



PROGRESS PLANNING

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Namaste Lounge, 66 Joel Street, Northwood, HA6 1LL

Single storey outdoor lounge, single storey building for use as a dessert and coffee area and front boundary wall

Prepared by Progress Planning

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Executive Summary

This report has been submitted in support of a planning application for a single outdoor lounge, single storey building for use as a desert and coffee area and front boundary wall. In terms of principle of development, there is local and London Plan support for improving the vibrancy of town centre commercial buildings and making them more equitable for all members of the public.

The proposal makes genuine equitable access improvements to this popular commercial premises in the interest of the public/users and the design changes ensures that the proposal would appear sympathetic in the streetscene.

The amended scheme is considered to overcome the previous reasons for refusal and the proposal would meet both design and accessibility related planning policies at local, regional and national levels.

The Site

The application site is an existing public house/restaurant located on the western side of Joel Street. To the front of the property is a parking area with Northwood Hills station on the opposite side of the road, to the northeast and railway lines are immediately to the north of the site. The surrounding area mainly comprises shops, with residential to the rear.

The application site lies within the Northwood Hills Town Centre and a critical drainage area.

The existing building and outdoor areas have poor access with no step free access for wheelchair users.

Proposed development

The proposal is for a single outdoor lounge, single storey building for use as a desert and coffee area and front boundary wall.

This is an amended proposal following refusal of a previous scheme for a canopy and front boundary wall.

Planning History

This application follows an application (ref: 23334/APP/2021/243) for a larger canopy and wall that was refused on the following grounds:

1. The proposed side extension and front wall by reason of their siting in this visually prominent position, size, scale, bulk and height would result in an incongruous and visually intrusive form of development, which would fail to harmonise with the architectural composition of the original property and would be detrimental to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the streetscene and the wider area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 - Strategic Policies (November 2012) and Policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020).
2. The proposal fails to demonstrate that considerations and measures have been taken to ensure that older and disabled people can gain equitable access to the services and facilities at this establishment. As such, the proposal fails to comply with Policy D5 of the London Plan (2021), the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document HDAS: Accessible Hillingdon (September 2017) and the Equality Act 2010.



Following review of the reasons for refusal relating to the previous scheme, it is fair to accept that the previous scheme failed to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance access to the existing premises.

The existing public house/restaurant is a popular destination for local residents and those beyond. Unfortunately as identified on the previous application, there is no means of access to existing building/services. This new proposal has sought to ensure that this has been addressed to provide step free access throughout the facility for wheelchair users.

To address the visual amenity concerns, the height of the canopy has lowered to the same level as the existing canopy and the height of the front boundary wall has been substantially reduced.

Overall, these measures are considered to address the previous reasons for refusal above. For more details please see the relevant sections of this report below.

Planning Policy

The proposed development would be assessed against Hillingdon's Local Plan; the London Plan, the NPPF, and supplementary planning guidance by both the London Borough of Hillingdon and GLA.

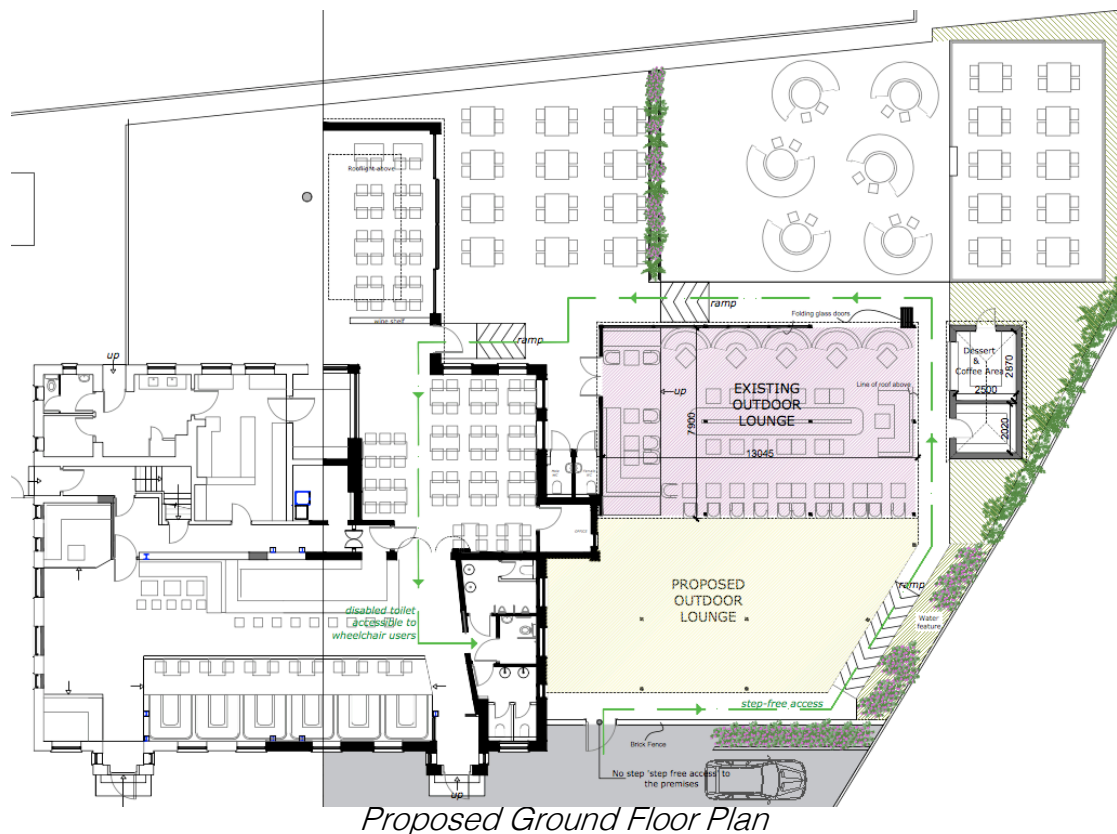
Principle of Development

The proposal seeks to improve the quality of the existing business premises in a town centre location. In particular, it seeks to improve accessibility for wheelchair users in and around the premises where currently there is no access. Given the proposal seeks to enhance an existing commercial premises and improve its accessibility to the public in line with the Equalities Act 2010, it is envisaged that the proposals would in principle be welcomed.

Improved Accessibility

There is currently no step free access to the building or external dining areas. The previous application failed to consider how the proposal could improve access to the services available. Although there is an existing wheelchair accessible toilet within the building, there was no means of accessing it or the external areas.

This proposal has given a lot of thought to improving accessibility for wheelchair users. This is a popular local commercial premises and it is correct to ensure that the establishment meets the Equalities Act 2010 and respects equally all potential users. Although the proposal relates primarily to external areas, the proposal has sought to make all areas accessible to wheelchair users (see proposed ground floor plan below).



As is evident on the plan above, the existing building is raised off of the external ground level by some distance. The main entrances are only accessible by a number of steps. We did explore providing a ramp at these existing entrances, however the vehicular access is rather tight and the length of ramp required would make it unfeasible.

Therefore, this proposal has focused on using the new extension as a means of providing access to the entire premises (both inside and out). A green route on the plan above shows how the proposal would now allow step free access to all publicly accessible locations within the establishment, including and important to the accessible toilet.

Although the previous proposal was refused on poor equitable access, the access arrangements for the new scheme are considered to be a real selling point of the development from both a planning and public interest perspective. Therefore, it is hoped that the amendments will have overcome this previous concern and will be welcomed as a genuine improvement to equitable access to this popular establishment.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The site is not located within a Conservation Area or Area of Special Local Character. Nor is the building listed or of any heritage designations relevant to this proposal.

Strategic Policy BE1 of the Local Plan: Part 1 requires all new development to improve and maintain the quality of the built environment in order to create successful and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Policy DMHB 11: Design and New Development of the Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management Policies states that all development, including extensions, alterations and new buildings will be required to be designed to

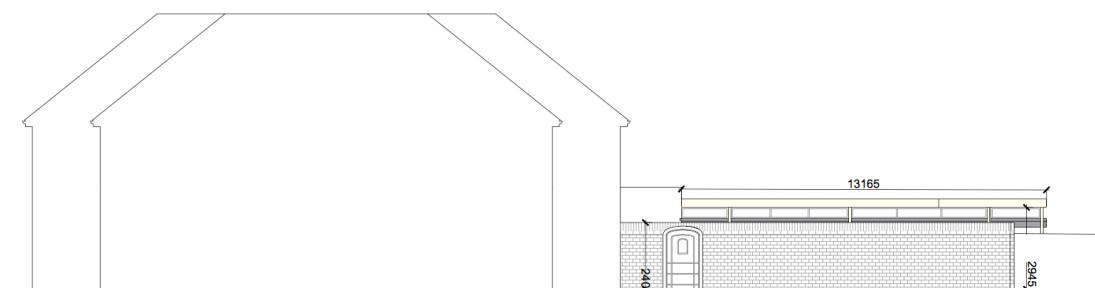
the highest standards and, incorporate principles of good design including harmonising with the local context by taking account the surrounding:

- Scale of development, considering the height, mass and bulk of adjacent structures;
- Building plot sizes and widths, plot coverage and established street patterns;
- Building lines and setbacks, rooflines, streetscape rhythm, for example gaps between structures and other streetscape elements, such as degree of enclosure;
- Architectural composition and quality of detailing;
- Local topography, views both from and to the site; and
- Impact on neighbouring open spaces and their environment.

The proposal was previously refused for the following reason:

1. The proposed side extension and front wall by reason of their siting in this visually prominent position, size, scale, bulk and height would result in an incongruous and visually intrusive form of development, which would fail to harmonise with the architectural composition of the original property and would be detrimental to the character, appearance and visual amenities of the streetscene and the wider area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 - Strategic Policies (November 2012) and Policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020).

This previous scheme as seen below sought a front wall that would have measured 2.4m in height and canopy structure that projected higher above this level to a height of approximately 3.25m from ground level.



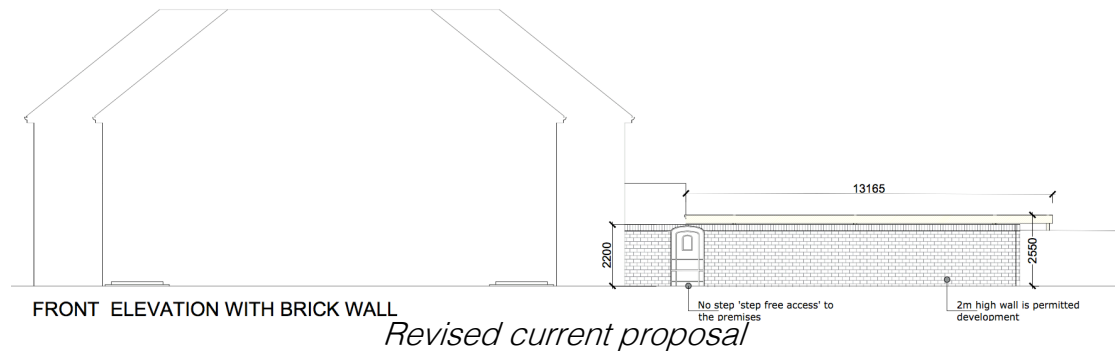
Previously refused scheme

The revised proposal hereby sought has reduced the height of the wall to a maximum of 2.2m, which is only 20cm higher than what could be constructed under permitted development. The additional 20cm sought above and beyond what would be permitted development is required in order to ensure security to the site when the premises is closed. This would be considered to have negligible impact on the visual amenity of the area and would be a similar height to the existing front boundary fence (see below photograph showing the front of the existing premises and the current proposed scheme).



Front of existing premises showing the existing front fencing to the northern side which would be replaced

The proposal as shown below is much lower than was previously sought. The canopy extension would be only 2.550m high and it would tie in with the height of the existing canopy extension. Therefore, when viewed from the street, or for that matter from the surrounding area, it would not appear significantly different to the present situation.



The front wall and canopy extension is situated between the main building and the boundary treatment shared with London Underground to the north. When viewed from the front, it would appear much more subordinate than the previous proposal and would not be appreciably different to the current arrangement. For these reasons and given its limited impact on the streetscene, the new proposal is considered to overcome the previous reason for refusal in relation to design.

Overall, it is considered that the scheme will introduce a modest change in built form that is appropriate to its setting and in keeping with the townscape character of the area, in accordance with policies SO1 and BE1 of the Local Plan: Part 1, Policies DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (January 2020), and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we consider that the development, incorporating the principles established above, makes genuine equitable access improvements to this popular commercial premises in the interest of the public/users and the design changes ensures that the proposal would appear sympathetic in the streetscene.

The amended scheme is considered to overcome the previous reasons for refusal and the proposal would meet both design and accessibility related planning policies at local, regional and national levels.

Therefore, it is anticipated that the application will be approved.