



Appeal Statement

Porch Extension
AT
26 Sanctuary Close,
Harefield UB9 6LJ

Reference:
26SC-2595

Date:
15 April 2025

1. Introduction

- a. This Appeal Statement has been prepared by Just Planning on behalf of Ms Jane Muyingo to support an appeal against the decision of London Borough of Hillingdon to refuse retrospective planning permission for a porch extension at 26 Sanctuary Close, in Harefield.
- b. Following a description of the site and surrounding area, the report will set out an overview of relevant planning policy and outline the case for the appellant.
- c. It will be demonstrated that the proposal complies with relevant local and national policies and that planning permission should therefore be granted.

2. Background

- a. On 30 January 2025, the appellant submitted a planning application to London Borough of Hillingdon for the following development (reference: 79171/APP/2025/232):

Erection of porch to the front elevation at first floor level.

- b. In a decision notice dated 27 March 2025, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) advised that the application had been refused for the following reason:

1. *Due to its siting, scale and design, the proposed development would form a incongruous addition to the property which would disrupt the visual uniformity of the streetscape, protrude discordantly from otherwise consistent front building line and dominate the character of the streetscape. The development would therefore be harmful to the visual amenities of the street scene. For these reasons the proposal is contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One – Strategic Policies (2021), Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management (2020) and Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021)*

3. Site Description

- a. The appeal site comprises a three-storey, mid-terraced house located on the eastern side of Sanctuary Close, in Harefield. The front elevation of the house is shown in the image in figure 1, below.



Figure 1: Image of the appeal property.

- b. Sanctuary Close is a cul-de-sac leading from Hill End Road. It is made up of two groups of buildings, each looking onto a central courtyard, used for parking, as shown in the satellite image in figure 2, on the next page.



Figure 2: Satellite image showing the buildings on Sanctuary Close.

- c. The buildings are from the late twentieth century (around the 1970s) and are constructed in brick with dual-pitched, tiled roofs.
- d. They have an unusual design with garage at ground floor level that projects forward of the rest of the building, as shown in the satellite image in figure 3, on the next page. The flat roof above the garage, to the front of each house, is used as an outdoor amenity space and has an entrance door resembling the front entrance to a conventional house. Tall, brick boundary walls run along both sides of each terrace.
- e. The house also has a rear garden and an outdoor terrace to the rear, as is typical for properties in this development.



Figure 2: Satellite image showing the appeal property, with the front entrance door at first floor level (prior to the construction of the porch).

- f. The immediate surrounding area is predominantly residential in character with properties of similar original design and layout. The front elevations of the houses on Sanctuary Close have been altered considerably over the years, with various changes to the front garages and entrance doors and to the front first floor terraces, many of which are enclosed by walls or fencing.
- g. The appeal site is not located within a Conservation Area or an Area of Special Local Character. No listed buildings are present and, though there is a Tree Preservation Order covering the site, the council acknowledges that there is no harm to protected trees.

4. Relevant Planning History & Appeal Proposal

- a. The planning history shows that a lawful development certificate was issued in January 2025 for rear conservatory, under permitted development rights (reference: 79171/APP/2024/3034).
- b. In addition, planning permission was granted in January 2025 for a first-floor rear extension, removing the existing balcony (reference: 79171/APP/2024/3190).
- c. At the same time, the appellant decided to build a porch in front of the front entrance door at first floor level. She carried out the works in good faith, understanding them to be permitted development under Class D, Part 1, Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015, as amended.
- d. Before starting works, she sought confirmation from the council that her proposal was indeed permitted development. She emailed the planning team, including photographs of the area for which the porch was proposed. The council responded that:

"Providing the porch doesn't exceed 3m in height it won't require planning permission."

- e. A copy of the email conversation is provided as Appendix A.
- f. In fact, the porch is not permitted development because of its height above ground level. It is a key failing that the council provided inaccurate advice to the appellant.
- g. The appeal proposal is for a square porch measuring 1.5m deep x 1.5m wide with an area of 2.6sqm. The porch has a sloping flat roof, is positioned at first floor level and is located entirely within the existing walled front area of the house. The porch is shown in the photograph in figure 3, below.



Figure 3: Image of the porch that has been built.

- h. The porch provides weather protection for the first-floor entrance and improves the thermal performance of the house. The design is simple and functional, with materials matching the existing property.

5. 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.
- b. The relevant parts of the development plan for the area are the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (2012), the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) and the London Plan (2021).
- c. According to the decision notice, the development fails to comply with policy BE1 of the Strategy Policies and policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the Development Management Policies.
- d. Policy BE1 (Built Environment) requires that all new development improve 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.
- e. Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development) 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.
- f. Policy DMHB 12 (Streets and Public Realm) relates exclusively to the public realm and is not relevant to the appeal proposal.
- g. 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"

- h. 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.
- i. It 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"

- j. It goes on to say that:

"porches should be subordinate in scale and individually designed to respect the character and features of the original building; pastiche features will not be supported"

- k. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), adopted on 12 December 2024, sets out the government's national planning policies and how these policies 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.

- l. According to paragraph 39:

"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, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, 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."

- m. Chapter 11 encourages developers and local planning authorities to *"make effective use of land"*. Part (d) of paragraph 125 promotes *"the development of under-utilised land and buildings"*.
- n. Chapter 12 requires good design. Paragraph 131 describes the *"creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places"* as *"fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve"*.
- o. Paragraph 130 requires that densities be maximised, to *"ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site"*.
- p. According to paragraph 135, developments must *"function well add to the overall quality of the area"*, be *"visually attractive as a result of good architecture"*, be *"sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment"* and provide *"a high standard of amenity for existing and future users"*.

6. Case for the Appellant

- a. The council does not object in principle to the appeal proposal and does not believe that the development causes any harm to neighbours' living conditions. It is concerned that the porch unacceptably harms the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area.
- b. The council does not dispute that the porch complies with the specific and detailed criteria set out for homeowner extensions in policy DMHD 1 of the Development Management Policies: it is modest in size and subordinate in scale, makes appropriate use of materials and does not project across the whole frontage.
- c. It is not disputed that if the development were at ground floor level, it would be permitted development and would not require express planning permission, suggesting that this form of development is generally considered minor and uncontroversial.
- d. The officer's report argues that the porch is an incongruous addition to this house. However, the porch matches the overall character and proportions of the dwelling and appears as an entirely conventional addition. It is very common to see small, uPVC porches outside the entrance doors to houses of this era.
- e. The porch has a very modest visual impact. It is low in height and has a moderate projection. It has a total area of just 2.6sqm. It is at first floor level and set well back from the front boundary of the property. It is tucked away to one side and sits neatly up against the tall, brick boundary wall that marks the boundary with the neighbour at number 27. It does not appear prominent in views from the street and does not appear incongruous or out of place.
- f. The council's assertion that the porch *"protrudes discordantly from the front of the building"* fails to acknowledge that the structure is sensitively positioned within an already enclosed space. The porch is not visible from most vantage points along the street due to the existing boundary treatments, which already extend to a similar height.
- g. The reason for refusal also argues that the porch would *"disrupt the visual uniformity of the streetscape"* and 'dominate' the character of the area. However, Sanctuary Close is not characterised by a strong uniformity in terms of its front elevational treatments, and it is difficult to see how the porch could reasonably be described as 'dominating' the cul-de-sac.
- h. The officer's report acknowledges the diversity of the area, noting that the first floor outside areas:

"have undergone a variety of minor works such as erection of frontage fencing or installation of retractable awnings to meet individual household uses"

- i. In fact, the council understates the existing diversity within the street scene and the precedent set by various alterations already present.
- j. Various properties have established different treatments to their front areas, including decorative elements, planters, coloured boundaries, trellis work, and different door styles.
- k. The planning application was accompanied by comprehensive photo documentation showing the consideration variety in front boundary treatments and alterations throughout Sanctuary Close. These photos clearly illustrate that uniformity is not the prevailing characteristic of the area.
- l. Drawing S08 (labelled 'Photosheet') shows the front elevation of the appeal property along with its neighbours along the same row. It can be seen that there are stark differences in the design, colour and materials of each garage door and front entrance door at ground floor level.
- m. There are also substantial differences at first floor level, with a canopy visible at number 24, timber fencing at number 25 and a different style and colour of fencing at number 29. The porch fits in comfortably with this eclectic mix of designs.
- n. Drawing C102 (labelled 'Photosheet 1') shows dark-stained timber fencing at number 24, bright red stained fencing at number 25, fencing and planting at number 28, trellis fencing and planting at number 29 and walls at number 30. In the appellant's view, her porch is less obtrusive to these alterations to other houses on her row.
- o. Drawing C103 (labelled 'Photosheet 2') provides examples of diverse front elevations elsewhere on Sanctuary Close. There have been substantial alterations to the first-floor front terraces at numbers 13 to 18 Sanctuary Close, as well as to 6 to 8 Sanctuary Close, 1 and 2 Sanctuary Close, 19-23 Sanctuary Close, 9-12 Sanctuary Close and 4 and 5 Sanctuary Close.
- p. The photograph in figure 4, on the next page, shows the front of number 1 Sanctuary Close, as an example of how the front elevations of these houses have been altered. It shows alterations to the garage door, the shape of the opening above the garage door and also shows a white wall built to the front of the terrace above.



Figure 4: Photograph of 1 Sanctuary Close.

- q. Figures 5, 6 and 7, below, provide further examples of alterations around Sanctuary Close.



Figure 5: Alterations at Sanctuary Close.



Figure 6: Alterations at Sanctuary Close.



Figure 7: Alterations at Sanctuary Close.

- r. The officer's report suggests that approving this porch would set a precedent. However, as we have seen, precedent already exists for individualisation of front areas throughout Sanctuary Close. The extensive photographic evidence submitted with the application clearly demonstrates the diverse character that has evolved over time.
- s. Properties have added various features to their front areas including different fencing styles, decorative elements, planters, and other personalised features. The development already displays a range of boundary heights and treatments and several properties have added decorative elements that project from the main building line.
- t. Specifically, nearby properties including numbers 28 and 29 (as seen in Photosheet 1) have made significant alterations to their front areas with decorative elements, extended boundary heights, and colourful additions that are more visually prominent than the modest porch at the appeal site.
- u. The suggestion that the porch *"harms the character of the street scape and the original design of the properties"* fails to recognise the evolved character of Sanctuary Close, where residents made various alterations to front areas in a manner that has created a diverse and personalised street scene.

7. Conclusions

- a. The council's decision is based on a mischaracterization of the area's uniformity. The evidence clearly demonstrates that Sanctuary Close exhibits considerable diversity in the treatment of front areas, with numerous examples of personalisation and adaptation throughout the development.
- b. The appeal scheme comprises a modest porch of conventional design that is contained entirely within the existing front yard area. At 1.5m x 1.5m with a simple sloping roof, it represents a minor addition that is in keeping with the scale and character of the property.
- c. Photographic evidence submitted with the application demonstrates that properties throughout Sanctuary Close have adapted their front areas with various additions, boundary treatments, and decorative elements. This established pattern of development has created a diverse street scene where the appeal scheme would not appear incongruous or harmful.
- d. The modest size and scale of the porch, combined with its conventional design and positioning within an already enclosed front yard, ensures that it does not *"dominate the character of the streetscape"* as claimed in the reason for refusal.
- e. For these reasons, the appellant contends that the development represents sustainable development, and the inspector is respectfully requested to allow the appeal.



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