



Planning, Design & Access Statement

Two-Storey Side Extension
AT
117 Sweetcroft Lane,
Uxbridge UB10 9LQ

Reference:
117SL-2153

Date:
16 May 2023

1. Introduction

- a. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Just Planning on behalf of Sumith Rathor to support a householder planning application for the erection of a new two-storey side extension at 1117 Sweetcroft Lane, in Uxbridge.
- b. Following a description of the site and surrounding area, the report will consider the planning history, provide an overview of relevant planning policy, and outline the case for the applicant.

2. Site Description

- a. The application property is a two-storey, semi-detached house on the southern side of Sweetcroft Lane. It has a double-storey front bay window, pebble-dashed elevations, and a tiled, hipped roof. It also has an attached garage and a single-storey rear extension. Figure 1, below, provides an image of the property, viewed from the street.



Figure 1: Image of the front of the application property.

- b. The adjoining neighbour, number 115 Sweetcroft Lane, has already been extended to the side in the same way that the applicant proposes, as shown in the image in figure 2, below.



Figure 1: Image of the extensions to number 115.

- c. The surrounding area is residential in character, with a mix of detached and semi-detached houses, as well as a mix of bungalows and two-storey dwellings. The houses are set out on a staggered building line and many have been extended and altered in a variety of different ways, contributing to a diverse streetscene.
- d. The property is not listed and not located in a designated conservation area. It is located within Environment Agency Flood Zone 2, where the risk of flooding from rivers or the sea is medium.

3. Relevant Planning History & Application Proposal

- a. On 7 July 2021, the council refused planning permission for a first-floor side extension and single storey rear extension (reference: 57806/APP/2021/1914).
- b. The application was refused for the following reasons:
 1. *The proposed first floor side extension, by reason of its size, scale, bulk and proximity to the side boundary, would result in a closing of the visually open gap between it and the neighbouring property, 119 Sweetcroft Lane, giving rise to a cramped form of development and possible terracing effect, which would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene and the surrounding area generally. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy BE1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012) and Policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies.*
 2. *In the absence of a Flood Risk Assessment in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance, the application has failed to address the issues relating to flood risk and the proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EM6 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part One - Strategic Policies (November 2012), Policy DMEI 9 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies, Policy SI12 of the London Plan (2021), National Planning Policy Framework (June 2019) and the Planning Practice Guidance (Flood Risk and Coastal Change March 2014).*
- c. The applicant has redesigned the extensions in order to respond to the council's concerns in respect of the previous proposal.
- d. Rather than build above the garage, the new proposal demolishes it and sets both the ground floor and first floor side extensions back from the front elevation. They are set back 1m, further than proposed under 57806/APP/2021/1914. As a result, the extensions match the extensions that have already been built at number 115 (as shown in the image in figure 2 on page 4 of this report), returning the semi-detached pair of houses to symmetry and making a positive contribution to the streetscene.

- e. The council's primary concern in respect of 57806/APP/2021/1914 was that the extension was not set off the common boundary with number 119, the non-adjoining neighbour to the other side.
- f. It is not practical to set the extension 1m away from the boundary, as the council would like (the resulting extension would be very narrow and look odd, and the internal space created would be awkward), so the applicant proposes that it be set off 0.5m from the boundary. This is sufficient to ensure that there is a gap retained to the boundary and that there is no terracing effect.
- g. The extension will be built in materials to match the main house and will have a sympathetic hipped roof form.

4. 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. 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).
- b. In refusing the previous application for similar extensions to the house, the council argued that the proposal failed to comply with policy BE1 of the Strategic Policies and policies DMHB 11, DMHB 12 and DMHD 1 of the Development Management Policies).
- c. In respect of flood risk, the previous decision referred to policy EM6 of the Strategic Policies, policy DMEI9 of the Development Management Policies and policy SI12 of the London Plan.
- 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) of the Development Management Policies 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 to the public realm design and improvements and does not appear to be relevant to the application proposal, which is confined to the curtilage of the dwelling only.
- 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. For side extensions, it recommends that they do not exceed half the width of the original property, should be set back 1m from the front elevation and should be set in 1m from the side boundary *"in order to maintain adequate visual separation and views between houses"*.
- j. Policy EM6 (Flood Risk Management) of the Strategic Policies directs new development away from Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- k. Policy DMEI9 (Management of Flood Risk) discourages new development in Flood Zones 2 and 3. It is underpinned by policy SI12 (Flood Risk Management) of the London Plan, which requires that *"development proposals should ensure that flood risk is minimised and mitigated"*.
- l. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they 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.
- m. Paragraph 11(c) requires that decision-makers approve *"development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay"*. Where policies are absent or out of date, permission should be granted unless:

"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

- n. According to paragraph 38:

"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 ... 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."

- o. Paragraph 126 states that:

"Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

5. Assessment

- a. The council refused the previous application on this site on the basis that the extension's projection to the side boundary would make it appear cramped and could lead to a harmful terracing effect.
- b. The current proposal seeks to respond to the council's concerns in respect of the design and appearance of the property.
- c. It improves the design overall by altering the side extension so that it matches the existing extension at number 115, the other half of the semi-detached pair, thereby returning the two houses to symmetry and making a positive contribution to the streetscene.
- d. It is not practical in this case to set the extension fully 1m off the shared boundary. It would make the internal space unusually narrow and the extension would also look out of place. It would no longer match the existing extension at number 115, next door.
- e. Instead, the applicant proposes setting the extension 0.5m off the boundary. This is sufficient to ensure that the extension does not appear cramped and that there will not be a terracing effect.
- f. As it is, there is no side extension to the neighbour at number 119. If this neighbour applies to extend in the future, and also incorporates a 0.5m setaway from the boundary, then a 1m gap will be retained between the houses, in line with the council's expectations.
- g. This revised proposal is substantial improvement over the previously refused scheme, as shown in the comparison in figure 2, below.



Figure 2: Comparison of the earlier application (57806/APP/2021/1914) and the revised scheme.

- h. The council's second reason for refusing the previous application on the site related to flood risk.
- i. The property is located in Environment Agency Flood Zone 2. New development is discouraged in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and applications should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- j. A full, detailed FRA is not required for what the Environment Agency call 'minor extensions' in Flood Zone 2. The Environment Agency's standing advice is that householder extensions should be "*no lower than existing floor levels or 300 millimetres (mm) above the estimated flood level*". The applicant confirms that the development will be built no lower than existing floor levels in the main house.

6. Conclusions

- a. The council's main objection to the earlier application at this site was that the side extension projected to the side boundary and would therefore appear cramped.
- b. The applicant has designed the proposal so that it is a close match to the existing extensions at number 115, returning the two houses to symmetry, and so that the extension is 0.5m away from the side boundary, so that it does not appear cramped and there is no 'terracing effect'.
- c. For this reason, the applicant contends that the proposal represents sustainable development and respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.



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