DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
Proposed Conversion of Existing Basement to a Self-Contained Studio Flat

42 Albert Road, Yiewsley, West Drayton, UB7 8ER

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a pre-application planning advice request to the London Borough of Hillingdon for the proposed conversion and alteration of the existing basement at 42 Albert Road, Yiewsley, West Drayton, UB7 8ER.

The proposal seeks to provide one additional self-contained studio flat within the existing basement accommodation, together with associated excavation, lightwell works, new and altered windows and doors, independent access and associated external works.

The proposed basement accommodation has an approximate floor area of 39.0 m².

2. Site and Surroundings

No. 42 Albert Road is a two-storey semi-detached residential property situated on the eastern side of Albert Road.

The property has previously been converted into two self-contained residential flats at ground-floor and first-floor levels. An existing basement extends beneath a substantial part of the building.

The site is long and relatively narrow, with the dwelling positioned towards the Albert Road frontage and a substantial garden extending to the rear.

The proposed works are principally contained within the existing building footprint and the areas immediately adjoining the building required for the proposed basement access and lightwell.

3. Existing Building

The existing building is a traditional semi-detached dwelling with a pitched roof and brick elevations.

The basement is currently non-habitable accommodation. The measured drawings indicate an approximate floor area of 39.0 m², with an existing internal height of approximately 1.8 m in the section shown.

The current drawing package includes existing basement plans and sections and existing front, rear and side elevations.

4. Design Approach

The design approach is based on making use of the existing basement rather than materially increasing the overall scale, height or bulk of the property.

The proposal has therefore been developed to:

- retain the existing character and form of the main dwelling;
- keep the majority of the development within the existing building envelope;
- improve the usability and internal headroom of the basement;
- introduce sufficient natural light and ventilation;
- provide a separate and legible means of access;

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- minimise the visual impact of new external works; and
- provide accommodation suitable for a small studio unit.

The external alterations are limited principally to basement-level openings, the lightwell, access stairs and associated guardrails.

5. Amount and Use

The proposal would provide one self-contained residential studio flat within the existing basement.

The current arrangement provides approximately 39.0 m² of internal floor area and comprises:

- living/sleeping room;
- separate kitchen;
- bathroom;
- hall/lobby;
- storage/cupboard space; and
- independent external access.

The existing ground-floor and first-floor residential units would remain.

6. Layout

The proposed layout has been developed around the existing basement footprint and structural arrangement.

The main living/sleeping room is located towards the front/lightwell side of the basement, while the kitchen is located towards the opposite end of the accommodation. The bathroom, lobby and storage areas are positioned centrally.

The current plan identifies the main living/sleeping area as approximately 13.9 m².

The proposed layout is intended to provide clearly defined functional areas within the constraints of the existing basement.

7. Scale

There would be no increase in the overall height of the existing building.

The proposed development is predominantly below ground and would not materially alter the overall bulk or scale of the existing dwelling.

The principal external changes comprise the lightwell, new basement openings, external access stairs and guarding.

The previous Council assessment concluded that comparable external alterations would not cause a significant detrimental effect on the appearance of the property or wider street scene.

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8. Appearance

The design intention is for all new external elements to remain visually subordinate to the existing building.

New basement windows, doors, railings and other visible components should be finished in materials and colours compatible with the existing property.

The proposed guardrails around the lightwell and external access are intended primarily as safety features and would be designed as simple, visually recessive elements.

The proposal does not seek to substantially alter the architectural character of the existing house.

9. Lightwell and Natural Light

A principal element of the design is the provision of a front lightwell and additional basement-level openings.

These are intended to improve:

- daylight penetration;
- outlook;
- ventilation; and
- the overall quality of the proposed basement accommodation.

A previous daylight assessment undertaken for the 2013 proposal concluded that the kitchen and living/sleeping room achieved daylight levels above the relevant criteria applied at that time.

The previous Council assessment also accepted that the proposed openings and enlarged lightwell could provide adequate natural light, although concern remained regarding the outlook from the principal living/sleeping area.

The current pre-application submission therefore seeks the Council's advice on whether the proposed lightwell arrangement provides an acceptable standard of outlook and whether further modifications would be required.

10. Amenity Space and Privacy

The property benefits from a substantial rear garden.

Previous Council assessment identified that the quantity of shared amenity space was sufficient, although concerns were raised regarding privacy where shared garden use could occur close to habitable-room windows.

If required, the arrangement can be refined to incorporate:

- a defensible space adjacent to basement windows;
- planting;
- privacy screening; or
- a defined separation between communal garden areas and habitable-room openings.

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The final arrangement would be developed having regard to the Council's pre-application advice.

11. Access

Pedestrian access to the property is from Albert Road.

The proposed basement studio would be provided with its own independent external access via new access stairs.

The new stairs would incorporate suitable guarding, shown on the proposed drawings, to provide safe access between external ground level and the basement entrance.

The proposal does not involve any new vehicular access.

The previous Council assessment did not raise an objection to the scheme from an accessibility perspective.

12. Parking and Sustainable Transport

The property does not currently benefit from off-street parking.

No additional off-street parking is presently proposed as part of the basement conversion.

Previous applications raised concerns regarding the potential effect of an additional residential unit on existing on-street parking demand. The present pre-application request therefore seeks the Council's current advice on whether:

- a car-free arrangement could be accepted;
- permit restrictions may be appropriate;
- a parking survey would be required; and
- additional transport information should accompany a subsequent planning application.

Secure and covered cycle storage is also proposed to support more sustainable modes of transport.

13. Cycle and Refuse Storage

The proposal will include suitable provision for secure cycle storage and refuse/recycling facilities within the site.

The detailed location and form of these facilities can be incorporated within the proposed block plan following the Council's advice.

The pre-application submission specifically seeks confirmation of the required number and form of cycle spaces and the Council's requirements for refuse and recycling provision.

14. Landscaping and Existing Site Conditions

The proposed development is principally contained within and immediately adjacent to the existing building.

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No significant alteration to the overall garden character is proposed.

Existing vegetation and garden areas would be retained insofar as practicable, subject to any local works required to form the basement access, lightwell and associated external areas.

No significant tree removal is presently proposed as part of the development.

15. Conclusion

The proposal represents a relatively contained form of development making use of an existing basement within an established residential property.

The design seeks to retain the existing scale and character of the dwelling while providing an additional self-contained studio flat with improved internal headroom, natural light, ventilation and independent access.

The main external interventions are limited to basement-level windows and doors, a lightwell, access stairs and safety guarding.

The detailed design has been submitted at pre-application stage so that the Council's advice can be obtained on residential quality, outlook, amenity and privacy, parking, cycle storage, access and the detailed treatment of the external alterations before a full planning application is prepared.

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