PLANNING DESIGN EVOLUTION AND ACCESSIBILITY JUSTIFICATION

Supporting Statement for Proposed Two-Storey Side Extension and Associated Alterations at 50 Birkby Lodge Road, Birkby, Huddersfield, HD2 2BG

1. PURPOSE

This statement explains why the current proposal differs from the previously approved scheme, with particular reference to the evolution of the side extension from the earlier approved footprint to the current approximately 6-metre-wide proposal. It should be read alongside the Design and Access Statement, Heritage Impact Statement, final Occupational Therapy Housing Assessment and submitted drawings. It is not intended to repeat the full design, access or heritage assessments contained within those documents.

2. BACKGROUND

The principle of extending the dwelling has previously been accepted through earlier planning permissions. The current application does not seek to establish a wholly new form of development. Instead, it revisits the previously approved design in light of a fuller understanding of the occupier's documented functional and accessibility requirements. The earlier schemes were prepared primarily with the objective of achieving an acceptable planning and heritage outcome. At that stage, the applicant had not fully explored how evidenced disability-related accessibility requirements could inform the overall layout and design of the extension. The current proposal has therefore evolved from the earlier approved approach following further consideration of the existing barriers within the dwelling and the need to provide a more practical and adaptable long-term arrangement.

3. DESIGN EVOLUTION

Stage 1 – Existing Dwelling
The existing dwelling presents practical constraints in relation to access, internal circulation, stairs and washing and toilet facilities. These constraints limit the ability of the occupier to use the home safely and independently and provide limited scope for comprehensive adaptation within the existing layout.

Stage 2 – Previously Approved Scheme
The previously approved side extension established an acceptable architectural approach within the Birkby Conservation Area. The principal characteristics carried forward into the current proposal include a subordinate extension, lowered ridge, sympathetic external materials and an appropriate relationship with the original dwelling and street. The earlier scheme was suitable for its approved purpose. However, subsequent consideration of the occupier's functional

circumstances provided an opportunity to reconsider whether its footprint and internal arrangement offered sufficient scope for a more integrated accessibility strategy.

Stage 3 – Current Proposal
The principal change is an increase in the width of the side extension to approximately 6 metres externally. The additional width is not proposed simply to increase residential floorspace. It provides greater scope for an integrated arrangement capable of accommodating improved access, circulation, accessible sanitary facilities, vertical access and longer-term adaptability.

4. ACCESSIBILITY EVIDENCE AND THE 6-METRE PROPOSAL

The final Occupational Therapy assessment considers the occupier's functional needs and the proposed scheme. It concludes that the proposed 6-metre extension provides an appropriate means of achieving the identified accessibility improvements and is preferable to rehousing at the present time, provided that the accessibility requirements identified within the assessment are incorporated into the design. The Occupational Therapy assessment does not provide the detailed architectural or structural design or prescribe every individual dimension or construction detail. Those matters will require further coordination as the detailed design progresses. The significance of the final OT evidence for this statement is therefore clear: it supports the current proposed 6-metre extension as an appropriate means of achieving the identified accessibility outcomes, while the detailed design remains subject to further technical development.

5. WHY THE WIDTH HAS INCREASED

The increase from the earlier approved footprint to the current approximately 6-metre-wide extension reflects the evolution of the design in response to the occupier's documented functional and accessibility requirements. The additional width provides greater scope for a coherent internal arrangement rather than relying on piecemeal alterations. In particular, it assists in providing for improved access and circulation, accessible washing and toilet facilities, vertical access and a more adaptable arrangement capable of responding to foreseeable changes in mobility. The width has therefore been adopted as part of the overall architectural response. The final OT assessment supports the proposed 6-metre extension as an appropriate means of achieving the identified accessibility improvements, subject to its requirements being incorporated into the design.

6. CONSERVATION AREA RESPONSE

The site lies within the Birkby Conservation Area. The increase in footprint is therefore balanced against the need to retain an appropriate relationship with the character and appearance of the area.

The current proposal retains the principal architectural approach established through the earlier approval, including the subordinate relationship of the extension, lowered ridge, sympathetic external appearance, established relationship to the street, landscaped frontage and traditional boundary treatment. The proposal therefore represents an evolution of an already accepted design approach, modified to provide greater scope for accessibility and adaptability while seeking to retain the principal heritage and townscape characteristics of the earlier scheme.

7. CONCLUSION

The current proposal should be understood as a considered evolution of the previously approved scheme rather than a simple increase in scale or an attempt to maximise floorspace. The revised approximately 6-metre extension has been developed following further consideration of the occupier's documented functional and accessibility requirements.

The final Occupational Therapy assessment specifically concludes that the proposed 6-metre extension provides an appropriate means of achieving the identified accessibility improvements and is preferable to rehousing at the present time, provided that the identified accessibility requirements are incorporated into the design.

At the same time, the principal architectural approach established through the earlier approval has been retained to maintain an appropriate relationship with the Birkby Conservation Area. For these reasons, the revised proposal represents a practical and proportionate design evolution, providing greater scope for accessibility and long-term adaptability while retaining the principal design and heritage characteristics of the previously approved approach.