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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 May 2025

by **J Heppell BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R5510/W/24/3357815**

**43 Rochester Road, Northwood, Hillingdon HA6 1NJ**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Ms Sophia Hawrylczak against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Hillingdon.
  - The application Ref is 78160/APP/2024/2562.
  - The development proposed is the demolition of existing rear conservatory structure and erection of a single storey front, rear and side extension and loft conversion including roof extension, 1no rear dormer and 4no front facing roof lights. Formation of larger driveway in front garden.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the demolition of existing rear conservatory structure and erection of a single storey front, rear and side extension and loft conversion including roof extension, 1no rear dormer and 4no front facing roof lights and formation of larger driveway in front garden at 43 Rochester Road, Northwood, Hillingdon HA6 1NJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 78160/APP/2024/2562, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

### Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal was accompanied by an amended Existing and Proposed Site Layout Plan, Drawing No 644/P3/1, showing no front dormer windows. The appellant has confirmed that front dormers were shown in error on the original drawing, and that front dormers were not part of the description of development and were not shown on the Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations. As such, no interested parties have been prejudiced by the correction of the error, and I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the revised site layout plan.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

### Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached bungalow situated in a residential area which comprises a mix of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows. The appellant wishes to convert the property into a chalet bungalow by extending to the side and rear and into the roof space.

5. The appeal property benefits from an extant permission for front, rear and side extensions and a loft conversion<sup>1</sup>. The principal difference between the permitted scheme and the appeal proposal is that the proposed rear dormer window is wider on the appeal scheme and would be clad in render instead of hanging tiles. The key issue therefore, having regard to the overall effect of the scheme, is whether the proposed wider rear dormer window, clad in render, would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area.
6. Policy DMHD 1E of the London Borough of Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 Development Management Policies Adopted Version 16 January 2020 (LPP2) contains detailed design criteria for roof extensions. Taking the already permitted enlargement to the roof to be the original roof for the purposes of the policy, the proposed dormer window would extend across approximately two thirds of the roof, retaining a significant area of roof slope either side of it. It would sit below the ridge line of the roof and, by virtue of the angled parapet roof above the single storey rear extension, would be perceived as retaining a roof slope above the eaves line. Consequently, the proposal would be subservient to the scale of the roof and would not dominate the appearance of the bungalow, in accordance with Policy DMHD 1E.
7. I saw on my site visit that the adjacent property, no 41 Rochester Road, has been converted into a chalet bungalow with two large flat roofed dormer windows at the rear. The dormers sit just below the ridge line and extend across most of the width of the property, with a gap between the two dormers. The overall bulk and massing of the proposed dormer window at No 43 would be comparable with that of the adjacent pair of dormer windows, indicating that the proposal would not be out of place with the character of this run of properties when seen from the rear.
8. The Council has argued that, although the proposed dormer window would be located at the rear of the property, it would still be visible from certain vantage points, including public and private views, and that the presence of other dormers of a different design and materials does not provide a justification for the development. I accept that the proposed dormer would be visible from limited vantage points, and its design differs from some nearby dormers. However, there is a mix to the character of properties and their architectural features including various designs of dormer windows in the wider area. Given this mix, and the details of the scheme, I am satisfied that the proposal is an appropriately designed addition to the property for the reasons I have given.
9. The proposed rendering of the dormer window would contrast with the appearance of the existing tiled roof, and I agree with the Council that the most appropriate material would be hanging tiles. Since external facing materials are a detailed matter which are capable of being conditioned, and as the appellant has indicated a willingness to accept a condition requiring details of the external materials of the dormer window to be submitted to and approved by the Council, I propose to attach a planning condition to this affect.
10. Subject to agreement on the external materials, the scheme would meet with the National Planning Policy Framework requirement that development be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

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<sup>1</sup> LPA reference 78160/APP/2023/2113

11. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal as a whole and the design and form of the dormer window, would not harm the character and appearance of the host property or the surrounding area. The scheme would therefore comply with Policy D3 of the London Plan March 2021, Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies Adopted November 2012 entitled “A Vision for 2026” and policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the LPP2. Together these policies promote a design-led approach which aims to improve and maintain the quality of the built environment by requiring design of the highest standards, including detailed design criteria for roof extensions which I have outlined above.

### **Other Matters**

12. The Council has argued that the fallback position of “permitted development” rights for dormer windows should not negate the need for high standards of design. I am however satisfied that the proposal achieves good design, without ‘permitted development’ rights being used as justification.
13. An interested party has raised a concern about the proximity of the proposed side extension to the boundary with no 45 Rochester Road, stating that it would obstruct access and make maintenance of the property difficult. I am conscious that this aspect of the scheme is the same as already permitted and, as the interested party alludes to, this is a civil not a planning matter. The interested party has also stated that the adjacent property No 45 is not shown on the appellant’s proposed ground floor plan, whereas the position of the adjacent property is evident on all the appellant’s submitted plans. However, the scheme is clear from the plans, and I am satisfied by the proposal.

### **Conditions**

14. The Council has recommended that six conditions be imposed in the event that the appeal is allowed. I have had regard to the policy requirements contained in the development plan.
15. Standard conditions relating to the three year time limit (No 1) and the list of approved plans (No 2) are necessary.
16. In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, the materials to be used for the roof, dormer window and external surfaces should be submitted for approval (No 3). This requirement for approval can be prior to installation and I have worded the condition accordingly.
17. Given that a dormer window and rooflights form part of this approval, it is necessary to remove permitted development rights for further roof extensions and alterations (No 4), to ensure that the property does not become overdeveloped to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
18. As the plans include a substantial flat roofed area, it is necessary to ensure that this area is not used for recreational purposes (No 5), which could lead to occupants of No 43 causing overlooking of the adjacent properties.
19. Parts of the front garden area not required for vehicular or pedestrian access should be landscaped (No 6), which is necessary in the interests of the visual appearance of the area.

## **Conclusion**

20. The scheme would comply with the development plan when considered as a whole and material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, the appeal should be allowed.

*J Heppell*

INSPECTOR

### **Schedule of Conditions**

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The approved development shall be carried out in accordance with drawings 644/P3/1 Revision A and 644/P3/3.
- 3) Prior to installation of the external materials on the development hereby permitted, details of the roof and dormer materials and external surfaces shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details should include information relating to make, product/type, colour and photographs/images. Thereafter the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details and retained as such.
- 4) Notwithstanding the provisions of Classes B and C of Part 1, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no additional windows, doors or other openings shall be constructed in the walls or roof slopes of the development hereby approved.
- 5) Access to the flat roof over the extension hereby approved shall be for maintenance or emergency purposes only and the flat roof shall not be used as a roof garden, terrace, balcony, patio or similar amenity area.
- 6) Notwithstanding the details hereby approved a minimum of 25% of the front garden area shall be soft landscaped for so long as the development remains in existence.

End of schedule