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ARCHITECTS DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT FOR:

Development at Woodlands Care Home, 84 Long Lane, Ickenham UB10 0EQ



July 2020

THE SITE

Locality

Long Lane (B466) is a relatively busy road running between West Ruislip High Road to the north and Uxbridge Road (A4020) to the south. This street contains a mixture of residential and commercial buildings on both sides, with extensive green buffer zones between the road and buildings in some parts. The road is fairly long, so the character and architectural styles vary significantly. The property at No. 84 sits on the western side of the road and is located broadly half way between the Ickenham underground station and Hillingdon rail and underground station. The site is also served by a number of bus routes (278 697 and U10), with West Ruislip High Road, which is located several hundred metres to the north), offers a vast number of amenities. Cycle lanes are available only in some sections of the road.

Setting

A variety of styles, materials and finishes can be seen on the buildings within this road and whilst this street is quaint in parts and forms a part of Ickenham Village Conservation Area, there is no clear established character to be seen on the existing elevations. The building itself, however, is not listed in any way or identified as being of special interest. The site is bound by The Douay Martyrs Catholic Secondary School to the south, whist there are residential properties to all other sides. This site currently comprises two detached two-storey buildings, both set back from the front boundary by approximately 12m. The building on the southern boundary is the original dwelling and is the larger of two – it has been extended in the past with a two-storey flat roofed extension to the rear and it presently accommodates the care home with existing 18 rooms for residents and various ancillary spaces, such as dining room, reception, assisted bathrooms, etc.. The building to the northern side (known as no. 84a), formerly a family house, is now used as a Day Care Centre associated to the main care home and currently also contains offices for the staff and management. To the rear there is a large area of open space, some of which is landscaped and some covered with gravel. The site covers an area of approximately 0.15ha situated on the western side of Long Lane. To the front of the buildings the area is covered in hardstanding and provides parking for parking spaces (one of which is a dedicated space for disabled users).

History

The site has been subject to internal and external modifications over the years, but the only relevant applications to this proposal are the two most recent ones (74274/PRC/2018/247/ 74274/APP/2019/1180). Both applications were for substantial extensions at the rear of the site and both were refused, primarily on the grounds of excessive massing and detrimental impact on the existing building and conservation area in principle. A further scheme was submitted following those two applications (by the same designer) for a roof extension over the existing building, which was also negatively received. However, we have now reassessed various comments from all previous applications and redesigned the scheme, which was sent to Mr Rodger for pre-application advice earlier this month. The scheme was revised to take on board some further comments and has now received a positive feedback.

THE PROPOSAL

Introduction

The proposed extensions comprise a mixture of single and two storey elements at the rear of the site, as well as a new mansard roof extension over the existing flat roofed two-storey rear extension. The new accommodation is to provide an increased capacity, offering a total of 31 bedrooms, new dining/ living area, and kitchen on the ground floor and various ancillary spaces to facilitate the increased capacity. All new rooms will be fully accessible and contain an en-suite bathroom, with access to the shared assisted bathroom. The new living/ dining area at the rear would also have access to the private garden, with openings in the southern elevation – away from the adjoining residential garden at the rear. The new laundry and boiler room enclosure will be housed in a separate single storey outhouse, which would help minimise the massing of the main building. Two further entrances into the building will be created – one close to the new kitchen (also used as service entrance) and another aff the new stair link connecting the exiting two storey element with the new extension. The new floor area of extensions would be 421m^2, 217m^2 of which is on the ground floor, 99m^2 on first and 105m^2 on the second floor mansard extension and converted roof.

Design/ Scale/ Massing

The relevant planning policies considered in developing this proposal are set out within the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 - Saved UDP Polices and the Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Residential Extensions. It is worth pointing out that the council does not object in principle to the extension of the building subject to compliance with the relevant policies. Some of the most relevant are as follows:

- Policy BE1 states that all new developments should achieve a high quality of design in all new buildings and the public realm contributes to community cohesion and a sense of place.
- Policy DMHB 4 advises that within Conservation Areas new development will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. It should sustain and enhance its significant and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- Policy DMHB 11 advises that all development will be required to be designed to the highest standards and incorporate principles of good design. It should take into account aspects including the scale of the development considering the height, mass and bulk of adjacent structures; building plot sizes and established street patterns; building lines and streetscape rhythm and landscaping. It should also not adversary impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties and open space.

The main differences between the previously refused schemes and this one are primarily concerned with the impact the proposed extensions have on the host building and conservation area in principle, as those appear to have been the main reason for refusal. Our proposal broadly retains the footprint of the extensions as per the previous designer's scheme (although this is now reduced and moved away from the northern boundary), but the two storey element is now only envisaged directly behind the existing flat roofer rear extension - this would not only maintain the views of the trees from the front (which can best be seen on the street scene drawing), but would also be quite inconspicuous given that it would appear as a natural extension to the existing building. There are a couple of windows proposed within the first floor rear elevation, but only one of those if facing the adjoining garden at the rear – this opening would be part obscured to 1.7m height in order to avoid overlooking. The top level of the two-storey element is also designed as a mansard roof in order to comply with the planning design guidance, whilst the single storey would feature a flat roof in order to minimise the volume and maximise view of trees sitting on the western boundary. The new storey extension will be linked to the existing building with a mostly glazed, lightweight flat-roofed link, containing a new Part M compliant staircase



Front view of the property

We have also changed the design and reduced the size of the roof extension by some margin - the volume would sit centrally in relation to the main building's roof (thus making is almost impossible to see from the street and a lot less imposing overall). The mansard arrangement would still allow for the rooms to be placed on one end, with shallow dormer windows placed on the north elevation only and velux-type roof lights on the elevation facing the courtyard. No modifications would be required to the main roof or any external elevation of the existing property, with the exception of relocation of the end room window from rear to the side elevation (facing the courtyard) on both floors.

Demand

The previous application stated that Woodlands Care Home on average receives ten enquiries per month whilst the Day Centre now has a waiting list of 10 persons living locally within the area. This was initially queried by the council and after additional information was provided to support this statement, the Head of Direct Care Provision has advised that there are no further objections to this application.

Further to the previous application, the management of the care home have established a good line of communication with Mr Darren Thorpe, who is the head of Business Delivery and Market Management at Hillingdon. He advised that there is always a need for good residential care in the Borough and that he believes this redevelopment would be providing exactly that, so was very supportive of this scheme.



Rear view of the property

Materials

The new extensions will be constructed using traditional methods and will use matching finishes, such as the red brick plinths and buff coloured render. The top floor of the new two-storey element will be constructed as a mansard roof and will be covered with slate tiles, which will also be used on the proposed second floor mansard roof enclosure. The single storey structure is to have a flat roof, which will be fully covered with natural sedum, providing additional green area that will be visible from upper floors of both the existing and proposed buildings on this site, and those of adjoining properties. The single storey boiler room/ laundry outhouse will be constructed using multi-coloured red brickwork and slate roof tiles. Timber pergolas are also proposed between the outhouse and main building to provide a dry link, similar feature is also envisaged over the entrance leading to the stair link.

Amenity of Neighbours

There are no concerns over loss of privacy, outlook or daylight to the adjoining properties since there are no material deviations from existing massing and window arrangements. The only new elements to consider would be the new dormer window in the rear first storey mansard roof, but this will be part obscured to 1.7m height in order to avoid overlooking. The remaining upper level openings (serving bedrooms in the new mansard roof extensions at 1st and 2nd floor level) are not considered to be contentious as they are facing the school yard. Velux windows in the north facing mansard roof are serving a hallway and as such would not be causing any privacy issues. Additional volumes are also set away from the existing adjoining properties by some margin, thereby not causing loss of light or outlook.

Access/ mobility/ distancing

The proposal will incorporate a number of measures to upgrade accessibility to all areas and levels of both existing and new spaces. Other than providing level access points to all openings serving the new rear extensions, the proposal also envisages a new disabled access ramp to the existing front entrance. The ramp will be wrapping around a planter bed, which sits between the main entrance and the disabled parking

space further along the front elevation, and will thus not form a dominant feature in the forecourt. New lobby and entrance area configuration (which incorporates a new DDA compliant toilet), will provide a much better circulation space for disabled users and visitors; doors will also be replaced with automatic sliding doors. The lift will also be upgraded and extended upwards to serve the new roof extension, meaning that all levels of the care home will become fully accessible to wheelchair users.

Additional facilities and accommodation will also go a long way in providing adequate space to meet the required distancing between occupants in communal areas, but also between staff and visitors. The Care Home currently has no cases of Covid 19, but is very aware of changing requirements that are put in place to deal with the issue and is keen to implement all possible measures to manage the situation.

Landscape

Whilst the proposed extensions would cover a fair part of the rear garden, there is still plenty of room on this substantial site left to maintain good separation between the new structures and adjoining boundaries and provide high quality landscaped spaces at the rear. The extensions will also maintain the visual gap between the Care Home and its Day Centre and would therefore comply in terms of scale and location, as well as preserve the Conservation Area. This will be further enhanced by additional landscaping that is proposed to the front of the site – other than retaining the existing hedge, new areas of planting are envisaged in front of the existing building. Further planters are proposed in front of the entrance enclosure and to the right of the vehicular entrance, which will together considerably soften the appearance of the forecourt, currently dominated by hardstanding. The new planting will dramatically improve the landscape quality of this site and enhance the village character this conservation area is seeking to preserve.

A sedum roof is also proposed over the single storey rear extension – whilst this is not going to be visible from the street, it will retain and enhance the 'green' feel to the rear when viewed from adjoining properties.

Trees

No tree will be affected by the proposed development – some of the larger trees are present in the residential garden to the west of the site, but relevant precautions can be taken to protect any roots that may be affected by the works. If needed, this matter can be conditioned should the approval be granted.

Traffic/ Parking

There are no changes to vehicular traffic or public pedestrian access to this scheme, although the disabled parking space directly in front of the building will be modified to provide better manoeuvring room between the parking bays and safer access of disabled users into the main building. It is also worth noting that the Highways department had no issues with the previous proposal in terms of numbers of vehicles visiting this site (the number of bedrooms proposed under this application is in fact lower than that on the previous one).

The proposal will provide 12 No. parking spaces (including the disabled space), which exceeds the council's requirements of 1 space per 4 residents. The number of employees is 1 to every 5 residents and some of the spaces are likely to be used by the staff, but given the proximity of Hillingdon and Ickenham stations and frequent bus services passing the site linking Uxbridge with Ruislip, the staff will be encouraged to use public transport.

In addition to this, a covered store for 8 bicycles is provided between the outhouse and the fence at the rear garden of 84a, with bin store enclosure located along the back of the same fence.

Conclusion

The careful redesign of this proposal has resulted in a solution that significantly improves and coordinates both the inside and outside of this property without creating a harmful impact on the host building and the street as a whole. The proposed amendments are intended to comfortably fit within the general character of Ickenham Village Conservation Area and surrounding in general. We believe that the proposal addresses all concerns raised as a result of previous applications and that the additional facilities would present a valuable contribution to the local ageing community. We therefore urge you to support this application

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