



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Householder Extensions
AT
41 Highfield Drive,
Ickenham UB10 8AW

Reference:
41HD-1941

Date:
28 April 2022

1. Introduction

- a. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Just Planning on behalf of Mr G Madhan to support a householder planning application for extensions to 41 Highfield Drive, in Ickenham.
- b. Following a description of the site and surrounding area, the report will consider the planning history, provide an overview of relevant planning policy and outline the case for the applicant.

2. Site Description

- a. The application property is a two-storey, detached house on the eastern side of Highfield Drive. It is brick built with a tiled, hipped roof. It has a shallow front projection, also with a hipped roof. There is a front entrance door and a garage door to the south side of the front projection, which is slightly off-centre. There are single and two-storey additions to the rear. Figure 1, below, provides an image of the property, viewed from the street.



Figure 1: Image of the front elevation of the application property

- b. The immediate area is residential in character, with detached houses of various designs. The houses have been extended and altered in various ways, and some have been demolished and replaced. The houses are tightly spaced and observe a consistent building line.
- c. The application property is not listed and not located in a designated conservation area.

3. Relevant Planning History & Application Proposal

- a. Planning permission was granted at appeal for two-storey side and rear extension and a single-storey rear extension in 2002 (reference: 30871/APP/2001/2555). This permission was implemented.
- b. The application site has no other relevant, recent planning history.
- c. The application proposal is for a:
 - A single-storey rear extension;
 - A first-floor rear extension infilling the area to the side of the existing first-floor rear addition;
 - A roof extension with two rear dormers to provide additional second floor living accommodation; and,
 - A two-storey storey front extension.

4. Planning Policy

- a. Planning law states that decisions on planning applications must be taken in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant parts of the development plan for the area are the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012), the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020) and the London Plan (2021).
- b. Policy BE1 (Built Environment) of the Strategic Policies requires that all new development improves the quality of the built environment in order to create successful and sustainable neighbourhoods. Among other things, the policy states that development proposals should be sensitive to local identity, landscapes, townscapes and views, improve areas of poor environmental quality, improve the quality of the public realm, and not result in the inappropriate development of gardens and green spaces that erode the character of suburban areas.
- c. Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development) of the Development Management Policies requires that all new development exhibit a high quality of design. Development should harmonise with its surroundings in terms of its scale, size and detailed design. It should use high quality materials. It should not unacceptably harm the residential amenity of close neighbours.
- d. Policy DMHD 1 (Alterations and Extensions to Residential Dwellings) sets out criteria for extensions. It seeks to ensure that there is:

"no adverse cumulative impact of the proposal on the character, appearance or quality of the existing street or wider area"

- e. It requires that extensions are subordinate to the host dwelling *"in their floor area, width, depth and height"*. It recommends the use of matching materials. It requires that adequate garden space and parking is retained.
- f. Part B(ii) of the policy states that:

"single storey rear extensions to detached houses with a plot width of 5 metres or more should not exceed 4.0 metres in depth"

- g. Part B(iii) states that:

"flat roofed single storey extensions should not exceed 3.0 metres in height and any pitched or sloping roofs should not exceed 3.4 metres in height, measured from ground level"

h. According to Part 3(iv):

"two storey extensions should not extend into an area provided by a 45-degree line of sight drawn from the centre of the nearest ground or first floor habitable room window of an adjacent property and should not contain windows or other openings that overlook other houses at a distance of less than 21 metres"

i. Part B(viii) states that:

"pitched roofs on extensions should be of a similar pitch and materials to that of the original roof and subordinate to it in design. Large crown roofs on detached houses will not be supported"

j. Part D deals with front extensions and states that:

"alterations and extensions to the front of a house must be minor and not alter the overall appearance of the house or dominate the character of the street. Front extensions extending across the entire frontage will be refused"

k. Part E deals with roof extensions. E(i) states that:

"roof extensions should be located on the rear elevation only, be subservient to the scale of the existing roof and should not exceed more than two thirds the average width of the original roof. They should be located below the ridge tiles of the existing roof and retain a substantial element of the original roof slope above the eaves line"

l. Part E(iii) states that:

"raising of a main roof above the existing ridgeline of a house will generally not be supported"

m. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It identifies a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development is sustainable when it meets the economic, social and environmental needs of a community.

- n. Paragraph 11(c) requires that decision-makers approve *"development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay"*. Where policies are absent or out of date, permission should be granted unless:

"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

- o. According to paragraph 38:

"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available ... and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible."

- p. Paragraph 126 states that:

"Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

5. Assessment

- a. The applicant seeks permission to extend the property to the rear at ground and first floor levels, to adjust the roof design to incorporate second floor living accommodation and to create a new front gable.
- b. Local Plan policies BE1 and DMHB 11 seek a high quality of design in all new development. Policy DMHD 1 provides more detailed guidance on different types of householder extension.
- c. The policy seeks to limit the depth of ground floor rear extensions to no more than 4m from the rear of a detached house, in order to protect living conditions at neighbouring houses. In this case, the extension would project only marginally beyond the deepest part of the neighbouring house at number 39 and there would not, therefore, be any harm to this neighbour.
- d. The extension would project to a greater depth beyond the other neighbour, number 43. However, this neighbour is to the south of the application site and will not, therefore, suffer any loss of light. The extension will project only moderately beyond the existing two-storey extension at the application site and there is a generous separation distance between the two houses. Finally, there is tall, dense planting along the common boundary between the two houses, as shown in the satellite image in figure 2, below.



Figure 2: Satellite image showing the planting (green line) between numbers 41 and 43 Highfield Drive.

- e. The ground floor rear extension complies with the requirement of Part B(iii) of DMHD 1 that it rise no taller than 3m from natural ground level.
- f. The first-floor rear extension largely infills the area above the existing ground floor rear projection (and conservatory) and to the side of the existing first floor rear projection. It complies with the requirements of Part 3(iv) that it does not breach a 45-degree line drawn from the centre of the neighbours' nearest habitable windows. The 45-degree lines are shown on the submitted plans.
- g. Part B(viii) of DMHD 1 requires that any alterations to the roof of a dwelling respect its original design, including incorporating a similar roof pitch and using matching materials. Large crown roofs are not generally permitted. Increases in the ridge height are discouraged by Part E(iii).
- h. In this case, the roof will not look very different when viewed from the front. The eaves line is raised moderately, and the roof pitch is increased only slightly. There is a very modest increase in the overall ridge height. As there is little uniformity in roof designs along the row, the changes to the roof will not appear incongruous or out of place. They will not be readily discernible to passers-by and the new roof will be balanced and symmetrical and will represent high-quality design.
- i. Two rear dormers are proposed. These are small, evenly aligned on the rear roofslope and set well away from the roof edges, with large areas of the roof visible around them. They therefore comply with the requirements of Part E(i).
- j. The council does not generally allow large crown roofs. In this case, the area of crown roof is proportionate to the substantial host dwelling. The crown area will be surrounded by pitched roofs so that it is not easily discernible from the street – the house will appear to have a conventional pitched roof design.
- k. In any case, crown roofs are an established part of the character of this area. A review of satellite imagery reveals that several of the neighbouring houses have them, including the next door neighbour at number 39, as well as number 49, a few doors down to the south. On the other side of the road, crown roofs are visible at numbers 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42 and 48. In most of these cases, it is impossible to see the crown roofs from the street. The image in figure 3, below, for example, shows number 32 viewed from the street – its crown roof is not at all visible.



Figure 3: 32 Highfield Drive, viewed from the street.

- I. Finally, Part D of DMHD 1 states that:

"alterations and extensions to the front of a house must be minor and not alter the overall appearance of the house or dominate the character of the street. Front extensions extending across the entire frontage will be refused"

- m. Alterations to the front of a house are particularly sensitive because they are more visible from the street. In this case, the house already had a shallow forward projection. The application simply proposes replacing this with a new front gable offset slightly to the south, rather than the north, and intended to add architectural interest to the front elevation and to highlight the front entrance door.
- n. The new gable is shallow in depth and has a conventional, lowered, gable roof form. The front elevation will respect the building line and will be balanced and harmonious, making a positive contribution to the streetscene.
- o. Front projections of various kinds are an established feature of the street. Number 39, next door, has a much deeper front projection, for example. Number 37 has a front projection with a side-sloping, cat-slide roof. Number 35 has a deep front gable projection with two-storey bay windows. Number 33 has a very large front projection on pillars. Number 32, almost directly opposite the application site and shown in the image in figure 3, above, has

single and two-storey front projections and a pair of front dormer windows. The proposed changes to the front of the application building are modest in the context of surrounding development.

- p. Generally speaking, there is a pronounced diversity in the character and appearance of the streetscene along this part of Highfield Drive. The houses all differ substantially in design, and most have been extended and altered in various ways. Some of the houses have been demolished and replaced with larger new dwellings.
- q. In July 2019, permission was granted at appeal for extensions to number 34 Highfield Drive, opposite the application site. The proposal was for front, rear and roof extensions of a similar nature to, if not more ambitious than, the current proposals. In the appeal decision (reference: APP/R5510/D/19/3224543), the inspector noted that:

"The street is characterised by a broad range of detached dwellings, a number of which appear to have been recently enlarged or re-developed. Whilst there is a generally consistent building line fronting towards the street, the prevailing character is one of variety, with a number of differentiations in form, massing, materials and overall appearance."

- r. The inspector went on to say that:

"Whilst I agree with the Council that the proposal would fail to harmonise with the architectural composition of the original dwelling, as it would involve a significant increase in massing and alter the overall appearance of the property, such a design would not be out of place in the context of the prevailing character I have described. The proposal would be consistent with the build line of adjacent properties and the massing would align with other buildings along the street. I noted during my site visit a number of examples of projecting gables to front elevations and a common horizontal emphasis to window detailing, which would be representative components of the appeal proposal."

- s. Considering the possible impact of the proposed extensions on neighbouring living conditions, the inspector placed significant emphasis on the presence of mature planting along the common boundaries and noted that the gardens in this area were long and wide.

- t. The houses just up from number 32, numbers 36 and 38, are large replacement dwellings. The design of both of these large new houses incorporated increased ridge heights (relative to the houses that were demolished), prominent front gables and areas of crown roof.
- u. The house at number 36 is a replacement dwelling granted approval in July 2010 (reference: 12536/APP/2009/1896). In assessing that proposal, the officer's report commented that:

"The street scene is characterised by large two storey houses set within spacious plots. Many of the houses have front and rear dormer windows and although there appears to be a uniform front building line, there is no uniform building line at the rear."

The proposed house would be comparable in terms of size, scale, bulk and height to some of the existing houses in the street and would not project beyond the established front building line on this side of the road. Furthermore, Highfield Drive is characterised by a variety of designs, including properties with front gables and front dormers and a variety of building heights. In this context, it is considered that the proposed house would harmonise with the character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area generally, in accordance with policies BE13, BE15 and BE19 of the adopted Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (Saved Policies September 2007) and paragraphs 4.23 and 4.27 of the Hillingdon Design & Accessibility Statement: Residential Layouts."

- v. The replacement dwelling at number 38 was approved at appeal under reference: APP/R5510/A/11/2144146. In the appeal decision, the inspector concluded that:

"There are substantial houses elsewhere in Highfield Drive; and in The Drive, which runs to the west of the appeal site. I do not consider that the proposed development would look out of place in this area. In my view, it would comply with the relevant UDP policies."

- w. Commenting on the crown roof, the inspector said:

"The depth of the proposed crown roof would not be apparent from the road directly in front of the building. In views from the north, it would largely be hidden by the existing 2-storey building at No 36 Highfield Drive. From the south it would be partially screened by

existing vegetation, including the copper beech on the appeal site."

- x. In October 2017, permission was granted at appeal for extensions, including a new crown roof, to 35 Highfield Drive, a few doors from the application site. In the decision (reference: APP/R5510/D/17/3178470), the inspector commented as follows on the proposed crown roof:

"The inclusion of a part crown roof would differ to the existing building with its pitched roof and hipped ends. Nevertheless, the flat roof element would not be visible from ground level given the upward angle of view.

From Highfield Road and the rear of the site, the hipped roof slopes would be evident and the overall roof form would be in proportion and in keeping with the style of the completed dwelling. Given the wide variety in roof styles of properties in the vicinity of the site, which include gable, crown and hipped roofs, this element of the proposal would not draw the eye because it would not look out of place."

- y. The inspector considered the extensions as a whole to be large but concluded nevertheless that they were acceptable:

*"To sum up, the house once enlarged would have an acceptable appearance. It would have been significantly changed on all sides such that the shape, size and composition of the original house would have been significantly altered. However, taken as a whole, the finished building would be in keeping with the qualities, character and appearance of an individually designed detached dwelling. The suburban residential character and sense of openness and informality in the street scene would remain with the new built form in place. **From what I saw, several other properties along Highfield Drive have had far more visible extensions without detriment to the character and qualities of the street scene.** Thus, I am not persuaded that the proposed development would materially detract from the character or quality of the local area."*(our emphasis)

6. Conclusions

- a. The application does not comply strictly with all of the requirements of policy DMHD 1 on householder extensions. In particular, the ground floor extension is deeper than usually permitted, there is a small increase in the ridge height and there is an area of crown roof. However, these elements of the proposal are acceptable, in the planning balance, because they are justified by site-specific circumstances.
- b. The ground floor extension is only moderately deeper than one neighbouring property, number 39, and is set well away from the other, number 43. Number 43 is also to the south and will suffer no loss of light. At a height of no more than 3m, the extension will not be overbearing or materially harm outlook. The side boundaries between the houses are marked by tall dense planting. The gardens are wide and deep. Similar arguments were made by the appeal inspector in granting permission for extensions at number 24 Highland Drive under APP/R5510/D/19/3224543.
- c. The alterations to the roof are modest in size and scale and, given the absence of uniformity in roof design along the street, will not look out of place. The crown roof is similar to several others in close proximity to the application site. The front projection is shallow in depth and conventional in design and appearance. It is much smaller than many others along this row.
- d. There is considerable diversity in the character and appearance of this part of Highfield Drive, creating greater tolerance for alterations to individual houses. There have been significant changes to houses on either side of the application site and on the other side of the road. Numbers 36 and 38, for example, have been replaced entirely with much larger buildings.
- e. For these reasons, the applicant contends that the proposal represents sustainable development and respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.



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