

<b>Delegated Report (Members Briefing)</b>		<b>Analysis sheet</b>	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	<b>06/12/2010</b>
		N/A / attached	<b>Consultation Expiry Date:</b>	08/11/2010
<b>Officer</b>			<b>Application Number(s)</b>	
Rob Willis			2010/5437/P	
<b>Application Address</b>			<b>Drawing Numbers</b>	
57 Solent Road London NW6 1TY			See Decision Notice	
<b>PO 3/4</b>	<b>Area Team Signature</b>	<b>C&amp;UD</b>	<b>Authorised Officer Signature</b>	
<b>Proposal(s)</b>				
Erection of a single storey rear extension and creation of a basement to a single family dwelling (Class C3).				
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		Grant planning permission		
<b>Application Type:</b>		Householder Application		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	<b>Refer to Draft Decision Notice</b>					
Informatives:						
<b>Consultations</b>						
<b>Adjoining Occupiers:</b>	No. notified	<b>11</b>	No. of responses	<b>10</b>	No. of objections	<b>10</b>
			No. Electronic	<b>00</b>		
<b>Summary of consultation responses:</b>	<p>Objections received on the application from the following addresses: 50, 52, 53, 54, 55 (First floor flat), 59, 60, 61 Solent Road; 16, 18 Sumatra Road.</p> <p>A summary of the objections received from the above addresses is provided below.</p> <p><b>Basement</b></p> <p>Potential impact on structural stability of neighbouring properties, including 55 Solent Road:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several houses have suffered subsidence problems, including the neighbouring property, 55 Solent Road and numbers 50, 52, 59</li> <li>• Properties built along Solent Road were constructed using shallow foundations or footings on London Clay, which is susceptible to shrinkage</li> <li>• Risk that the works would damage the foundations of neighbouring properties</li> <li>• Further excavation could precipitate further ground movement in the area, with a potential knock on effect for other properties in the area</li> <li>• Building regulations do not protect neighbours from potential damage</li> <li>• Structural engineer needed to provide a structural report</li> <li>• Probable need for a Party Wall Agreement</li> </ul> <p>Other concerns regarding basement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harm to structural stability will be exacerbated by likely presence of underground water streams and springs, which are common in this part of London</li> <li>• The plans do not show how deep the proposed excavation is</li> <li>• Excavation the whole width of the property is unacceptable</li> <li>• It would be the only house with a lightwell and could set a harmful precedent</li> <li>• Provision of a lightwell and basement is inappropriate for these terraced Victorian properties and the bay window would stand out from the other houses along Solent Road, affecting the character of the street</li> <li>• Excavation of basement could disturb rats' nests</li> </ul> <p><b>Works to the rear (rear extension and loft conversion)</b></p> <p>Concern that works to the rear would compound the effect of the proposed basement works, increasing the potential to destabilise the surrounding area.</p> <p>Opposition expressed to the proposed loft extension on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size and scale – extension is disproportionately large</li> <li>• It would compromise the privacy of houses along Solent Road and Sumatra Road, including to the back garden and rear of 61 Sumatra Road and the back garden of 59 Solent Road</li> <li>• Potential impact on the light available to other properties. Would harm outlook from and block daylight to loft window at 59 Solent Road</li> <li>• Would set an unwanted precedent and would look out of keeping with the rear roof line of the rest of the terrace</li> </ul> <p>Opposition to the single storey rear extension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extension would bring the house much closer to no.16 Sumatra Road, and would harm the privacy of that property.</li> </ul> <p><b>General comments</b></p>					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taken together, the works represent overdevelopment of an average sized Victorian terraced property.</li> <li>• Concern regarding disturbance cause by construction process, including noise, dust, vibration, roadway obstruction and loss of residents' parking associated with skips, lorries etc. Effects of construction of the basement would be particularly severe on adjoining neighbours.</li> </ul> <p>The adequacy of notification for the application was also questioned by a number of respondents: residents at numbers 50 and 52 Solent Road did not received consultation letters. <i>Officer comment: Notification letters were sent to no.s 54, 55, 56, 58 and 59 Solent Road, and no.s 16, 18 and 20 Sumatra Road (letter sent 18/10/2010). A site notice was also erected on 15/10/2010. This is considered to represent an appropriate scale of notification, considering the scale of works proposed.</i></p>
<p><b>CAAC/Local groups* comments:</b> *Please Specify</p>	<p>West Hampstead Amenity and Transport objects on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed basement would adversely affect the attractiveness and appearance of the area, which is characterised by harmonious lines of housing.</li> <li>• The extension to the rear will restrict the views and light of the neighbouring house;</li> <li>• Attempts to cram additional building space into the area risk wrecking the area.</li> </ul>

### **Site Description**

The application site comprises a two storey Victorian terraced house, and is located on the west side of Solent Road. It is not listed and is not located in a conservation area.

### **Relevant History**

No relevant history.

### **Relevant policies**

#### **LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies**

CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development

CS13 Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards

CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP23 Water

DP24 Securing high quality design

DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

DP27 Basements and lightwells

## Assessment

### Revisions

The application originally sought an extension to the rear of the property at roof level, in addition to the proposed basement and rear infill extension to the side of a closet wing. Following discussions with the Council, the applicant removed the roof extension from the proposals, as they were considered to be unacceptable in design terms.

The height of the parapet wall to the proposed single storey (ground floor) rear extension has been reduced by 15cm, allowing the extension to appear more appropriate to the proportions of the host building.

The application originally proposed to enclose the proposed basement lightwell with iron railings: following discussions with the Council, the application now seeks to enclose the lightwell using a horizontal grate, in order to minimise the visual impact of the proposals.

### ASSESSMENT

The application seeks the excavation of a basement to create additional habitable accommodation at basement level, and the construction of a single storey side extension. The main issues raised by the application are visual impact, amenity, and structural and hydrological issues relating to the proposed basement.

#### Visual impact

##### Rear extension

Under LDF Development Policies Policy DP24 (and supporting text), extensions and alterations should respect the form, proportions and character of the building and should be subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation.

The proposed single storey extension would occupy the gap between the existing two storey closet wing extension and the boundary wall with the adjacent property, no.55 Solent Road. It is considered that the proposed single storey rear extension is subordinate to the existing building, and the scale and building lines of the new extension reflect those of the existing ground floor level. The proposed design therefore respects the proportions of the host building.

The proposed extension also respects the form and character of the host building. The materials would reflect the existing materials on the building, with timber framed windows and brick walls to match existing. The provision of large folding doors to the rear of the property is considered to be an acceptable feature at garden level.

The proposed extension therefore meets the requirements of LDF Development Policy DP24.

##### Basement

Under Development Policy DP27, Camden will seek to ensure that basements and lightwells do not harm the appearance or setting of the property or the established character of the surrounding area.

Solent Road does not currently have any basements, and so the introduction of a basement and associated lightwell would be a first in the street. The proposed lightwell would stretch 1.5 metres from the main front elevation of the property and would be enclosed by a horizontal grate: this would help to minimise the visual impact of the lightwell. The visual impact of the proposals would be further reduced by the existence of a tall hedge to the front boundary of the property, which blocks most views to the affected area from the street and from other properties.

The proposed basement would extend the façade of the front elevation, below the existing ground floor level. The new facade would mirror the existing bay window arrangement that is provided at ground and first floor levels, with materials to match existing: this is considered to be an appropriate

design approach. The limited scale of the proposed basement means that it would appear suitably subordinate to the host building. Paragraph 17 of Camden's guidance note on basement development seeks to ensure that basements retain at least 50% of amenity space: the proposed basement would leave approximately 1.5 metres (50%) of garden space between the lightwell and the front boundary: this is considered to be acceptable.

Given the limited views of the affected area, the detailed design of the proposals and fact that the site is not in a conservation area, it is considered that the introduction of the proposed basement and associated lightwell would not harm the appearance of the host building or the established character of the area.

## **Amenity**

### Rear extension

LDF Development Policy DP26 sets out a range of issues that will be considered in protecting the amenity of neighbours. These include visual privacy and overlooking, sunlight and daylight levels, and artificial light levels.

Where it meets the boundary, the proposed rear extension would be higher than the existing boundary wall with the adjacent property, no.55 Solent Road: this could lead to the loss of natural light to the side ground floor windows of the premises. However it is considered any loss of light would not be sufficient to warrant refusal of planning permission, given that:

- the existing two storey rear extension to no.57, and boundary treatments between the two properties, already impact on the light available to the side windows of no.55; and
- the main daylight to the rear of the adjacent property is from the rear windows, which would be unaffected by the proposals.

It should also be noted that the light currently available through the relevant side windows of the adjacent property is further reduced by the provision of net curtains, which would appear to have been installed to mitigate privacy issues raised by the proximity of side windows between the two properties: the proposed extension would remove these issues by providing a windowless façade facing onto the side elevation of no.57.

It is considered that the proposals would not have an unacceptable impact on outlook as the front and rear windows to the adjacent property would not be affected by the proposals. Outlook from the side windows of no.55 is already severely limited by proximity to the boundary wall between the two properties, and to the existing side elevation of no.57.

The proposed rear extension would include the installation of two rooflights. These rooflights would not create any additional views that would be harmful to the privacy of the adjacent property.

### Basement

The basement would provide an additional bedroom to the property, and would receive daylight from the lightwell to the front of the host building. The light available to this room would therefore be very limited, given the shallow nature of the lightwell, and would not meet the standards set out in the Camden Planning Guidance SPD. However, given that this would be one of five bedrooms in the house, it is not considered to make the application unacceptable in terms of amenity, especially given that the remaining bedrooms are located on upper floors, which receive plenty of natural light.

## **Structural and hydrological issues**

The proposed basement would be one storey deep and would be located within the footprint of the original building. This complies with paragraph 27.9 of the LDF Development Policies, which states that this is often the most appropriate way to extend a building below ground.

The basement would involve excavation below the existing building by approximately 3 metres. Under Development Policy DP27, Camden will seek to ensure that basements maintain the structural

stability of the building and neighbouring properties, and do not adversely affect drainage and run-off or cause other damage to the water environment. It is noted that considerable concerns have been expressed by local residents in relation to the potential impact of the proposed basement on structural stability in the area.

As required under Development Policies paragraph 27.3 the applicant has provided a structural and hydrological report, in order to address these issues, and the level of information provided by the applicant is considered sufficient in terms of policy DP27. The report sets out how the construction process will be managed to ensure the stability of the housing and the neighbouring properties, including the carrying out of underpinning in sequence in order to ensure that the walls remain stable. The report acknowledges that properties within Solent Road and the surrounding areas are founded on London clay, which is susceptible to shrinking and swelling due to the changing moisture content within the soil. It notes that subsidence within the soil is often caused by root action from trees.

The report states that, if carried out with an agreed sequence of construction by an experienced contractor, no significant damage to neighbouring properties will occur, but notes that minor movement is always possible, and therefore a condition survey is required before and after works, with any damage attributed to the works then repaired by the contractor under Party Wall awards. The basement would render the host property less susceptible to seasonal movement than neighbouring properties: the report indicates that the construction of the buildings on the terrace with London stock brick with lime mortar is relatively flexible, and thus able to absorb minor movements between properties, and also states that any cracking resulting from the basement would be likely to only require local re-pointing as a remedial repair. Works to the party walls would be covered by the Party Wall Act, and any damage resulting to neighbouring buildings as a result of the works would be a private legal matter associated with the buildings' insurance. Structural stability is not directly a planning matter as it is covered by the building regulations: the Council's Building Control team has advised that the submitted structural report is sufficient for the purposes of the planning application.

The report indicates that the site lies upon impervious London clay and therefore argues that, as there will currently be minimal water flow through the sub soil, the introduction of a basement would not significantly affect under ground water movement. It is also noted that the site is not located within the underground development constraints zone, which identifies areas with hydrological issues in the borough. Given these circumstances, the fact that the basement is within the footprint of the existing house and is limited to a single storey, no further information regarding hydrology/ drainage is required.

## **Conclusion**

The application is considered to be acceptable in terms of design and amenity. It is not considered possible to refuse the proposed basement on the basis of potential structural or hydrological issues.

Recommend approval.

## **DISCLAIMER**

**Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2010.**

**For further information see**

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/development-control-members-briefing/>