




Haringey Council

Report for:	Cabinet, 15 th October 2013	Item Number:	
Title:	Revised House Extensions in South Tottenham Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)		
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Ward(s) affected: Seven Sisters (only)	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions: Non Key		

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 For many years there have been concerns at unauthorised house extensions, permission being granted for house extensions, and pressure for even greater house extensions in the South Tottenham area of Seven Sisters Ward, where there is a statistically verified significant problem of large families (many but not only members of the Charedi Jewish community) suffering overcrowding in small 2 story houses.

1.2 The House Extensions in South Tottenham SPD (adopted October 2010)ⁱ aimed to provide a solution to concerns on overcrowding and house extensions by providing a viable way for homeowners to extend their houses whilst not undermining the visual coherence of the area or neighbour's amenity. However to be successful and achieve a broad consensus of support from local residents, it needs to be both easy to understand and followed correctly.

1.3 Therefore the SPD is being revised to:

- Clarify the important construction details that need to be got right;
- Clear up ambiguous and difficult details



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- Make it easier to build “type 3” extensions by removing the onerous and unenforceable requirement they be built in pairs;
- Reiterate that Haringey will not permit in South Tottenham any rear extensions (other than what Borough wide policy and Government Permitted Development rules allow);
- Reiterate that these extensions are not for houses converted to flats or HMOs; and
- Appeal to residents/applicants/developers to consider the safety of their families and their neighbours and construct soundly, in accordance with the Building Regulations (the planning system cannot enforce this and developers have the right to use other “approved inspectors” instead of our Building Control).

1.4 Following consultation with the general public, residents in the area, relevant community groups on the Council’s Consultation Database and statutory consultees, we are now asking the Cabinet to approve the Revised SPD for adoption. If adopted, it will replace the existing SPD as planning guidance for house extensions in the South Tottenham area.

2. Cabinet Member introduction

2.1 In taking the original decision, to adopt The House Extensions in South Tottenham SPD in October 2010, the Council proved that it could listen to competing concerns and legislate fairly.

2.2 This SPD created a framework for those local residents who formed large, extended families and wanted to extend their homes and remain within the community, whilst at the same time protecting the character of South Tottenham and the amenity enjoyed by their neighbours.

2.3 However, the Council has to balance two passionate and diametrically opposed views. Those wanting greater freedom to build larger extensions alongside fewer restrictions either on their use and appearance, and those wanting stronger restrictions on extensions and fewer extensions to be built.

2.4 It is important that residents not only believe the South Tottenham SPD to be a fair balance, but that they also believe that it is being fairly implemented.

2.5 The Council has continued to listen and to consult with residents, stakeholders and Councillors, and also to reaffirm the position that permitted extensions are not intended to facilitate conversions to flats or HMOs.

2.6 The result of this consultation is this Revised House Extensions in South Tottenham Supplementary Planning Document which builds upon, and clarifies the guidance that it supersedes.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Cabinet is recommended to ADOPT the Revised House Extensions in South Tottenham Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in place of the original House Extensions in South Tottenham SPD (adopted October 2010).

4. Alternative options considered

4.1 This recommendation is considered to meet the balance of residents and stakeholders concerns over extensions in South Tottenham; of both those that want greater freedom to build larger extensions with fewer restrictions on their use and appearance, and those that want stronger restrictions on extensions and fewer extensions built.

4.2 There are a number of ways in which the Council could have granted greater freedom. It could for instance have consider to permit larger rear extensions, whether single story of on two or more floors; however this would have caused significant loss of amenity, particularly daylight, sunlight and privacy) to neighbours, and lead to further loss of back garden space, which provide amenity, recreation space, food growing space and wildlife habitats.

4.3 If the Council had chosen to not insist on greater attention to detail of extensions, evidence from those built so far shows that extensions will be built that in many cases do not match the original house, increasing the loss of architectural unity and consistency of appearance of streets, leading to diminished property values and lack of acceptance of extensions from other residents of the neighbourhood. It is worth noting that the guidance reiterates that “Potential applicants can always discuss particularly peculiar circumstances that lead them to consider extra large extensions may be acceptable in a pre-application enquiry” (page 28).

4.4 If instead the Council had sought to restrict extensions, there would not be a solution to the problem of overcrowding of large families within the capabilities of homeowners to resolve and the clear demand would not be met. This would continue social and health problems associated with overcrowding, further pressure for one-off planning applications for extensions of all sorts including rear extensions and the previously popular “grossly overscaled dormers”, in all likelihood greater construction of extensions without or in contravention of planning permission, and causing greater workload on the Council’s planning officers.

4.5 Alternatively the Council could have elected to not revise the SPD at all. This would have maintained existing restrictions on “Type 3” extensions only being built in pairs, which many residents wanting to build such extensions are



finding difficult to follow, the Council's planning officers are finding difficult to enforce and are considered not to make a significant difference to the impact on appearance and neighbours' amenity compared to single extensions. The absence of greater emphasis on getting the details of extensions to match existing houses would perpetuate the problem of extensions not matching the existing house, which would diminish cross-community neighbourhood consensus in favour of the existing SPD. Some details with additional emphasis in the revised SPD, such as the importance of strengthening foundations and improving fire safety, impact on safety of residents. Without other revisions, SPD would also lack the increased emphasis that the extensions are not intended to facilitate conversions to flats or HMOs.

5. Background information

5.1 The South Tottenham area comprises mostly late Victorian and early Twentieth Century two storey terrace houses with a traditional pattern of development that is typically of shallow pitched roofs, lining a network of roads laid out to a grid pattern with back to back rear gardens. Within the overall area there is some visual variety between house types, between adjoining streets, and between terraces on the opposite sides of the street.

5.2 Within individual terraces, however, there is a general consistency in the use of a limited palate of external facing materials and detail design. Whilst this is not a conservation area, or an area of particular architectural sensitivity, the terraces have a consistency of scale and rhythm resulting in a uniformity of street character within the area that influences design proposals when assessing alterations and/or extensions to buildings. The pattern of development gives the streets and the area a distinct character and these should be retained whilst also providing opportunities of some limited alterations and/or extension. The design principles developed in the SPD sought to meet these wider objectives.

5.3 The Council recognises the needs of local residents to provide additional habitable accommodation within their property to relieve overcrowding and to meet the needs of their large extended families in parts of South Tottenham. The house extensions design guidance was prepared to set down the design principles that should be followed by local residents when considering extensions. The new planning and design guidance, once adopted as SPD, provided a consistency of approach for house extensions in the area (normally in the form of roof extensions) and ensured both adequate growing space for the occupiers and design consistency.

5.4 In preparing the original SPD in 2009-2010, these matters were discussed with members of the local community, ward councillors, the Planning Committee and Cabinet in 2009. The Draft Design Guidance was then subject to wider community consultation and developed as Supplementary Planning Document; the consultations produced a large majority support for the three design



principles for roof extension. It was therefore prepared as an SPD, along with a Sustainability Appraisal and Equalities Impact Assessment and adopted by Cabinet in October 2010.

- 5.5 Following concerns being raised by local residents (both for and against extensions) and local councillors, a “consultation and discussion” document on the SPD identified the importance of both good design to protect the appearance of the area and sound construction to protect the safety of families living in extended houses and their neighbours. This provided interim additional guidance on how to successfully design and build house extensions in accordance with the SPD.
- 5.6 The discussion document, setting out possible changes to the SPD, was consulted on, including letters sent to all local residents in the area, as well as architects, builders and approved inspectors active in the area, from 17 January until 28 February 2013. Two well attended public meetings were held in different parts of the SPD area; one in the community hall attached to a local synagogue, the other in the non-consecrated hall of a local Anglican church. The consultation produced a strong response with 365 written responses; this is considered a high response rate in proportion to the number of people consulted, and in comparison to response rates to other Planning Policy consultation documents including the Local Plan, Development Management Policies and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.
- 5.7 The responses received to the consultation included a mix of responses to the discussion document, with the majority strongly supporting the SPD while a minority expressed strong opposition to parts or all of it. Many of the supportive comments would like to see additional extensions permitted, but most considered the current types of extensions met their needs. Most of the comments concerned about or opposed to the current SPD complained about aspects of the permitted extensions types not being followed properly; that details were built incorrectly, and that the policy was not being applied consistently.
- 5.8 The revised draft SPD (2013) makes modest changes to the types of extensions considered acceptable by mainly allowing 'Type 3' extensions on their own, along with significant additional detailed advice on appearance and sound construction. It is considered these changes ensure the extensions residents needs an be accommodated, and the guidance applied with greater consistency, whilst meeting other residents concerns with details and public safety. **Additions compared to the original edition are marked in the draft document with a double vertical line to the right of the text.**

6. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications

- 6.1 This report seeks Cabinet agreement for adoption of the House Extensions in South Tottenham Supplementary Planning Document. Any costs arising for the



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preparing and disseminating the guidance will be met from within existing Service budgets.

7. Head of Legal Services and legal implications

7.1 This report is on revisions to an SPD originally produced in 2009-2010. The original draft SPD was reported to the March 2010 Cabinet, for which the Head of Legal Services provided the following comment, considered to still apply:

7.2 The policies contained in the SPD must be in conformity with the London Plan and the Council's adopted Local Plan in line with Regulation 13(8) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

7.3 The SPD must be in conformity with the adopted Local Plan. The document will carry little or no weight in the development management process if it does not conform with the adopted Local Plan.

7.4 Part 5 of the Regulations sets out the process to be followed both prior to and following the adoption of an SPD.

7.5 The Regulations set out the consultation process, and this should also be carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The Council cannot adopt the SPD until such time as it has considered any representations made and prepared a statement setting out d. a summary of the main issues raised and how these issues have been addressed in the SPD which it intends to adopt. This statement has been prepared and is included at Appendix 2 to this report.

7.6 As soon as reasonably practicable after the Council adopts the SPD it must comply with Regulation 19 of the Regulations. This involves making the statement summarising the consultation responses (at Appendix 2), an adoption statement and the SPD available for inspection. The statement and adoption statement must be made available on the Council's website, and the adoption statement must be sent to any person who asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD.

8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

8.1 This report is on revisions to an SPD originally produced in 2009-2010. The original draft SPD was reported to the March 2010 Cabinet, for which the Equalities and Diversity Unit has provided the following comment, considered to still apply:

“The demographic profile of South Tottenham indicates a number of specific issues in relation to the ethnicity and size of most households. A key consideration for the proposed consultation is whether the three



designs proposed will meet the diverse circumstances and needs of all sections of the community.

The Equalities Service recommends that the Design and Conservation team undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment of the proposed designs as part of the process of the consideration process in order to ensure that there is no potential adverse impact to any resident group or community in South Tottenham.”

8.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out for the original SPD and is considered to still apply. It is available on the website for the House Extensions in South Tottenham SPDⁱⁱ.

9. Head of Procurement Comments

9.1 Not required.

10. Policy Implication

10.1 The SPD, whether on its current form or as improved in the draft Revised SPD, will help implement the following policies from the Council’s Corporate Planⁱⁱⁱ:

- **Outstanding for all:** Enabling all Haringey children to thrive – by allowing a solution to overcrowding of large families it will improve the living and working conditions for school children, with more space for homework, privacy and quality of life.
- **Safety and wellbeing for all:** A place where everyone feels safe and has a good quality of life - by allowing a solution to overcrowding of large families it will improve safeguarding, health and wellbeing of children; by improving consistency of appearance of extensions it will improve the appearance of streets.
- **Opportunities for all:** A successful place for everyone – most obviously it will improve the chances of residents being able to secure a decent place to live by allowing solutions to overcrowded home owning families and increasing the supply of large family sized accommodation, the property size in most short supply. The additional building work to extend houses could increase economic activity and opportunities for local businesses in architecture, building contracting, supplies etc.
- **A better council:** Delivering responsive, high quality services and encouraging residents who are able to help themselves to do so – the greater clarity of the sorts of extensions that are acceptable should make it easier for officers to advise enquiries, make planning decisions and follow them up.

10.2 With regards to the Council’s Sustainable Community Strategy^{iv}, the SPD addresses each of its policies as follows:



- **People at the heart of change:** – it will improve the chances of residents being able to secure a decent place to live by allowing solutions to overcrowded home owning families and increasing the supply of large family sized accommodation, the property size in most short supply. By improving consistency of appearance of extensions it will improve the appearance of streets.
- **An environmentally sustainable future:** – by providing solutions to home extensions that do not take garden space it will increase their protection as potential leisure, play, food growing and wildlife spaces. New extensions, with new roofs, walls and windows to at least the latest building regulations, will reduce heat loss from homes.
- **Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all:** – not so significant but the building works could provide greater opportunities for local businesses.
- **Be safer for all:** – not relevant.
- **Healthier people with a better quality of life:** – reduced overcrowding, better living space in the home and more modern building techniques should have a positive effect on health, particularly of children, in houses extended.
- **Be people and customer focused:** – the greater clarity of the sorts of extensions that are acceptable should make it easier for officers to advise enquiries, make planning decisions and follow them up.

10.3 The Council's Local Plan, Strategic Policies^v set out the strategic planning policies for the Council; obviously of particular relevance for this Supplementary Planning Document, and in particular this revised SPD addresses each of its policies as follows:

- **People at the heart of change:** – it will improve the chances of residents being able to secure a decent place to live by allowing solutions to overcrowded home owning families and increasing the supply of large family sized accommodation, the property size in most short supply.
- **An environmentally sustainable future:** – by providing solutions to home extensions that do not take garden space it will increase their protection as potential leisure, play, food growing and wildlife spaces and slow down rainwater runoff.
- **Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all:** – the building works could provide greater opportunities for local businesses, which could also provide more local apprenticeships improving skills.
- **Safer for all:** – by improving consistency of appearance of extensions it will improve the appearance of streets and by providing an alternative to rear extensions protect gardens.
- **Healthier people with a better quality of life:** – reduced overcrowding, better living space in the home and more modern building techniques should have a positive effect on health, particularly of children, in houses extended.



- **People and customer focused:** – the greater clarity of the sorts of extensions that are acceptable should make it easier for officers to advise enquiries, make planning decisions and follow them up.
- 10.4 In reference to the Council’s key themes in the use of resources:
- **Value for Money** – the revised SPD does not have significant value for money implications, in that revising the SPD is not costing significant money; itself an indication of the value for money of the process. This far, in addition to officer time, the only costs have been postage, printing and the hire of meeting venues in relation to the consultation. However, if the revised SPD is adopted, the Council are planning to design, print and make available a public information leaflet summarising the guidance to increase awareness and understanding. The cost is not expected to be great as it is intended that internal staff and resources will be used to produce the leaflet.
 - **Property Assets** – there should be no effect on Council owned property, unless the Council owns homes in the area and would like to extend them. This would increase the value of the properties and more significantly their usefulness in meeting the significant unmet need for Council housing for larger families, but the affect of this would be marginal.
 - **Risk management** – the greater clarity of the guidance should lead to some reduction in the number of planning appeals and enforcement cases.
 - **Staff/ Workforce** – by increasing clarity of what is required for residents to build acceptable extensions, there should be a reduction in the workload on the planning department, particularly on enforcement officers. Relieving overcrowding should improve health, social wellbeing and family life,

11. Use of Appendices

- Appendix 1: Final Draft (for adoption) Revised House Extensions in South Tottenham Supplementary Planning Document (October 2013).
- Appendix 2: Consultation Report on draft Revised House Extensions in South Tottenham Supplementary Planning Document (2013), following the Discussion and Consultation Document (2012-13) (September 2013).
- Appendix 3: Statement on Sustainability Appraisal and Equalities Impact Assessment (July 2013)

12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 12.1 In addition to published documents (e.g. legislation and government reports) cited in the report or appendices, that are already in the public domain, no other documents have been used to inform this report.

ⁱ The House Extensions in South Tottenham SPD (adopted October 2010):
http://www.haringey.gov.uk/house_ext_s_tottenham_adopted_spd_nov_2010.pdf



ⁱⁱ House Extensions in South Tottenham SPD (adopted October 2010) Equalities Impact Assessment: http://www.haringey.gov.uk/house_extensions_in_south_tottenham_equality_impact_assessment.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Haringey's Corporate Plan 2013-15: <http://www.haringey.gov.uk/corporateplan>

^{iv} Haringey's Sustainable Community Strategy 2007 – 2016: <http://www.haringey.gov.uk/sustainable-community-strategy>

^v Haringey's Local Plan: Strategic Policies: http://www.haringey.gov.uk/local_plan_adoption.htm