

Planning Justification Statement

Site at: 1, High Close, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 4DZ

**Proposed Development: Single-Side Extension and External Steps
and Wall**

1.0 The Site and Local Context

1.1 The property is a detached house in a fairly spacious plot, well screened by boundary planting and situated in a low-density residential area within the urban boundary of Rickmansworth and wherein, for planning purposes, the proposed development is acceptable in principle. The site is not within a Conservation Area.

2.0 The Proposal and Relevant Planning History

2.1 This planning application is for the construction of a single-storey side extension in an 'Orangery' style with brick plinth, rendered walls incorporating painted timber window framing and doors with generous glazing in several elevations and a glazed lantern feature within the roof. A set of external steps and free-standing low outer wall are also proposed. The photographs below show existing views of the front elevation and three of the side elevation where the proposed extension would be attached to the house.

Front Elevation



Side Elevation



Side/Rear Elevation



Side Elevation



2.2 The scheme as now presented is similar to that applied for under planning application reference 20/1247/FUL but which was subsequently withdrawn due to an indication from the Local Planning Authority that its size, projection, general form and notable encroachment into the Root Protection Area (RPA) of a nearby preserved Cedar tree on the site, would all be reasons for a likely outcome of refusal.

2.3 What differentiates the new proposal from the withdrawn proposal is that it has been reduced in footprint area and overall three-dimensional size, made more compact and regular in form and has been reduced in its projection from the wall to which it would be attached. As a consequence it would barely meet the furthest extent of the Cedar tree canopy and the extent of its incursion into the RPA of the Cedar tree has been significantly reduced to 5.5% of the total RPA which it is considered would be too little to pose an existential threat to the future health of the tree. This new proposal has been scrutinised by the Local Planning Authority through the formal pre-application process (ref: 21/0176/PREAPP). The outcome of this exercise is recognition that recommendation for approval of planning permission would be appropriate with the only caveat being that the preserved Cedar tree would require effective protection in terms of excavation and construction methods. To this end, a viable protection and method statement accompanies the planning application.

3.0 Relevant Planning Policy

National Level: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019

3.1 At paragraph 7 of the NPPF it states that: ***“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.”*** It goes on at paragraph 10 to state that there should be a ***“... presumption in favour of sustainable development.”*** It then states at paragraph 38 it that: ***“Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”***

3.2 The NPPF does not directly address matters of residential extension design or residential amenity but at section 12 it does set out some general, common-sense principles providing basic direction to achieving good design outcomes.

Local Level: Three Rivers Core Strategy (2011) and Three Rivers Development Management Policies Local Development Document (2013)

3.3 The following policies of these plans are those most relevant to consideration of the planning merits of the proposed development. They have been acknowledged in its conception, with the objective being an acceptable degree of compliance as appropriate, in light of all other specific material considerations and circumstances pertaining:

PSP1: ‘Development in the Principal Town’ (CS)

CP12: ‘Design of Development’ (CS)

DM1: ‘Residential Design and Layout’ (DMP)

4.0 Design and General Planning Considerations

4.1 The proposed development would be an appropriate response to the architectural appearance of the house. It would be an aesthetically pleasing design form displaying inherent architectural harmony and with this being further enhanced by external materials of construction compatible with those of the existing house. It would not result in disproportionate enlargement of the original house. The essential scale of the house would be unaffected. It would complement the essential form and architectural style of the host house and

exhibit subordination and intrinsic proportionality in relation to it. The overall size, appearance and character of the enlarged building would clearly be seen to be just a variation on the theme of and a direct evolution of, the style of the existing building. Any change to the character of the existing house would be incidental, within the parameters of the normal and expected and in no way so radical as to harm public visual amenity or any other planning interest of acknowledged importance.

4.2 Assessing the actual effect of the proposed development in itself and that of the enlarged house overall, on the character and appearance of the locality, requires taking into account the full combination of design, size and setting, including all permanent and at least semi-permanent features of the locality such as other buildings, screen structures, distance and orientation to the nearest Public Highway (s), trees and 'layers' of shrubs and hedgerows which create a complex pattern of screening from different positions and distances surrounding the application site. Taking all these factors into account it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development, being just variation on the existing domestic theme, would fit into the setting without changing public perception of the environmental quality of the wider locality, much less harm it.

4.3 The proposed development would neither be large enough nor sited in such close proximity to nearby properties as to be capable of having adverse effect on the privacy, outlook or ambient level of natural light enjoyed by their occupants. Private amenity space and off-street parking provision would not be adversely affected. Conflict with policy on these issues would not occur.

4.4 The proposed development has been designed and sited to ensure that, with appropriate protection measures and practices for the duration of the construction period, no trees or vegetation of high public amenity value would be adversely affected. The preserved Cedar tree adjacent to the position of the proposed development would be afforded special attention and consideration in this regard as detailed in the protection and method statement that forms part of

this planning application submission.

4.5 The design philosophy which underlies the proposed development is that of improving the functional quality of the site as a family living environment, creating an inherently attractive and architecturally satisfactory enlarged building whilst at the same time avoiding harm to the character and appearance of the wider locality or to nearby property occupiers. The proposed development has been positively conceived in all aspects to accord with the various protection and other functional expectations of national and local policy as referred to in part three of this statement.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 When considering the planning merits of the proposed development the Local Planning Authority is respectfully requested to take fair and reasonable account of all material considerations pertaining. The applicant believes that in doing so the proposed development can be seen to comply with the spirit, purpose and objectives of the NPPF and all directly relevant local policies relating to protection of the local environment and that no interests of acknowledged planning importance would be harmed by it. This indicates that a grant of planning permission would be appropriate. The Council is at liberty to impose any conditions it deems reasonable and necessary to ensure satisfactory initial development and satisfactory on-going use of the site.