



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2023

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/D/23/3321014

6 Cullera Close, Northwood HA6 3SE

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Daksha Soni against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
 - The application Ref: 64130/APP/2023/75 dated 10 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is erection of a part single, part double storey rear extension to existing detached dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - a) The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing property and on the character and appearance of the Frithwood Conservation Area;
 - b) Whether the proposal would create satisfactory living conditions for the occupants of the extended property, with particular regard to the size of the remaining private amenity space and the outlook and light from the extended rear bedroom.

Reasons

Issue a) Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a detached two storey dwelling house on the north side of Cullera Close, a secluded cul de sac of some 13 detached properties, leading off Frithwood Avenue and in a predominantly residential area. The individual houses have different appearances, but most are characterised by white rendered exteriors and pitched tiled roofs and some hacienda style features including boundary walls and porches. Another distinguishing feature shared by some of the properties is the use of monopitch roofs especially over side built elements, including at the appeal property.
4. The property lies within the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area, the significance of which primarily relates to the large individually designed detached houses in the Arts and Crafts style in a verdant setting. The Council's

Conservation Area leaflet advises that Cullera Close was added to the Conservation Area in 2009. The Close is described as *a distinctive group of well designed properties, separated from the road by white painted brick walls with a slightly "hacienda-like" appearance. Their unusual style and interesting design warrant their inclusion within the extended area.*

5. The appeal proposal would add a flat roofed single storey extension across the rear and a first floor extension over part of this extension. The proposed roof design would seek to extend the existing monopitch of the existing rear projection over the first floor projection as far as the eaves level but would then result in a flat roof beyond this. Whilst I have taken into account the various roof forms and the different arrangement of the roof pitches across the house, I consider that the roof to the first floor rear extension and in particular the flat roof element would appear as a very bulky and clumsy addition which would detract from the scale, proportions and design form of the existing house. It would not integrate well with the character and appearance of the existing property but would appear as an incongruous addition.
6. Section 72 (1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out in respect of development within Conservation Areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Although the proposal would be at the rear of the house, I consider that the proposal would fall materially short of the high quality of design which is sought in national and local plan policies.
7. The proposed extension would be at the rear and would not therefore been seen in street scene views from within Cullera Close. However, and although the frequency of its use is not known, there is a footpath running along the rear of the dwelling which forms part of an extensive east – west path across this local area, from which it would be possible to get glimpsed views of the rear of the property. The proposed extension at first floor, and in particular the proposed roof form would detract from the high quality character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the significance of which is in part due to the well-designed nature of the properties within it.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not respect the character and appearance of the existing property nor the significance of the Conservation Area. It would not preserve the character and appearance of the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area. This would conflict with Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (2012), Policies DMHB 4, DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020), (Local Plan Part Two), Policies D3 and HC1 of the London Plan (2021) and Chapters 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), all of which amongst other matters seek a high quality of design which respects the local context and the significance of designated heritage assets.
9. Paragraph 202 of the Framework sets out that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Whilst the harm to the designated heritage assets of the Conservation Area would, in my view, be less than substantial, I have not been directed to any public benefits arising, and I must therefore conclude that there are no material public benefits that would be sufficient to outweigh that harm.

Issue b) Living Conditions

10. I understand the Council's reason for refusal in respect of the proposed layout for the extended third bedroom as it would appear from the notations on the submitted plan, that the bedroom would be deprived of any natural light or outlook. However, and despite the restricted headroom in part, I recognise that there would be alternative ways to lay out the accommodation to ensure that the bedroom would maintain an acceptable outlook and light for future occupiers. Were no other matters of concern and planning permission were to be granted, I do not therefore consider that there would be justification to withhold permission in this regard.
11. In respect of the rear garden size, this would, following the proposed development, reduce to some 85 sq m. Policy DMHD 1 of the Local Plan – Part Two refers to the requirement for an adequate garden but Policy DMHB 18 of the same plan goes into further detail and sets a standard of 100 sq m for 4 bedroom properties. The remaining garden area, following the proposed extensions to the property, would fall short but by a relatively modest amount and would remain of regular shape to be usable amenity space in relation to the dwelling. Although it would not comply with the specific requirements of Policy DMHB 18 of the Local Plan – Part Two I do not consider that, were there no other matters of concern and planning permission were to be granted, that this shortfall would justify withholding planning permission.
12. I am therefore satisfied that the living conditions of the residents of the dwelling would be or could be made satisfactory, with particular regard to the light and outlook to bedroom three and the provision of private outdoor space. There would be no conflict with Policy DMHD 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two, Policy D6 of the London Plan (2021) and Section 12 and in particular, paragraph 130 of the Framework, all of which amongst other matters seek to protect the amenities of existing and future occupiers.

Other Considerations

13. The information before me confirms that there is a Tree Preservation Order across the site and adjoining land under the reference TPO 156. However, and as confirmed at my site visit, the Council has set out that there are no protected trees remaining on site.
14. The Appellant has raised concerns about how the application was processed by the Council, but this is a matter to be addressed direct to the Council; my decision is necessarily based solely on the planning merits of the scheme before me.

Conclusion

15. I have found that the proposal would provide for satisfactory living conditions for the existing and future occupiers, but my finding on this issue does not outweigh the harm I have concluded under my first main issue.

16. There are no other material considerations which would justify me making a decision other than in accordance with development plan policy. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR