



Planning Statement

Single-Storey Rear Extension
AT
Ground Floor Flat, 236 Victoria Road,
London N22 7XQ

Reference:
236VR-2311

Date:
30 November 2023

1. Executive Summary

- a. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Just Planning on behalf of Mr Daniel Francis to support a planning application for a single-storey rear extension to a ground floor flat at 236 Victoria Road.
- b. Land levels at the site fall down to the rear. The applicant has further flattened the rear garden to make it more usable. As a result, though the extension is shown to rise 4m above ground level, it rises just 2.8m above the ground on which the flat itself sits. The visual and amenity impacts are therefore the same as a standard rear extension that might be built under permitted development, for example.
- c. In addition, the neighbour at number 234 sits on higher ground and there are tall boundary treatments, comprising a fence and planting on top, between the two sites. There is also tall screening along the existing boundary with the other neighbour, at number 238.
- d. The effective net height of the extension is therefore low, and it has a moderate depth of just 3.4m. There will, as a result, be no material harm to neighbours, and the extension will complement the character and proportions of the main building and not appear oversized or out of place.

2. Site Description

- a. The application property is the ground floor flat forming part of a two-storey terraced building on the northern side of Victoria Road, close to its junction with Albert Road. The building is red brick with front bay windows and a tiled, pitched roof. The image in figure 1, below, shows the property, viewed from the street.



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

- b. To the rear, the house has a deep two-storey rear projection with a flat roof. There is a rear garden with an outbuilding in use as a home office. There is also rear access on to Albert Road. Land levels fall away from the front of the site to the rear, meaning the garden sits below floor levels inside the ground floor flat. Figure 2, below, provides a satellite image of the site.



Figure 2: Satellite image of the application site.

- c. The photograph in figure 3, below, shows the lower ground level to the rear of the building.



Figure 3: Photograph of the rear of the application site.

- d. The building is not listed and the site is not located in a conservation area.

3. Relevant Planning History & Proposed Development

- a. On 8 June 2021, the council granted permission for an outbuilding in the rear garden for use as a home office (reference: HGY/2021/1209). The permission has been implemented.
- b. On 22 September 2023, the applicant had a pre-application meeting with the council. In the pre-application advice note, the case officer advised that:
 - *As a result of its height and depth, the extension would appear out of place and harm the character and appearance of the area, especially when considered in combination with the existing outbuilding.*
 - *The extension would also be overbearing on the neighbours to either side, with a greater impact on number 238, to the west, because its garden is shallow. There would also be an impact on the windows in the side return to number 234.*
- c. In response to the council's concerns, the applicant revised the plans to reduce the depth of the extension, from 4m to 3.4m.
- d. The application proposal for a single-storey rear extension to the side return and to the rear of the outrigger. It projects 3.4m to the rear and is 2.8m tall in the side return, with the height increasing to a maximum of 4m as the ground levels fall towards the rear.
- e. A courtyard area is incorporated into the side return to the rear of the main part of the house. The extension is finished with a flat roof and has high level windows in the side elevation and doors and windows in the rear elevation.
- f. The existing outbuilding is reduced in size and repositioned closer to the rear boundary of the site, in order to maximise the garden area.
- g. The applicant and his wife have two young children and the existing flat is constrained in size and awkwardly configured. The proposal will provide the family with a much-needed extra bedroom.

4. Planning Policy

- a. The development plan for the area comprises the Haringey Local Plan: Strategic Policies (2017), the Haringey Development Management DPD (2017) and the London Plan (2021).

- b. Policy SP11 (Design) of the Strategic Policies requires that all development:

"be of the highest standard of design that respects its local context and character and historic significance, to contribute to the creation and enhancement of Haringey's sense of place and identity"

- c. Development Management policy DM1 (Delivering High Quality Design) states that:

"All new development and changes of use must achieve a high standard of design and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area."

- d. The policy also requires that development proposals preserve the residential amenity of close neighbours in terms of light and privacy.

- e. Development Management policy DM12 (Housing Design and Quality) states that:

"that extensions or alterations to residential buildings, including roof extensions will be required to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, and respect and/ or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, detailing of the original building, including external features such as chimneys, and porches. High quality matching or complementary materials should be used appropriately and sensitively in relation to the context."

- f. Paragraph 3.14 of the supporting text states that:

"Extensions to residential buildings should therefore be subordinate in scale to the original building, as well as respect the architectural unity of a block or terrace of houses and the urban grain and character of the surrounding area. New development should not undermine existing uniformity of the building or terrace, and should not over balance or dominate existing features important to the building."

- g. Paragraph 3.15 advises that extensions should appear as subordinate additions and cause no undue harm to neighbours in terms of overlooking or a loss of light.
- h. Policy D4 of the London Plan requires a high quality of design in all new development.
- i. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. A new version was published in September 2023. It identifies a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development is sustainable when it meets the economic, social and environmental needs of a community.
- j. 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."

- k. 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."

- l. 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."

- m. Paragraph 130 requires that development is visually attractive and sympathetic to its surroundings and local character. Development should provide *"a high standard of amenity for existing and future users"*.

5. Case for the Applicant

- a. According to the pre-application advice note, the council has no objection in principle to the application proposal, but it seeks reassurance that the development will not cause undue harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the wider area and will not unacceptably harm neighbours' living conditions.
- b. Policies DM1 and DM12 of the Development Management Policies require that developments represent good design and that extensions relate well to the host building and their immediate surroundings. The council's policies do not impose specific numerical limits on the depth or height of rear extensions.
- c. In the pre-application advice, the council noted that the extension was both 4m deep and 4m high and argued that, at these dimensions, it would appear oversized and out of place.
- d. The applicant has revised the proposal to reduce the depth of the extension to 3.4m from the end of this outrigger. This is a conventional depth for a single-storey rear extension and the reduction in the depth from the previous design reduces the site coverage and also minimises the bulk and scale of the new extension.
- e. The height remains at 4m, but this number is somewhat misleading. As the photograph in figure 3 on page 5 of this report shows, the ground level has been partially excavated to eliminate a slope in the land and sits some 1.2m below the floor level of the main building. From the ground level beneath the building itself, the extension only rises around 2.8m, not an excessive height.
- f. The full height of the extension from the lowered garden level will only be evident from the applicant's own garden. The tall boundary treatments to either side and to the rear will mean that the lower parts of the extension will not be readily visible to the neighbours or from Albert Road. The extension will appear as a natural continuation of the main part of the existing building.
- g. It might be possible to lower the roof of the extension so that it steps down from the main building, but there are drawbacks to this design. The roof of the extension would sit below the upper part of the existing windows, as indicated in figure 4, below, requiring them to be bricked up. It would appear

odd and sunken. Having the extension as a continuation of the existing building is a preferable design outcome.



Figure 4: A shorter extension would relate poorly to existing windows.

- h. The extension, as shown in the excerpt from the submitted plans in figure 5, below, is proportionate to the main house and its neighbours. Its ceiling and floor levels match the existing house. It rises just a little way above the side boundary fence, and it reflects the vertical emphasis in the flat-roofed outrigger and tall main roof.



Figure 5: The rear elevation will appear balanced and in proportion, reflecting the building's vertical emphasis.

- i. Although a 4m-tall extension might be considered to harm neighbours, any harm is mitigated in this case because the extension rises from a lowered ground level. The extension in the side return starts at a height of 2.8m before ground levels fall away. The extension rises approximately 2.8m from the base of the boundary fences to either side. The impact when experienced from the neighbouring properties, therefore, is of a standard extension with a conventional height. The flat roof further mitigates against any harmful impact.
- j. The extension runs along the side return of the neighbouring property at number 234. This neighbouring property sits on a higher land level than the application site (land levels fall down towards the junction with Albert Road), as shown in the satellite image in figure 6, below. In addition, its rear garden

has not been excavated. Land levels are therefore higher at number 234, mitigating any adverse impact.



Figure 6: The rear elevations step down towards Albert Road.

- k. The applicant also notes that the boundary treatments to either side are tall and mature. The image in figure 4, on page 11, shows the fence on the boundary with number 234 sitting above the lower ground level and mature planting growing above it.
- l. The photograph in figure 7, below, shows dense planting on the boundary with number 238, which is also visible in the satellite image in figure 8.



Figure 7: Planting on the boundary with number 238.



Figure 8: Satellite image showing planting on the boundary with number 238.

- m. The photograph in figure 9, below, taken from number 238, gives further indication of how dense the boundary planting is.



Figure 9: Photograph taken from number 238, showing the boundary.

- n. The rears of the buildings face north, so any overshadowing is caused by the tall, existing buildings and their two-storey outriggers. The new extension, which is much shorter than surrounding built form, will not lead to any increased overshadowing.
- o. The windows in the side elevation of the new extension are high-level so that there will be no overlooking of neighbours.

6. Conclusions

- a. The extension has a depth of 3.4m and, though it has a maximum height of 4m, it rises just 2.8m above the ground level beneath the building itself.
- b. It will therefore appear as a proportionate and subordinate addition, causing no harm to visual amenities.
- c. It will rise just a little way above the boundary fences and will be largely screened by mature planting along both boundaries.
- d. For these reasons, the applicant contends that the development represents sustainable development and he respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.



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