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Planning Statement

Timbers, Northgate, Hillingdon, HA6 2TH
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1. The Application

- 1.1. Proposed extensions to existing 3 bedroom detached dwelling, conversion of garage to habitable use, raising of roof to allow conversion of roof space to habitable use to include 2 rear dormers and 2 front dormers.

2. Site Location

- 2.1. The application is for a site within the Copsewood Estate, on Northgate, Northwood. The plot is approximately 1069m². Currently, the house is used for residential purposes for a single-family household. The properties on Northgate and the adjacent streets have a wide variety of form and materiality with traditional detailing and construction methods characterising the houses.
- 2.2. More recently many of the houses within the estate are being remodelled leading to an enrichment of the area. In order to function effectively for the modern family, there are improvements that need to be made to the current house, and the extension and remodel of the internal layout offers the most economical method.

3. Background

- 3.1. Previous pre-applications exists for the site, the first being application REF: 20350/PRC/2021/129, for the demolition of existing single storey extension and garage to the west of the building. Proposed single storey side extension, to the south elevation of the main house. Proposed double Storey extension to main house. The following comments are below:
 - 3.1.1. The proposal would substantially demolish and extend the original dwelling, wrapping around the north, south and west elevations of the original dwelling. The proposed development would be considered in principle unacceptable.
 - 3.1.2. The proposed development would fail to remain subservient to the original dwelling and unacceptably develop a substantial portion of the existing plot. The footprint would be more than doubled and create an uncharacteristic angular plan form.
 - 3.1.3. The two storey built form would be significantly larger in bulk and mass, than the original dwelling introducing an over dominant built form to the site. The overall design would introduce competing gable forms and incongruous stretched dormers. The creation of a flat roof behind the proposed pitched roof form is a clear indication of the unacceptable scale of the development, it would fail to respect the design of the original building.
 - 3.1.4. The proposed terraces along the north and south elevations would be highly visible along their respective street scenes, Northgate and Copse Wood Way. Terraces are not a characteristic feature of the ASLC or original building.
 - 3.1.5. The property positively contributes character and style of the ASLC and represents the principles in which the area had originally been developed. It would substantially harm the character and appearance of the original dwelling and wider ASLC.

- 3.1.6. The development would set and unwelcome and detrimental precedent within the ASLC. It is inevitable that the cumulative impact of such large developments within the ASLC would be devastating to its significance.
- 3.2. A second pre-application REF: 20350/PRC/2022/95 for extension and alterations to existing dwelling, loft conversion with additional dormers.
- 3.2.1. The proposed development would fail to remain subservient to the original dwelling and unacceptably develop a substantial portion of the existing plot. The footprint would be more than doubled and create an uncharacteristic angular plan form. The proposed side extension would be very prominent in the street and would detract from the original dwelling, causing detriment to the visual amenities of the street scene.
- 3.2.2. The two storey built form would be significantly larger in bulk and mass, than the original dwelling introducing an over dominant built form to the site. The overall design would introduce competing gable forms, incongruous dormers and an uncharacteristic large crown roof, which would cumulatively, fail to respect the design of the original building.
- 3.2.3. In addition it is highlighted that the two storey extension with dormer windows to the west has an awkward visual relationship to the original house gable 'crashing' into the side of it and jarring within the street scene. It should be set off the gable so that it can still be clearly read and that any extension should appear subordinate to it. Building directly off the existing single storey extension (west side) would be the wrong approach and is creating the uncomfortable relationship. The existing single storey extension is subordinate and does not compete with the gable end.
- 3.2.4. The site occupies a prominent corner plot on the approach into the area of special local character. The side extension would be built up to the shared boundary with the neighbour Woodlands and the two storey side extension only set away 1metre from the shared boundary, which half the 1.5m gap prescribed by Policy DMHD 1. The immediate area is characterised by notable gaps between the dwellings and this scheme would result is a bulky and cramped form of development that fails to harmonise with the established street pattern and streetscape rhythm.

4.2 Linksway, Northwood – Background

- 4.1. Previous applications exists for the site, the first being application 36910/APP/2013/107, whereby planning permission was sought for the demolition of the existing house and erection of a 5 bedroom house, however this scheme was since withdrawn and not decided.
- 4.2. Since this initial application by a previous firm of architects, we had been in continuous dialogue with the planning and conservation department following a consultation process in order to present a viable scheme.
- 4.3. This process helped refine a final scheme into a proposal that was deemed to be sympathetic to the immediate neighbours as well as the surrounding area. Various aspects of the design such as the facade treatment, layout, sight-lines, external landscaping and more had been discussed in detail as part of the pre-application and main application process.

- 4.4. This application 36910/APP/2013/2338 was recommended for approval to the planning committee, however the officer recommendation was overturned by the members and the application was refused.
- 4.5. Subsequently, an appeal was lodged to the Planning Inspectorate, however this appeal was dismissed despite the application having satisfied every requirement of the planning department.
- 4.6. According to the "Main issues" section within the appeal decision, the scheme was dismissed because of the effect of the proposal on two main grounds.
- *"The character and appearance of the area."*
 - *"The living conditions of the occupiers of 3 Copse Wood Way (No.3) and the proposed dwelling, with particular regard to privacy and outlook."*
- 4.7. Following this dismissal, the application has since been reworked in order to address the two points for refusal and present a scheme that satisfies the Inspector's comments.
- 4.8. In conclusion, after working on the scheme for couple of years we finally got the planning approved. The proposed scheme for Timber, Northgate will be a similar scheme that will help enhance the street scene by making the two dwellings identical once more.

5. Design

- 5.1. Following the Pre-application response the amendments made are as follows:

We have made the following amendments below:

- Reduced the width of the first-floor extension by setting it back by 1.5m from the boundary
 - Set back from the front of the main building line
 - 400mm lower than the main ridge
 - Reduced the size of the crown roof at the rear
 - Side extension is now a hip roof to reduce the mass, scale and bulk.
- 5.2. The applicants wish to retain the vernacular style of the existing house, yet provide a modern advancement within the internal configuration of the property. It will provide a comfortable living space that will serve the current needs of a modern household, in a manner that respects the form and nature of the immediate context especially within the corner plot location.
- 5.3. The overall size of the extension has been governed by the HDAS Design Guidelines, but is also designed in light of the nature of the site and its unique siting and position. The existing site and property is such that it doesn't fall under a typical house type or setting, and as such enables a more unique design approach.

- 5.4. A simple single storey side and rear extension is proposed to the existing house on the elevation fronting Copse Wood Way. This will have a flat roof and detailing to match the existing house.
- 5.5. The rear wall of the extension runs parallel to the front wall and continues the new rear line of the proposed garage through to the main house. This ensures that the depth of the extension is kept at a minimum and is to a smaller proportion to the garage and the existing house. This in turn allows the roof form to be of a smaller depth than the existing roof to the house.
- 5.6. The extension is over two storeys and aims to retain the same floor to ceiling heights as the existing house, and as such allows the external features such as the fenestration and eaves to be kept uniform throughout the proposal.
- 5.7. In order to comply with HDAS guidelines for residential development, the first floor extension is set away from the side boundary by 1500mm. This will ensure that the extension is not overbearing on the streetscene and proposes a scale and massing that is in keeping with the overall building.
- 5.8. In order to provide accommodation in the loft space within the existing building and the extension, the ridge height will be increased. This not only ensures that the roof form is to a scale proportionate to the building footprint but more importantly it provides sufficient internal head height to comply with Building Regulations requirements.
- 5.9. The detailing of the existing house follows that of a traditional vernacular style that is not only seen on Northgate, but also more widely in the Copsewood Estate, and so the proposed extension seeks to continue this style and draw upon the existing precedents set.
- 5.10. The existing materiality of the main house and detached garage is that of facing brickwork together with timber framed windows and plain clay roof tiles.
- 5.11. As the roofs to the house and garage will be replaced and re-tiled, it presents a chance for the new roof tiles to be kept uniform within the proposed scheme, and as such will help tie the existing house, extension and garage together.
- 5.12. The fenestration style and proportion seen within the existing house will be retained within the proposed scheme and instead the windows will simply be replaced with a matching style and finish to ensure that the character of the existing property will be retained. As such, the new windows will be white painted timber framed with solid core detailing to the heads.
- 5.13. In order to retain as much of the existing external character of the building, the brick detailing seen on all elevations of the main house will be continued through to the extension. This again will help tie the extension in with the existing dwelling in a uniform and sympathetic manner.
- 5.14. The internal layout is designed to be functional and provide an efficient living space within the extents of a permissible development. The ground floor contains a formal lounge and an open plan family room within the extent of the existing house and new extension.

- 5.15. The first floor contains three bedrooms including a master suite. There are no further spaces for living accommodation and plant located within the loft space, which are lit via four dormer windows located on the front and rear roof slopes.
- 5.16. The current site boundaries to the main roads have a large amount of foliage and tall trees that will be retained as part of the proposal. There is also an existing low brick wall along these boundaries, which will be retained or made good where necessary. This ensures there will be no loss of character to the street scene at this prominent corner site.
- 5.17. Within the site area itself, the soft landscaping will be retained as far as possible, however the area of hardstanding will be increased to provide an adequate access to the house and allow for off-street parking spaces.

6. Access

- 6.1. The access to the house remains unchanged as part of the proposal, with the current driveway being adequate for the proposed usage. The access within the internal spaces has been designed so that it complies with Lifetimes Homes Standards.

7. Sustainability and Renewable Energy

- 7.1. The proposal is consistent with current sustainable planning aims, to make full use of existing developed land in urban areas, as promoted by central and regional Government as well as by the local planning authority. Water conservation will incorporate the following:
 - Water leakage reduction through use of water fuses
 - Water efficient taps
 - Water efficient toilets
 - Low output showers
 - Flow restrictors to manage water pressures to achieve optimisation
 - Use of a water meter with device attached to guide consumption and increase savings.
- 7.2. The development will not have any use that creates pollution affecting the quality of ground water. Further guidance will be sought from Envirowise and also from The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding the Enhanced Capital Allowances Scheme for water Technologies (www.ecawater.gov.uk)
- 7.3. All timber used on the project will be from sustainable sources. All steel work would be supplied pre-cut and ready for assembly on site thus reducing cutting and wastage. All concrete will be supplied ready mixed to site in pre-determined quantities. Any waste of construction material would be disposed of to other sites for recycling and reuse.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. The proposal for the retention and extension of the existing building is seen to be to a reasonable proportion for plot of this unique scale within the Estate and serves to keep up with the ongoing enrichment of the area.
- 8.2. The extension has been designed with the existing traditional qualities in mind, and reflects the detailing, scale and proportions of the existing house. It has been designed to be sympathetic to the immediate neighbouring properties with the building lines and key dimensions respectful of its context.
- 8.3. The house is designed to provide a modern level of accommodation within a traditional setting. Traditional materials and construction techniques ensure that the extension will blend into not only the existing house but also its surroundings.
- 8.4. This application is the result of the outcomes of the previous pre- applications and the apparent resistance to the previous schemes. Thus, with an application to retain the existing building and simply extend it, it is felt that the proposal at Timbers, Northgate is of an acceptable standard and we look to working with the planners on this scheme to facilitate a favourable decision.