

261 Long Lane - Justification for amendment

Application Site: 261 Long Lane, Ickenham, UB10 9JR

Proposal: Variation of layout to incorporate vertical accessibility (lift installation) resulting in a revised unit mix (1 x 3-bed, 1 x 3-bed, 1 x 2-bed unit).

1. Introduction and Overview

This statement provides planning justification for the proposed modification to the approved residential layout at 261 Long Lane. The revised scheme replaces the approved duplex layout with a horizontal layout spanning three floors (Ground, First, and Second/Loft) served by a new passenger lift.

While the previous consent delivered three 3-bedroom family units, the integration of a lift from ground to second floor necessitates a minor shift in unit mix to 2 x 3-bedroom units and 1 x 2-bedroom unit.

This statement sets out the compelling planning and statutory policy grounds justifying why replacing the third 3-bedroom unit with a 2-bedroom unit delivers a significantly higher quality of development, aligns with local and strategic housing policies, and enhances inclusive living.

2. Planning Policy Considerations

2.1 Housing Mix & Balanced Communities

- Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 Policy DMH 1 (Housing Mix): Requires residential developments to provide a mix of unit sizes that reflect local housing needs.
- London Plan (2021) Policy H10 (Housing Size Mix): Explicitly states that schemes should promote mixed and balanced communities and recognize the need for both family homes and smaller 1- and 2-bedroom units.

Justification:

1. Retention of Substantial Family Housing: The proposal maintains 66% of the total units as 3-bedroom family units (Ground Floor and First Floor). The core policy objective of preserving and contributing to Hillingdon's family housing stock remains firmly intact.
2. Diversification & Local Market Need: Hillingdon's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies a critical, growing demand for high-quality 2-bedroom units to accommodate downsizers, elderly residents, key workers, and smaller households. Reallocating the top-floor unit from a 3-bed to a 2-bed unit avoids over-saturating the building with large family units where amenity or second-floor living is less optimal for larger families.

2.2 Inclusive Design, Accessibility & Lifelong Housing

- London Plan (2021) Policy D5 (Inclusive Design) & Policy D7 (Accessible Housing): Mandates that developments should be accessible, inclusive, and provide step-free access where feasible to cater to older people, disabled residents, and families with young children.
- Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1 Policy HE1 & Part 2 Policy DMHB 11: Encourages adaptable design that enables residents to remain in their homes as their mobility needs change over time.

Justification:

1. Unlocking Full Step-Free Access: Incorporating a passenger lift servicing all floors elevates the quality of the entire development. Second-floor units in converted/extended developments are traditionally inaccessible to individuals with mobility restrictions or elderly occupants. The lift ensures true step-free accessibility across every level.
2. Spatial Trade-off for Universal Accessibility: The spatial footprint required for the lift shaft, lift motor mechanisms, and compliant level-access lobbies reduces the usable Internal Floor Area (GIA) on the upper levels. Reducing the second-floor unit from a 3-bedroom to a 2-bedroom unit is a direct spatial consequence of installing the lift.

3. Planning Balance: Exchanging one bedroom on the top floor to unlock full vertical accessibility for the entire building delivers a net benefit that strongly outweighs the loss of a single bedroom.

2.3 Residential Quality, Internal Standards & Amenity

- London Plan (2021) Policy D6 (Housing Quality and Standards): Requires internal layouts to provide functional space, adequate headroom/storage, and dual-aspect living conditions without overcrowding.

Justification:

1. Avoiding Substandard Space: Forcing a 3-bedroom unit onto the top floor while integrating a lift core would result in cramped bedrooms, compromised storage, or substandard room shapes under sloping roofs/eaves.
2. Superior Living Conditions: Reconfiguring the top floor as a generously sized 2-bedroom unit guarantees that all habitable rooms exceed Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS), offer adequate ceiling heights, receive excellent natural light, and provide practical floorplates.

3. Summary of Key Planning Arguments

Aspect	Approved Scheme	Proposed Scheme	Net Planning Benefit
Unit Mix	3 x 3-bed units	2 x 3-bed, 1 x 2-bed units	Creates a balanced community mixing family and smaller units.
Accessibility	Stairs only to upper floors	Passenger Lift servicing all floors	Full compliance with London Plan Policies D5 & D7.
Spatial Quality	Tightly fitted upper-level layouts	Spacious, fully NDSS-compliant units	Eliminates potential overcrowding and substandard room layouts.
Family Housing	100% 3-bed	66% 3-bed	Preserves primary family housing objectives for Hillingdon.

4. Conclusion

The proposed revision presents a clear planning gain. While the scheme reduces the count of 3-bedroom units by one, it maintains a strong majority of family housing (two 3-bed units). In exchange, the incorporation of a passenger lift introduces fully inclusive, step-free access across all floors—a strategic priority under London Plan Policies D5 and D7.

The spatial adjustments resulting in a high-quality 2-bedroom unit on the top floor deliver a better-proportioned layout that adheres to Policy D6 standards. Consequently, the scheme represents sustainable development under the NPPF and complies with Hillingdon Local Plan Policies DMH 1, DMH 4, and DMHB 11.