

Planning Statement

10 Rickmansworth Road,
Northwood,
HA6 1HA

04/11/2024

Introduction

This planning application for 10 Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, HA6 1HA, seeks approval for a revised proposal involving the conversion of a single dwellinghouse into two self-contained flats, the erection of a 4-meter rear extension, and the addition of a dormer extension. This revised proposal follows the refusal of application reference 20026/APP/2024/1737, with adjustments introduced to address previous concerns from council officers. This statement outlines the modifications to the design, demonstrating how the revised layout improves upon the earlier proposal, meets planning standards, and provides a high-quality living environment in line with the Hillingdon Local Plan, London Plan, and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023.

The revised proposal incorporates the addition of a dormer extension, an element previously granted approval under application reference 20026/APP/2024/884. The approved dormer design will serve as a fallback position within this application, affirming the design's acceptability and establishing compatibility with the character of the building and surroundings. This addition further contributes to the suitability of the conversion project and ensures it meets relevant design policies.

The application addresses all previously raised issues, with a focus on optimizing layout, enhancing privacy, managing noise, and creating an attractive, sustainable development. Below, each aspect is discussed in detail, demonstrating compliance with local and national planning requirements and highlighting the quality of accommodation provided for future residents.

Summary of Revised Proposal

Dormer Extension (Approved Fallback Position)

The inclusion of a dormer extension has been carefully integrated into this revised application, supported by an approved fallback position established in application ref 20026/APP/2024/884. The fallback serves as a key point of reference, confirming that the scale, design, and materials of the dormer extension are already deemed acceptable by the council.

The dormer will add valuable space to the first and loft-floor flat, enhancing the functionality of the layout and allowing a practical separation of spaces. Given the compatibility of the dormer with existing structures, it aligns with both the character of the property and the broader streetscape, demonstrating that the dormer design is in keeping with the Hillingdon Local Plan's policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 12, which seek to ensure that extensions are compatible with the architectural integrity of the original building and surroundings.

Flat Configurations and Layout

The internal layout has been significantly optimized to address privacy, outlook, and amenity considerations raised in the prior refusal. The revised configuration effectively minimizes any potential issues and prioritizes high-quality accommodation for future residents. The flats are arranged as follows:

- **Ground Floor (Two-Bedroom Flat):**

The ground-floor flat has been redesigned to include one bedroom at the front of the property and one at the rear. This arrangement eliminates the need for side-facing windows, thus resolving any prior concerns regarding outlook and privacy from external viewpoints. Each bedroom benefits from a direct view to the front or rear, offering ample natural light and a pleasant outlook, essential elements for a comfortable residential environment. In particular, the front bedroom receives filtered light through landscaping, which provides privacy without compromising daylight.

The layout, by design, ensures that each bedroom maintains a sense of privacy while avoiding any conflicts with external noise or overlooking issues. The high standard of accommodation aligns with Policy DMHB 16 of the Hillingdon Local Plan, which stipulates that developments must safeguard residential amenity and provide good living conditions for future occupants.

- **First and Loft Floors (Three-Bedroom Flat):**

The first-floor flat spans two levels, occupying both the first and loft floors, and includes three bedrooms. This duplex layout enhances privacy between living spaces and sleeping areas, creating a functional and practical living arrangement. Each bedroom has a well-planned orientation, ensuring ample daylight and privacy. The design incorporates previously approved dormer space, enhancing the usability of the loft area, and adheres to the fallback permissions granted for the dormer extension.

The first-floor flat configuration ensures a balanced distribution of space, optimizing both communal and private areas. Each bedroom and living space complies with London Plan Policy D6, which mandates high-quality internal space standards, privacy considerations, and noise management, ensuring residents' well-being.

Privacy, Noise, and Outlook Enhancements

The revised proposal integrates several measures aimed at enhancing privacy, controlling noise, and ensuring a comfortable outlook for each flat. These adjustments respond directly to prior feedback and demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering quality residential accommodation in line with planning standards.

Partial Obscured Glass for Privacy

To protect privacy while maintaining an open outlook, the revised design uses double-glazed windows with obscured glass up to 1.7 meters from floor level on any necessary side-facing windows. This arrangement prevents direct views into the rooms from outside, ensuring privacy for occupants, while still allowing clear glass in the upper portion to offer a pleasant outlook and natural light. The partial obscuring method strikes a balance between providing privacy and ensuring that residents can enjoy an unobstructed view.

This feature directly addresses previous concerns related to overlooking and privacy, meeting the standards set out in Policy DMHB 16 of the Hillingdon Local Plan. It also aligns with London Plan Policy D6, which promotes the use of thoughtful design solutions to safeguard residents' comfort, security, and privacy in densely populated areas.

Front Window Double Glazing and Noise Mitigation

To ensure that noise levels are controlled within the property, the front bedroom window will be double-glazed, as recommended in the accompanying noise report. The enhanced window glazing will act as an effective noise barrier, limiting any potential disturbance from external sources such as the adjacent parking space. The double glazing ensures compliance with Policy D6 of the London Plan, which emphasizes the importance of noise mitigation in residential developments.

Additionally, the landscaped privacy buffer, located between the parking space and the front window, will contribute to noise reduction by creating a visual and acoustic barrier. This measure ensures that the quality of living space within the flat is maintained at a high standard, consistent with national and local policies focused on residential amenity.

Landscaping for Additional Privacy

A carefully designed landscaping scheme, including a row of low bushes and shrubs, will be introduced in front of the ground-floor bedroom window. This greenery serves as a natural privacy screen, enhancing the visual amenity for residents while also shielding the bedroom from direct views. The landscaping aligns with the objectives of Policies DMHB 15 and DMHB 16 in the Hillingdon Local Plan, both of which emphasize the role of soft landscaping in creating attractive, harmonious living environments.

By softening the interface between the parking area and the residential space, the landscaping also contributes positively to the overall visual appeal of the property. This approach reflects best practices in residential design and supports the development's integration into the surrounding neighborhood.

Refuse Storage and Parking Facilities

Ensuring that waste storage and parking arrangements are functional, accessible, and sustainable is a priority within this proposal. The revised plans include adjustments to the refuse storage location and enhancements to the car parking area to support modern, sustainable living standards.

Refuse Storage Location

The refuse storage area will be positioned adjacent to the main entrance, offering easy access for occupants and waste collection services. This placement improves the functionality of waste management for the site and adheres to policy requirements for accessible and secure storage solutions. The proximity of the refuse storage to the entrance ensures that it remains convenient yet unobtrusive, addressing practical needs without compromising visual appeal.

By meeting the standards set out in local policies, the refuse storage arrangement contributes to the quality of life for future residents, aligning with the principles of sustainable development. The waste storage design also supports efficient waste collection and minimizes potential disruptions to the streetscape.

Front Car Parking with EV Charging Point

The front car parking space now includes an electric vehicle (EV) charging point, promoting sustainable travel options for residents and aligning with Policy T6 of the London Plan. The addition of the EV charging point is in line with current trends toward sustainable transportation and ensures that the development remains future-proof as electric vehicle use continues to rise.

The car parking space is thoughtfully located to avoid impacting residential amenity, screened by the landscaping, which further ensures that privacy and visual harmony are maintained. By integrating sustainable transport infrastructure, the proposal not only complies with policy standards but also supports the borough's goals for environmental sustainability and reduced carbon emissions.

Supporting Evidence

To substantiate the quality of the revised layout and confirm compliance with planning standards, this application includes the following reports:

1. **Daylight Report:** This report confirms that all habitable spaces within both flats meet the required daylight standards. The assessment demonstrates that the internal environment is bright and comfortable, ensuring a high standard of living conditions for future occupants. Compliance with daylight standards is essential in residential design, and the findings of this report highlight the success of the proposed layout in achieving these standards.
2. **Noise Assessment:** The noise report supports the design choices for window glazing and landscaping as effective mitigations for noise impacts. The report confirms that noise levels within the flats will remain within acceptable limits, supporting a peaceful residential environment. This assessment is especially relevant to the front bedroom window, where double glazing and landscaping work together to limit sound intrusion from nearby areas, ensuring compliance with noise standards set out in both local and national policies.

Conclusion

The revised proposal for 10 Rickmansworth Road has been carefully crafted to address the key concerns raised in the previous refusal decision. By refining the design layout, enhancing privacy, improving noise mitigation, and incorporating sustainable features, the proposal now provides high-quality, functional, and attractive residential accommodation in line with all relevant planning policies. Specifically:

1. **Privacy and Quality of Internal Spaces:** Adjustments such as partial obscured glass, optimized room layouts, and enhanced landscaping ensure that privacy and residential quality are preserved to a high standard. These changes comply with Policies DMHB 15 and DMHB 16 of the Hillingdon Local Plan and London Plan Policy D6.
2. **Waste and Transport Facilities:** Accessible refuse storage and the inclusion of an EV charging point in the car park demonstrate a commitment to sustainable living and meet policy expectations under Policy T6 of the London Plan.
3. **Dormer Extension:** The dormer extension's fallback approval provides a robust basis for its inclusion in this application, affirming its compatibility with the building's character and surrounding environment.

Given that the principle of conversion has already been accepted, we respectfully request approval of this revised application. The modifications have addressed all prior concerns, ensure policy compliance, and demonstrate a commitment to providing high-quality accommodation.

Request for Approval: In the event that additional minor adjustments are required, we invite the council to address these through conditions rather than delaying the project further. We trust that the council will acknowledge these efforts and grant approval at this stage, allowing this project to progress without further delay.