar approach is taken under the heading of 'Achieving Appropriate Densities'. This supports development that makes efficient use of land taking into account such matters as the need for different types of housing, the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit car use, and the need to promote regeneration and change (para 122).

18. The Framework also points out that where there is a shortage of land for meeting housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. It concludes that *"LPAs should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land"* (para 123).

19. In relation to design issues, the Framework supports the use of SPDs such as design guides and codes, but requires that *"their degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety where justified"* (para 126). There is also a ref to sympathy for the local character and built environment while *"not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)"*. It goes on to refer to *"optimising the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount of development"* (para 127).

20. Therefore, in its own small way, our expanded building accords with NPPF principles and policies in making more effective, efficient and optimum use of under-utilised housing land in an accessible location while ensuring the design and scale is sympathetic to the street character.

The London Plan

21. The adopted London Plan (March 2016) points out that the Capital's population growth has accelerated much more than was anticipated in the earlier 2011 Plan (para 1.6). It thus strongly emphasises the need to increase housing supply, again stressing the importance of re-using previously developed sites. It introduces a new 10 year housing target of 5,593 new homes (559 pa) for Hillingdon, a figure which is specified as a minimum which should be exceeded (policy 3.3). That is an increase of nearly 32% from the previous (2011) Plan target of 4,250 (425 pa).

22. The Plan also spells out that:

"Residential development should optimise housing output taking into account local context and character and the relevant density range"

(London Plan policy 3.4.)

23. At the consultation stage, Hillingdon Council objected to this new housing target, pointing out that *"the increase reflects an unrealistic allowance for small sites (sites less than 0.25ha)"* (LBH reps on FALP 2014). However the Council was unable to secure any reduction in the above figure. The higher target therefore stands, and small-sites are considered important to the achievement of the overall target.

24. The seriousness of the housing position, especially in London and the south-east, is also well documented elsewhere. Even higher targets are thus now included in the new draft London Plan (see below).

25. The adopted London Plan also requires new development to take account of local context and character (policy 3.4). Among other things, it seeks the enhancement of the quality of local places and high quality design in relation to the context (policy 3.5).

26. The draft replacement London Plan was published in Dec 2017 and has since been the subject of modification (Dec 2019) following public consultation and formal Examination. While it awaits final changes and the agreement of the Secretary of State - which has been delayed by Covid and other considerations - it is clearly now well advanced and justifies more significant weight than previously.

27. Chapter 1 of the draft new London Plan identifies "Good Growth Policies". It points out that:

"all options for using the City's land more effectively will need to be explored as London's growth continues, including redevelopment and intensification in outer London"(para 1.2.5).

28. The use of small sites is advocated and well-connected sites are prioritised. The potential to intensify land use should be *"proactively explored"*, promoting higher density development (Draft LP policy GG2 – 'Making the best use of land').

29. Policy D3 explains the need to use land efficiently by optimising site capacity through a design-led approach. It requires all development to make the best use of land. The approach requires consideration of design options to determine the most appropriate form of development that responds to a site's context and capacity for growth.

30. The draft encourages and facilitates active travel with convenient and inclusive pedestrian and cycling routes. It re-states the NPPF requirement that development that does not demonstrably optimise the density of the site should be refused.

31. Policy H1 requires that boroughs should optimise the potential for housing delivery through their Development Plans and planning decisions, especially on sites within 800m distance of a station or town centre boundary. We are well within both.

32. London Boroughs' Housing targets are again substantially increased in the draft new London Plan. In the case of Hillingdon, even after substantial reduction following the EiP, the requirements are still almost doubled (from 559 to 1,083 units pa), of which over 27% are targeted on small sites.

33. Boroughs are also required to *"pro-actively support well-designed new homes on small sites"* - below 0.25 ha - in order to:

- 1) significantly increase the contribution of small sites to meeting London's housing needs*
- 2) diversify the sources, locations, type and mix of housing supply,*
- 3) support small and medium-sized housebuilders,*
- 4) support those wishing to bring forward custom, self-build and community-led housing,*
- 5) seek to achieve the minimum targets for small sites set out in [the Plan]*

(Draft Policy H2 - 'Small Sites').

34. The same policy also makes clear that Boroughs should: *"recognise that local character evolves over time and will need to change in appropriate locations to accommodate additional housing on small sites....."* (Draft policy H2).

35. Our revised proposal represents a sustainable form of growth, as a scheme of a high standard assisting with intensification and use of a small site in accordance with the new draft London Plan policies. The proposal makes optimum use of this previously-developed site and thus accords with policy requirements. The proposal assists in achieving (or exceeding) the increasingly demanding housing targets for the Borough while taking account of local context and character, as required.

36. To the limited extent to which the proposal represents a change in character, this is simply part of an evolution to accommodate additional housing on small sites, as sought and accepted by the new draft London Plan.

LBH Local Plan - Part 1: Strategic Policies

Design Policies and Density

37. The Local Plan: Part 1 – 'Strategic Policies' was adopted in Nov 2012. It includes policies to conserve and enhance the Borough's distinct and varied environment including its Metroland suburbs (policies HE1 & BE1). However it also makes clear that the density of residential development should take account of the need to optimise the potential of sites compatible with the local and historic context while respecting the quality, character and amenity of surrounding uses (Local Plan: Part 1, para 6.23).

38. I submit that we have got the balance right here. The officers have previously pointed out that the appropriate density range for the area is 35-65 upha (see London Plan policy 3.4). The proposal achieves a density of 34 upha, just below the identified range. This reflects the character of the site and road and the on-site parking availability while limiting the building bulk to an acceptable scale.

39. The general design approach remains unchanged in addressing issues of scale and in enhancing the 'Metroland' character. The building has been detailed to reflect a traditional inter-war 'mock-Tudor' character – a suburban vernacular with half-timbered bays, asymmetric elevations and herring-bone brick infill panels. This design picks up the detail on nearby houses including the neighbouring house at no.9, and no.16 opposite.

40. The elevations also maintain a 2-storey scale which largely disguises the accommodation in the roof and basement, included to optimise the use of the site without adding to the building bulk. The building scale is less than that of the larger 3-storey blocks of flats opposite in Sandy Lodge Way.

41. The building also maintains the footprint and plan dimensions previously approved, simply making better use of the roof-space opportunities and avoiding the costs and delays involved in the basement construction.

42. The Grove Road elevations are tidied and improved (compared with the 2019 refusal) while the small recessed area on this return frontage continues to add interest, to fragment the building scale and to reflect the hipped roofs over.

LBH Local Plan Part 2 - Dev Management Policies

Housing Mix and Residential Floorspace Standards

43. Part 2 of the Local Plan was adopted earlier this year. The policies seek a mix of housing units of different sizes to reflect housing need (policy DMH2) while para 4.6 identifies a Boroughwide need for larger units, including 3 bed dwellings.

44. The proposal includes a large 3-bed family unit - more than 150m² in area - on two floors (flat 3), and three spacious 2-bed flats varying from 106m² to 130m² (flats 1, 2 & 4), one of which is also on two floors (flat 4).

45. The Local Plan Part 2 sets out minimum floorspace standards for new homes (Table 5.1) based on the National Space Standards which also accord with the figures now adopted in the London Plan (Table 3.3).

46. The Council's standards thus require a min floorspace of 102m² for a 3-bedroom 6 person flat (on two floors) and 79m² for a 2-bedroom 4 person flat (on two floors). A 2-bedroom 4 person flat (on one floor) needs a min of 70m². Our flats will substantially exceed these minimum requirements, as set out above. Despite excluding the basement accommodation, flats 1 & 2 are still well in excess of requirements for a 2-bedroom dwelling while flats 3 & 4 include the use of the roof-space and substantially exceed min standards for 4 and 6 person accommodation. They thus directly address the Boroughwide need for larger units.

Amenity Space & Access

47. The rear amenity space provision also substantially exceeds the Council's Part 2 policy requirements even without the first-floor balconies (policy DMHB 18 and Table 5.3). With a total amenity space requirement, for the four flats, of 105m², the proposal provides more than 600m² (excl bin and cycle stores) – a fivefold excess over the figure required. If the rear patios are allocated for the two ground floor flats, there is still more than sufficient (over 500m²) rear space for either communal use or to be subdivided between the four flats.

48. The rear patio terraces have now been defined by hedge and shrub planting which creates defensible space adjacent to the rear windows of the ground floor flats. As before, easy garden access is provided from all flats via an internal corridor and path to the rear, rather than having to exit via the front door and walk around the building. The side spacing enables hedge planting to be added along this flank frontage, as now shown.

49. All other external spacing and boundary relationships are maintained as previously permitted including the gap to 9 Sandy Lodge Way.

Accessibility, Parking and Servicing

50. The parking and access arrangements remain as previously approved. The site lies just 450m to the north of Northwood town centre with its range of shops and services and its bus/rail interchange. Six parking spaces were thus considered adequate in this location – at an overall ratio of 1.5 spaces per flat.

51. This accords with policy DMT 6 of Local Plan Part 2 which refers on to Appendix C Table 1 of the Plan. The requirements provide some flexibility, seeking provision of between 1 and 1.5 spaces per unit for the 2 bed flats and 2 spaces for the 3 bed flat – an overall requirement of between 5 and 6.5 spaces. Our provision of 6 spaces thus strikes a suitable balance between sustainability objectives - restraint-based parking figures - and demand-led provision.

52. The position of a marked on-street parking bay on the Sandy Lodge Way frontage will need some adjustment to accommodate the required access arrangements.

53. Cycle parking plus waste and recyclable storage also remains easily accessed within the rear garden.

Landscaping, Trees and Bio-diversity

54. The existing mature Oak tree in the rear garden will be retained and protected as previously and the proposal provides the opportunity to introduce new landscaping and planting to the front, side and rear of the building. The Green (eg Sedum) roof above the rear extensions will assist with bio-diversity, improve outlook and help with surface-water drainage and insulation. The wider landscaping will also help the outlook and soften the streetscape. Paving materials will be permeable. Policy DMHB 14 refers.

Flood Risk, Hydrology & Drainage

55. The site is not within a high-risk flood zone and no flood risk implications are expected to arise. A hydro-geological assessment has previously been submitted to support the earlier basement works, but the basement accommodation has been deleted from this revised scheme. Any further drainage works, if required, will be submitted in a separate report. The Council is asked to include their standard condition if further detail is required pursuant to Part 2 Environmental Protection policies.

Hillingdon Design & Accessibility Statement SPD

56. Supplementary guidance includes the *Hillingdon Design & Accessibility Statement (HDAS)*, *SPD: Residential Layouts*. Among other things this says:

"Over time rooflines have contributed to the character of the townscape, and a diverse roofline with a variety of pitches is considered to improve the richness of the townscape where this adequately respects the wider street scene".
(SDP Res Layouts: para 4.24)

57. The guidelines and policies have been carefully considered and taken into account in the scheme design. The elevations remain well-modelled including a 'diverse roofline'.

58. Other recent examples of crown roofs in the area can be found on new or extended houses, at 21 Sandy Lodge Way and 19 Grove Road, and on blocks of flats such as 'Blue Springs' at 10A Sandy Lodge Way. I have also identified, above, the 2018 permission for a scheme having three large crown roofs at 8 - 10 SLW. These all show that this form of roof detail is acceptable in the area and can be successfully incorporated in a proposal to accommodate the required increased space while respecting the character of the area.

59. Our current revisions therefore continue to maintain and enhance the character of the road and to further the Council's design objectives.

Conclusion

60. The revisions to the previously permitted scheme assist in terms of the impact, appearance and character of this carefully designed building. The increase in the useable space represents a sustainable form of development which accords with NPPF and London Plan objectives and policies, but does not prejudice the scheme design. The building will continue to fit well into this mixed street scene, reinforcing and enhancing its character.

61. The principle of this form of redevelopment is established by the previous permission. The changes will have no greater impact on the neighbouring properties or the street scene, while providing a high-quality solution in housing terms.

62. The revised proposal provides four spacious modern flats on previously-developed land, optimising the development of the site, as required, without detracting from the character of the area, all in accordance with current standards. It thus complies with NPPF objectives and with development plan provisions.

63. The proposal is in a sustainable location and makes suitable provision for parking and access. Arboricultural and hydrological issues are also addressed.

64. In all the circumstances, the LPA is requested to conclude that permission should be granted subject to appropriate conditions.

Robin Bretherick FRICS DipTP MRTPI

Robin Bretherick Associates

Chartered Town Planning Consultants

3 November 2020