

GARAGE SITE BETWEEN 26 & 28 ASH GROVE, HAREFIELD, UB9 6EX

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT - Further amended

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PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT - AMENDED

INTRODUCTION

Stewart Management & Planning Solutions Ltd has been instructed by the applicants, Oak & Stone Developers Ltd, to prepare this statement in support of a planning application for the erection of 2 x 2-storey 2-bedroom houses on land at 26 and 28 Ash Grove. The main purpose of this statement is to:

- Explain the background to the proposal;
- Clarify the design approach;
- Clarify the access arrangements;
- Explain how the relevant planning considerations are reflected in the proposals, including the recent planning history;

This is a revised statement reflecting revised proposals following the refusal of application 71704/APP/2022/3739 for 2 x 3 storey, 3-bedroom houses. The report and proposals seek to address the Council's reasons for refusal and are the product of recent further dialogue with the case officer.



Site & context

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Ash Grove is a looped distributor road servicing much of the residential area to the east of Harefield town centre. It connects to Northwood Road, to the north and Breakspear Road to the south giving access Rickmansworth and Northwood to the north and Ruislip and Ickenham to the south. The area is generally characterised by traditional brick and tile two storey properties in the form of semi-detached and short terraces of dwellings used primarily as single-family houses.

The subject site measures about 0.03 hectares and is located on the south side of northern portion of the Ash Grove loop road, approximately 35 metres southwest of its junction with the roadway leading to Northwood Road and 85 metres north east of its junction with Ash Close. It is located between 26 and 28 Ash Grove which are semi-detached two-storey single family houses fronting Ash Grove. The site comprises 4 unused estate garages in a poor state of repair, fronting Ash Grove and a regularly shaped area of land to the rear. The site is unfenced on all but the north east side where it abuts the house and garden at 28 Ash Grove. Notwithstanding the above, the boundaries are marked by a public playground and amenity space to the rear, the highway to the front and a public footpath that runs along its western side, adjacent to 26 Ash Grove, that provides access to the public amenity space from the highway.

For planning purposes, there are no land use designations affecting the site.

The site has a PTAL rating of 1a and is about 10 minutes' walk from the shops and community facilities hub of the Harefield Village local centre.

PLANNING HISTORY

There is no substantive planning history prior to the applicant's first planning application that was submitted on 12th December 2022. This proposed the construction of 2 x 3-storey semi detached 3-bedroom houses with gardens to the front and rear and off-street parking for 1 car each.

The application was refused on 6th February 2023 for 4 reasons related to the front and rear building lines; loss of light to 28 Ash Grove; and the amenities for future occupiers both able-bodied and disabled.

This application follows a series of discussions with the case officer to better understand the council's concerns leading to the refusal and how they might be overcome. These proposals represent the second iteration of the applicant's response.

THE APPLICATION SCHEME

As noted above, the site currently comprises 4 standalone garages, formerly in local authority ownership that have recently been sold to the applicants as part of an ongoing programme of site disposals. The garages are currently empty and in a poor state of repair. They would have been constructed as part of the development of the original council estate in the 1960s and are now too small to accommodate a modern car comfortably. It is understood that they were last used primarily for storage.

The project involves the demolition of the garages and the construction of a pair of two storey, two-bedroom semi-detached houses. Each of the properties would comprise kitchen, dining and lounge facilities on the ground floor with two bedrooms and a bathroom at first floor level. The site will be arranged to place the built form towards the centre of the street frontage, corresponding to the established building line in this part of the road. Each property would have the benefit of one off street car parking space to the front of the property, and a private garden space to the rear.

The properties would be inset by a minimum of 0.3 metres on each of the flank boundaries with neighbouring properties and the footpath leading to the public open space to the rear of the red line site.

The scheme has been designed to correspond with design features typical of the area and proposes a typical domestic scale and form. The building is proposed to be constructed using brick and tiles to match those typically found in the area.

This is a reduced scale of development following the recent refusal of planning permission for application 71704/APP/2022/3739. The main differences are that the footprint of development has been reduced as well as the number of bedrooms. The rear facing dormer has been removed and the amount of private rear garden space has been increased. Further amendments show removal of a previously proposed front gable feature and reconfiguration of the entrance arrangements. These changes are all aimed at addressing the Council's reasons for refusal and are discussed in further detail below.

THE PLANNING COMPONENT

Sections 54A and 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 lay down the basic rules for determining planning applications. Section 54(A) states that:

Where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination should be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The principle of the plan-led system of development management articulated in section 54(A) of the 1990 Act is carried forward, in slightly modified form, in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

NATIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

In July 2018 the new National Planning Policy Framework was adopted, replacing the 2012 version which itself replaced all previous Planning Policy Statements and Guidance. The 2018 version was itself updated in February 2019 and again, in 2021 and earlier this year.

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. For decision-making, Local Planning Authorities are encouraged to approve without delay development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan (paragraph 11c). For applications involving the provision of housing, an “up-to-date development plan” includes situations where the local planning authority can demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites; or where the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) indicates that the delivery of housing was more than 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years. Hillingdon is currently able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The “tilted balance” in favour of sustainable development is therefore not engaged and the local plan is considered to be up-to-date for the purposes of housing delivery.

LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

This Statement has been prepared having regard to the planning framework against which the application falls to be assessed in this case, the London Plan 2021, The Local Plan Part 1 – Strategic Policies 2012, Part 2 – Development Management Policies 2020, Part 2- Site Allocations and Designations 2020.

Providing new housing to meet the needs of a growing population is an overriding strategic objective for the London Borough of Hillingdon in accordance with London Plan policy H1, which sets an annual monitoring target of 1083 new homes per year between 2019-2021, 295 of which are expected to be provided on small sites such as this. Policy H1 also promotes optimising housing delivery on suitable sites and highlights how small sites and surplus council owned sites, such as this one, especially contribute to this objective.

Policy DMH 2 of the Hillingdon Local Plan 2020 calls for the provision of a mix of housing unit sizes in development schemes “... to reflect the Council’s latest information on housing need.” The related paragraph 4.6 of the document refers to a particular need for three-bedroom units. The scheme has therefore been designed to feature three-bedroom units as a particular response to this identified need. We would

therefore submit that our proposals would provide a suitable mix of housing to support sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities in compliance with Policy DMH 2 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020), Policy H10 of the London Plan (2021) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). Further, as the site is located within a residential area, a presumption in favour of the development would apply, subject to compliance with the detailed policy requirements contained within the local plan.

THE DESIGN COMPONENT

DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

	POLICIES
D1	London Plan 2021 London's form, character, and capacity for growth
D3	Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
D4	Delivering good design
DMHB11	Local Plan Design of New Development
DMHB12	Streets and Public Realm
DMHB15	Planning for Safer Places

Our design philosophy has been to interpret the context of the site in a traditional design approach with modern features that would both preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. The other main consideration was the protection of the living conditions of neighbouring properties.

The street scene is characterised by short terraces and pairs of two storey dwellings all responding to a consistent building line that runs parallel to the back edge of the pavement. The roof eves and ridge also run parallel to the street so that the facades have a distinctly horizontal emphasis. This uniformity is punctuated by occasional dwellings with a projecting gable roof profile where the footprint of the house is effectively rotated through 90° and which function as paired or single entrances. The application site appears as a gap site between two of these consistent rows of terraced houses each of which abuts a longer terrace that features the gable profile dwellings. The application proposal has been designed to match these original characteristics of development and, to reflect the rhythm and conventions of the design of the existing area. A previously proposed central gable feature has been replaced by a simple unified frontage with entrance doors at the corners thereby corresponding more closely to the layout and appearance of adjacent existing properties. The window and door openings are similarly designed to reflect the simple, unfussy designs of the original buildings and are arranged in a symmetrical fashion around the facades. Similar materials are proposed to be used so that the proposal may properly reflect the characteristics of this property in terms of bulk, outline silhouette and appearance.

Combined with a floor plate that would be approximately 300mm below that of the next-door properties but with matching roof ridge and eaves heights, the visual impact of the proposal would be minimal from any vantage point.

The scheme has been designed to place the car parking spaces in a central location so that the extent of pavement crossover can be reduced and additional space for kerbside parking can be returned to the public realm. Each house now has a continuous front garden area with refuse storage facilities adjacent to the site frontage.

The site has been a focus for anti-social behaviour in the past and there is still evidence of fly tipping in parts. The applicants would submit that the proposal offers both urban design and community safety benefits to the area and, for local residents, that should be welcomed.

SCALE

POLICIES

London Plan 2021

- D1 London's form, character, and capacity for growth
- D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
- D4 Delivering good design

Local Plan

- DMHB11 Design of New Development
- DMHB12 Streets and Public Realm

The scheme proposes the development of a pair of two storey houses with gardens and parking to the front and private gardens to the rear. Their footprints are closely related to the established building lines of the existing properties in this part of Ash Grove. The properties would each sit on a site with a street frontage of between 5.0 and 5.7 metres which relates closely to that of properties elsewhere in the street which varies from about 5.7 metres to 9.0 metres.

The deletion of previously proposed accommodation at third storey level has enabled the roof form to be simplified and more directly follow the ridge and eaves heights of the terraces adjacent to the site. Similarly, the removal of the forward projection of the ground floor entrance features enables a closer correlation to the front building line than in previous proposals. However, it is acknowledged that rear elevation has become more articulated in this version with a single storey rear projection in a central position in the elevation. However, as this affects just the ground floor of a minor elevation that is enclosed by fencing, it will be barely visible from outside the site and will have no impact on the character or appearance of the site or the streetscene.

Collectively, these changes would result in a significant reduction in built form and a significantly closer relationship to the scale of development in the adjacent terraces when compared with the recently refused application.

The proposed dwellings would be inset a minimum distance of 1.0 metres from the eastern side boundary and 0.3 metres from the west side to reflect the pattern of irregular gaps in the facades that is typical of the area. The gardens to the rear would have a depth that varies between about 13 and 14 metres. Each of the rear gardens would measure 59.4 square metres which compares favourably to the amenity space standards set out in Policy DMBHB 18, albeit with a negligible shortfall of 0.6 of a square metre.

The scheme has been designed taking cues from the style and detailing of properties on adjoining and nearby sites and reinterpreting these in the context of the application site and the semi-detached form of the dwellings. The most recent change involves pushing the entrance doors to the corners of the building and replicating the form of doorcase detail found in the existing, adjacent properties.

Special attention has been paid to the 45°-degree rule in the design of the scheme to ensure that there can be no loss of amenity to adjoining residential occupiers by way of overshadowing, overlooking or loss of outlook at both ground and first floor level. The scheme has also been designed so that any windows proposed in the flank elevations would be obscure glazed and non-openable below a height of 1.7 metres above floor level. Rear-facing windows would provide views toward the respective gardens of each new property, and onwards to the public open space to the rear of the site. While this would ensure a high-quality outlook for prospective occupiers of the new houses, it would entail some overlooking views into neighbouring gardens as well. However, this is a common feature of the area and a consequence of following established patterns and styles of development in the area and is therefore entirely appropriate.

Finally, it is also proposed that the external surfaces will all be constructed using materials to match the adjacent terraces. The resulting design is considered to be most appropriate to the character and appearance of the area, consistent with the requirements of Policy DMHB 11 and DMHB 12 and should therefore be supported.

AMOUNT AND LAYOUT	POLICIES
	London Plan 2021
D6	Housing Quality and Standards
D3	Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach
D4	Delivering good design
	Local Plan
DMHB11	Design of New Development
DMHB12	Streets and Public Realm
DMHB16	Housing Standards
DMHB18	Private Outdoor Amenity Space

The application scheme proposes the provision of two new family houses, as defined by the London Plan. Each one would comprise principally a large family area including kitchen, with designated areas for living, dining and study at ground floor level. Additionally, there would be a toilet in the under stairs area; a direct response to the fourth reason for refusal of the previously submitted planning application. At first floor level there would be two bedrooms together with bathroom facilities. The scheme would provide about 70.6m² of floorspace over two floors making it suitable for occupation by 3 persons, having regard to the London Plan and the Nationally Prescribed room size standards. It similarly exceeds the minimum space standard for a 3-bedroom house set out in Table 5.1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 - Development Management Policies (2020) as these are the same as those found in Table 3.1 of the London Plan (2021).

With regard to garden spaces, following some further revisions, these are now only marginally below the 60m² guideline set out in Policy DMHB 18. Further, the space is well located, well designed and well-able to provide for the private enjoyment of the occupier, thereby meeting all other requirements of the policy. Moreover, as noted previously, the site backs onto a significant area of public open space that includes children's play equipment. It is therefore considered that future occupiers would benefit from good levels of both private and communal amenity space.

The minimum back-to-back distance separating the proposed new dwellings from existing properties would substantially exceed the minimum distance recommended in the Local Plan to safeguard conditions of privacy between existing and proposed new developments by virtue of the intervening area of public open space. With this open space feature, the properties would also offer an exceptionally standard of outlook for future occupiers with no significant impact on the conditions currently enjoyed by occupiers of nearby and adjoining properties.

SUSTAINABILITY

POLICIES

London Plan 2021

SI 2 Managing greenhouse gas emissions
SI 4 Managing heat risk

Local Plan

DMEI 2 Reducing Carbon Emissions

The proposed development will be designed to achieve the highest standards of sustainability with regard to materials, energy, and water use. Low energy building techniques, methods and practices are an essential part of the applicants' approach. The applicants are considering seeking Passivhaus accreditation for the scheme.

Passivhaus buildings provide a high level of occupant comfort while using very little energy for heating and cooling. They are built with meticulous attention to detail and rigorous design and construction according to principles developed by the Passivhaus Institute in Germany. They are then certified through an exacting quality assurance process. The objective in Passivhaus design is to reduce the heating requirement to the point where a traditional heating system is no longer considered essential. Cooling is also minimised by the same principles and through the use of shading. Other techniques that are used include:

- good levels of insulation with minimal thermal bridges.
- passive solar gains and internal heat sources to reduce the heating load.
- excellent level of airtightness.
- good indoor air quality, provided by a whole house mechanical ventilation system with highly efficient heat recovery.
- low energy light fittings with infra-red sensor controls in circulation and toilet areas.

In any event, the new windows and door would be constructed using high performance sustainably sourced timber fitted with low "E" and argon filled triple glazed units to maximise thermal efficiency. In addition, water usage reduction measures are planned to ensure that each of the proposed dwellings uses no more than 105 litres of water per person per day.

Notwithstanding the above, we are mindful that Policy SI 2 of the London Plan (2021) asks residential development to achieve at least a 10% improvement beyond Building Regulations 2013, whilst Policy DMEI 2 requires all developments to make the fullest contribution to minimising carbon dioxide emissions. All of these matters can be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition attached to the planning permission.

POLICIES**London Plan 2021**

T6 Car parking

T6.1 Residential parking

Local Plan

DMT1: Managing transport impacts

DMT6: Vehicle Parking

CONNECTIVITY

The site has a PTAL rating of 1a and is about 10 minutes' walk from the shops and community facilities hub of Harefield Local Centre.

Bus travel

Bus route 331 is about 3-minute walk from the site and provides access to various local destinations including Ruislip, Northwood and Uxbridge as well as Mount Vernon Hospital.

CAR PARKING

Whilst the scheme proposes demolition of 4 existing garages, it does not entail a loss of car parking since the form of construction of the garages means that they are no longer suitable for modern cars. Also, they are in a poor condition physically and beyond economic repair.

Regarding parking conditions locally, we note that there are no anti-commuter or other CPZ restrictions on car parking that apply in Ash Grove and surrounding streets. Nonetheless, it is proposed to provide off street parking facilities for one car for each of the proposed dwellings and, by virtue of the configuration of the pavement crossovers and front garden spaces, an additional parking space/opportunity will be returned to the street for general use. The aggregate number of parking spaces provided by this development is therefore 3, although it is acknowledged that these would not all be off-street. Nonetheless the aggregate number of spaces enabled through the application scheme would be consistent with the London Plan requirement for a maximum of up to 1.5 spaces per dwelling for this scale of development in a suburban location with a Ptal rating of 1 in outer London, as indicated in table 10.3 which supports Policies 2.8 and 6.13. Local plan Policy DMT6 also suggests a maximum level of provision of 1.5 spaces.

Notwithstanding the above, as noted previously, the site is well located in relation to a range of shopping, leisure, school and employment facilities at Harefield Town Centre The Harefield Academy and the Hospitals at Harefield, Bishops Wood and Mount Vernon which are significant local employers. The 331 bus service also provides good connectivity to regional facilities at Mount Vernon Hospital and Uxbridge Metropolitan Centre. So, whilst The Ptal level is acknowledged to be poor, the site is well located in relation to a broad range of social, health, education, employment, and shopping facilities. The proposed level of parking provision is therefore considered appropriate having regard to the objectives of Policies 6.0 and 6.1 of the London Plan.

DISABLED ACCESS & MOBILITY

The design and layout of the scheme has been revised to include a ground floor WC and level access from the street as a direct response to the fourth reason for refusal of the previously proposed scheme. More widely, the proposed development will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations, with BS 8300:2009, The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended 2005), The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, British Standards 9999: 2008 with particular reference to the means of escape for disabled persons.

The proposed dwellings would be built to Lifetime Homes Standard with full potential for adaptation to suit a range of family types, needs and lifetime points.

OTHER MATTERS

It is acknowledged that the scheme will be liable for payment of CIL.

The net area chargeable for Mayoral CIL would be calculated using the Jones, Laing LaSalle CIL calculator. The Mayoral CIL for Hillingdon is £60/m².

The London Borough of Hillingdon Charging Schedule adopted in 2014 indicates £95/m² for residential development which with indexation to 31st December 2022, amounts to £142.30/m².

CONCLUSION

Detailed consideration has been given to the planning policy context of the site, in particular, its location in a gap site in a former council estate that has a strong and consistent character and appearance. The scheme has been designed as a specific response to this context.

The statement demonstrates that the scheme would be well designed to correspond with the character of the site and the surrounding area consistent with NPPF, London Plan and Hillingdon Local Plan policies in support of good design. Internally, the scheme would provide a high standard of accommodation and would meet Local Plan standards and the detailed requirements for “Lifetime Homes” as well as the Nationally Described Space Standards. No adverse implications are anticipated with regard to the character of the area or the amenities of adjoining and nearby residents.

These are revised proposals following the recent refusal of application 71704/APP/2022/3739 for 2 x 3-bedroom houses and seeks to address the Council’s reasons for refusal. The applicant has positively engaged with officers to better understand the council’s concerns with the previous application. The proposals to which this statement relates are a direct response to these concerns. They are substantially reduced in scale and impact compared to the recently refused scheme and the originally submitted revised scheme. Further, they have been substantially endorsed by officers.

It is considered that this revised scheme proposes a proper response to the circumstances of the site in planning, design and access terms and is worthy of support, from a planning point of view. Planning permission should therefore be granted, subject to suitably worded planning conditions.

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