

**Cabinet**

12 January 2015

Draft Building Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

**Wards:** All

**Report Authorised by:** Sue Foster, Strategic Director Delivery

**Portfolio:** Councillor Jack Hopkins, Cabinet Member for Business and Growth

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**Report summary**

Currently the Council has in place a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Residential Alterations and Extensions (2008) which supports the policies in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), saved policies, 2010. That SPD has proved an effective and useful tool for the management of development in Lambeth.

When the new Local Plan replaces the UDP (currently scheduled to be in May 2015) that SPD will need to be replaced with an up-to-date SPD reflecting the new Local Plan policies and other relevant planning policy.

In order to inform the new draft SPD an officer review of the building alterations and extensions topic area has been carried out – taking into consideration the current property market, development activity in the borough, and also considering representations and anecdotal evidence from officers, members, residents, residents' groups and responses received during the Local Plan consultation process. The result, a new draft SPD, is the topic of this report.

This report summarises the key changes on approach to extensions and alterations between the current document (2008) and the proposed draft (2014) and recommends a way forward for public consultation of the SPD, for agreement.

**Finance summary**

The preparation of the draft Building Alterations and Extensions SPD has been accommodated within existing budgets. The new document, once adopted, will be available as a pdf on the Council's website. There will be no publication costs.

## **Recommendations**

- (1) To note and agree the content of the draft Alterations and Extensions SPD (2014) in Appendix 1.
- (2) To note and agree the proposals for public consultation.

### **1. Context**

- 1.1 The Lambeth Residential Alterations and Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted April 2008, has proved a valuable guide to residents undertaking work within the borough. Its replacement is required to take account of the changing planning policy context as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the London Plan (2011) and in particular the emerging Lambeth Local Plan (presently due for adoption May 2015). Once the new draft Alterations and Extensions document is adopted it will be used in the determination of appropriate planning applications.
- 1.2 In recent years Lambeth has seen a significant change in its housing market. Rising property prices and stamp duty are discouraging many residents from moving to larger properties and there is increasing interest to enlarge existing properties rather than move. This 'don't move – improve' approach is one that is increasingly common across London and the South East.
- 1.3 A number of consultees on the emerging Local Plan reiterated this position and asked the Council to consider a more pro-development approach to extensions than is currently taken. As a result Policy Q11 is more permissive in terms of rear extensions and roof extensions than was previously the case. Only minor changes to the text in Policy Q11 resulted from the Examination in Public. The new draft SPD will allow the Council to establish standards that reflect this new policy approach. It is anticipated that both the emerging Local Plan and the draft SPD will be adopted together.
- 1.4 In preparing the new guidance officers have noted the trends outlined in para 1.2 and looked at the current approaches of comparable boroughs – Camden, Islington and Wandsworth.
- 1.5 This report highlights the key changes being proposed between the existing Residential Alterations and Extensions SPD (2008) and the draft Alterations and Extensions SPD (draft 2014).

### **2. Proposal and Reasons**

- 2.1 One key difference is that the draft SPD will apply to all property types unlike the current document which relates solely to residential properties. This approach will allow the document to be more widely applied; thus assisting in the determination of a greater number of applications.

2.2 The following paragraphs set out the key changes in the revised version of the SPD:

*Balcony additions*

2.3 Paragraph 2.11 of the draft SPD sets out new considerations for applicants regarding the provision of new projecting balconies on existing buildings. New projecting balconies should generally have solid floors and soffit treatments of quality design, robust materials and be properly drained and should be limited to rear elevations. This addresses an omission in the 2008 document.

*Rear extensions – Closet returns*

2.4 A closet return is a modest extension which is commonly found off the staircase half-landing level on terraced houses dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. These can be single or multiple storeys. Paragraph 3.4 of the draft SPD proposes new guidance regarding additional floors to existing closet returns. Previous guidance allowed for additional floors to terminate one storey below the eaves of existing closet returns. The proposed guidance sets out that additional floors to existing closet returns may terminate half a storey below the eaves. This approach addresses an inconsistency in the previous SPD and is a more accurate reflection of the existing character and form of closet returns in Lambeth.

*Rear infill extensions*

2.5 Paragraph 3.10 of the draft SPD relates to the infilling of the gaps along the side of rear returns (infill extensions). It now allows infill extensions to wrap-around the rear of the return on non-heritage asset buildings. The 2008 approach, which prevented infill extensions from wrapping around, was considered too restrictive.

*Full width 2 storey extensions*

2.6 Previous policy and the 2008 SPD resisted proposals for two storey full width rear extensions. The new policy approach does not specifically state that these types of extensions are unacceptable. Reflecting this the draft SPD states that issues of adjoining amenity, subordination and a design integrated with the host building will be key considerations where such extensions are proposed. This approach will thus support two storey full-width extensions where appropriate.

*Side extensions*

2.7 The 2008 SPD set out that side extensions should maintain a 1m gap between completed structures and the side boundary to avoid visual terracing. The proposed guidance paragraph 3.16 of the draft SPD maintains a minimum 1m side space at first floor level and seeks to ensure the extension is setback and the roof design is integrated with the main roof in a subordinate manner. On heritage assets side spaces will continue to be protected where they are considered important.

### *Mansard roof extensions*

- 2.8 The 2008 guidance took a restrictive approach to mansard roof extensions. It stated that “a mansard roof addition would not be acceptable where it is not a part of the established character of the street or where it would harm the appearance of the building.” The proposed guidance still seeks to maintain uniformity but this is achieved by only supporting mansards at the rear and insisting each follows a prescribed design approach. Paragraph 3.43 of the draft SPD sets out the starting point for rear mansards which must be that the front pitch and existing ridge height remain unaltered so that change is not noticeable from the street. The clear design guidance will ensure that rear mansards are subordinate in form and uniform in appearance. This approach relates to non-heritage properties; rear mansards will continue to be unacceptable on heritage assets.

### *Full Mansards extensions replacing London Roofs*

- 2.9 This is perhaps the most contentious of all the proposed new approaches. It is long-established practice in Lambeth, and indeed in comparable boroughs across London, to protect London roofs as part of London’s local distinctiveness; and it is still the intention to protect such roofs where they are on heritage assets. However, on non-heritage buildings paragraph 3.48 of the draft SPD proposes that the replacement of a London roof with a traditional mansard roof will be acceptable, so long as each property follows traditional design rules to ensure that the visual unity of the group is reinforced over time.

### *New dormer windows*

- 2.10 The approach to dormers in the 2008 SPD did not differentiate between ordinary properties and heritage assets. That approach is considered too restrictive for non-heritage properties; limiting the opportunities for householders to utilise existing under-used attic space. As a result paragraph 3.34 of the draft SPD sets out the following design approaches for the provision of dormers; giving particular emphasis to subordination and their appropriate siting. The following may now be acceptable:

- Two individual dormers
- Two individual dormers with a thin linking part
- Inset dormer/s (are formed by cutting into the roof slope)
- Single subordinate box dormer

## **3. Finance**

- 3.1 The preparation of revisions to the draft Building Alterations and Extensions SPD has been undertaken from existing budgets.

#### **4. Legal and Democracy**

- 4.1 The National Planning Practice guidance, reflecting the National Planning Policy Framework, provides that *“supplementary planning documents should be used where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery, and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.”*

The preparation of revisions to the draft SPD is consistent with the above guidance as contained in national planning policy.

- 4.2 The proposed publication of the draft SPD reflects the statutory requirement for a local planning authority to consult on the preparation of supplementary planning documents.
- 4.3 Notification of this key decision was published on the Forward Plan on 5 December 2014 so the statutory 28 days' notice has been given. The report was published five working days before the decision is due to be taken and will be subject to call-in for five days once the decision is published.

#### **5. Consultation and co-production**

- 5.1 A working draft version of document was considered by the cross-party Planning and Development Cabinet Advisory Panel on 20 November 2014. The panel is supportive of the approach taken and minor amendments were made in light of Panel feedback.
- 5.2 Upon receipt of Cabinet approval the draft SPD will be subject to a public consultation which it is proposed to run for six weeks over February and March 2015.
- 5.3 The draft document will be made available in pdf format on the Council website. The consultation will also be publicised through Lambeth Life, a press release and the Council's online consultation diary.
- 5.4 It is also proposed to consult specific individuals with a stated interest in the issue, especially those parties that made representations on the extensions policy in the emerging Local Plan, as well as local amenity societies, residents' and community groups and stakeholders identified in the planning policy team's consultation database.
- 5.5 Detailed consideration will given to the consultation representations and final amendments made before the final draft of the SPD is reported back to Cabinet. This is presently scheduled to be Spring / Summer 2015 subject to any change to that timetable arising from the progress of the emerging Local Plan.

#### **6. Risk management**

- 6.1 Changes in the property market locally and across London have led to an intensification of demand for alterations and extensions to existing properties. The existing SPD document is an invaluable planning tool. To proceed without a new, replacement, document presents a significant risk as its absence would provide greater uncertainty for residents, planning staff and decision makers. The result is likely to be more cases

being contested at planning appeal. Decisions may be more difficult to defend if there is no up to date SPD in place.

**7. Equalities impact assessment**

7.1 No separate equalities impact assessment has been undertaken or is proposed to be undertaken in relation to the proposed revisions to the SPD. The emerging Lambeth Local Plan is subject to various statutory impact assessment procedures.

**8. Community safety**

8.1 None for the purposes of this report.

**9. Organisational implications**

9.1 None.

**10. Timetable for implementation**

<b>Stage in plan preparation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet approval of SPD content and agreement to proceed to public consultation.	12 January 2015
Public consultation	February/March 2015
Final edits	April 2015
Final draft SPD reported back to Cabinet for adoption.	Spring / Summer 2015

<b>Audit trail</b>				
<b>Consultation</b>				
<b>Name/Position</b>	<b>Lambeth cluster/division or partner</b>	<b>Date Sent</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Comments in para:</b>
Sue Foster	Strategic Director Delivery	01.11.14	23.12.14	
Finance	Business Partnering	28.11.14	1.12.14	
Legal Services	Enabling: Integrated Support	28.11.14	30.12.14	
Democratic Services	Enabling: Corporate Affairs	28.11.14	01.12.14	
Councillor Jack Hopkins	Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth	3.10.14	18.12.14	
Councillor Diana Morris	Chair of the Planning Applications Committee	20.11.14	20.11.14	
<b>External</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

<b>Report history</b>	
<b>Original discussion with Cabinet Member</b>	02.10.14
<b>Report deadline</b>	19.12.14
<b>Date final report sent</b>	19.12.14
<b>Report no.</b>	128/14-15
<b>Part II Exempt from Disclosure/confidential accompanying report?</b>	No
<b>Key decision report</b>	Yes
<b>Date first appeared on forward plan</b>	05.12.14
<b>Key decision reasons</b>	Meets community impact test
<b>Background information</b> Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Residential Alterations and Extensions	<a href="http://lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pl-adopted-residential-alterationsand-extensions-spd_1.pdf">http://lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pl-adopted-residential-alterationsand-extensions-spd_1.pdf</a>
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix 1 – Residential Alterations and Extensions SPD, April 2008  Appendix 2 - Draft Building Alterations and Extensions SPD, November 2014