



**Conversion of garage to a habitable room,
new driveway, dropped kerb and external
alterations to the dwelling.**

1 Nelson Mews, St Giles Close, Reading, RG1 2SF

Planning Statement

Introduction

Studio Charrette has been commissioned by Simona Hotomega to prepare a full planning application for the conversion of the existing integrated garage to a habitable room, a new driveway, dropped kerb and alterations to the dwelling.

This application is supported by the following documents:

- Planning application form;
- Correct fee;
- Planning Statement (this document);
- Site location and block plan;
- Existing and proposed plans and elevation

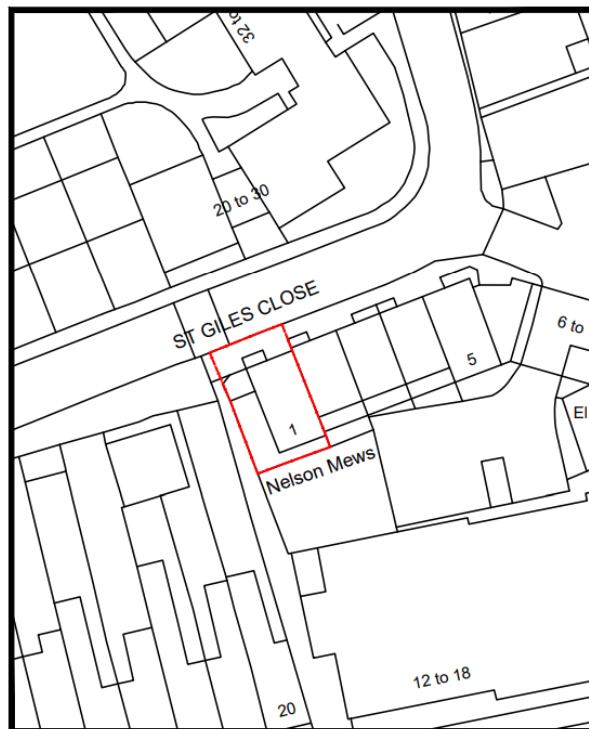
Application Site

The application site is a three storey, end-of-terrace dwelling on St Giles Close with an integrated garage. It is constructed with brick at the base and rendered on the top half. The property has a small grass area to the side of the dwelling.

The property forms part of a modern development comprising residential units and associated parking and amenity space. The surrounding street scene has a mix of three storey and two storey terraces and semi-detached dwellinghouses and a mix of bricks and render. Neighbouring properties in the development have converted the ground floor, integrated garages to habitable rooms.

The site is not in a conservation area and the property is not listed.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



Planning History:

The dwelling was approved under the following planning application:

Reference: 040727

3,4 and 5 storey building providing 11 no. residential units (comprising a mix of flats and townhouses and 2 no.1 bed, 6 no.2 bed and 3 no.3 bed) with associated parking, amenity space and retention of office parking for 9 vehicles.

Approved in 2004.

Condition 31 on the approved application states:

"The car parking provision shown on the approved drawings shall be provided and made ready for use prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted. The residential parking spaces shall be retained thereafter for the parking of vehicles by residents of the approved scheme and their visitors only."

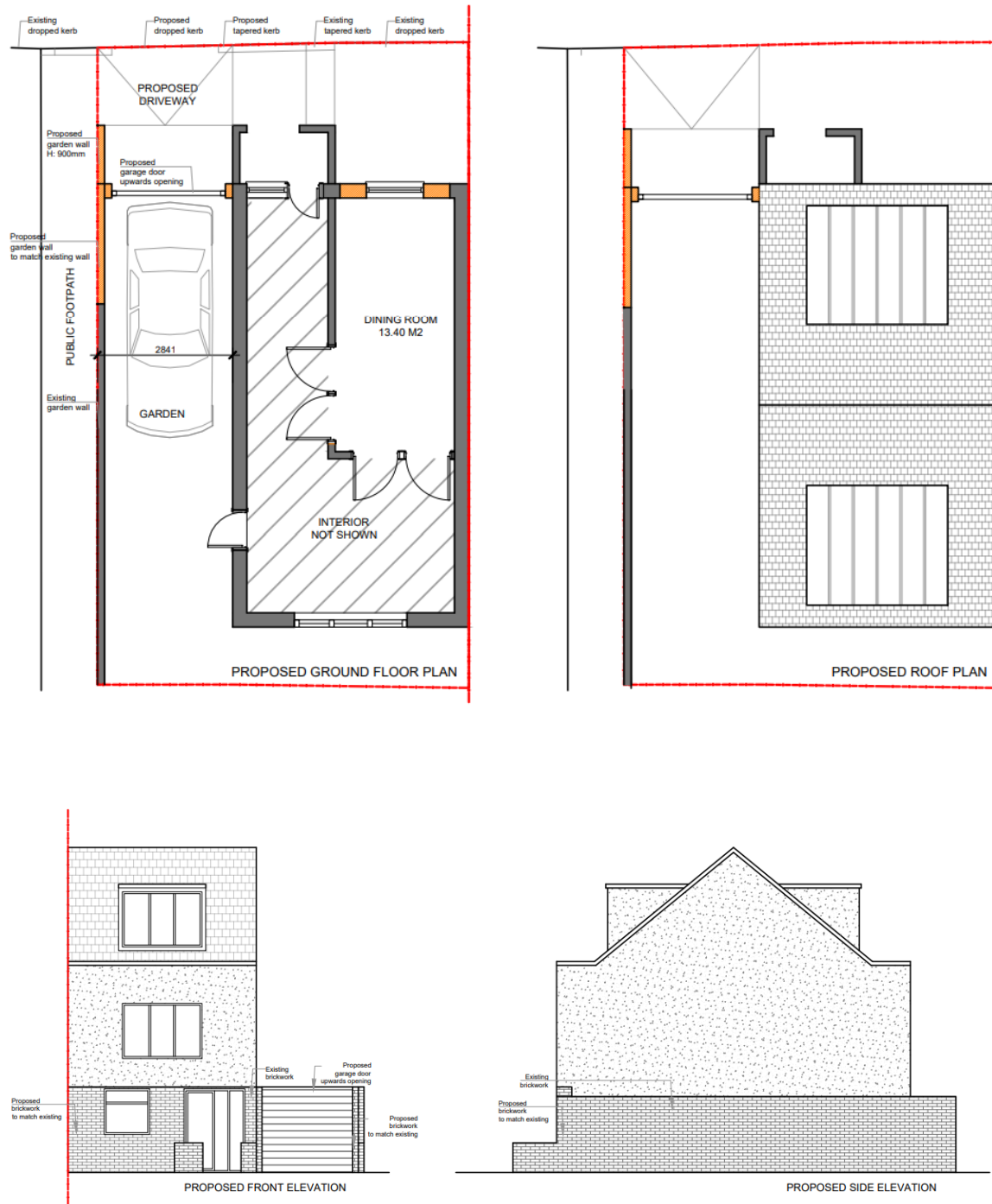
Proposal

Planning permission is being sought for the conversion of the existing garage to a habitable room and the relocation of the parking space to the side of the property.

The proposed conversion of the garage will include external alterations consisting of removing the garage door and replacing it with a window and brick infill to match the existing building.

The parking space will be re-provided to the side of the property. A new dropped kerb and vehicular crossover will be provided. The existing rear garden boundary will be moved forward to be level with the front elevation, and this will have a garage door providing access to the parking space. The wall surrounding the garage door will be brick to match the existing dwelling. There will be no roof over the parking area.

Figure 2: Proposed Plans and Elevations:



Planning Policies

The following policy and guidance documents are recognised as primary considerations for the decision of the associated application at the site location:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1: Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development
Policy CC7: Design And The Public Realm
Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
Policy H2: Density And Mix
Policy H8: Residential Conversions
Policy H9: House Extensions And Ancillary Accommodation
Policy TR3: Access, Traffic And Highway-Related Matters
Policy TR5: Car And Cycle Parking And Electric Vehicle Charging

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Residential Conversions (2013)
Design Guide to House Extension

Assessment

The application is seeking full planning permission to convert the existing garage into a habitable room and replace the parking space to the side of the property.

Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

The application does not involve any major work. It includes bricking up the front elevation of the existing garage and providing a window, extending the garden wall and also providing a garage door that opens upwards. The proposed brick of 0.9 metres matches the existing wall in terms of height and design. It projects forward to match the existing brick wall and not go beyond the building line. It complies with policy CC7 and does not cause any obstruction, to the highway. The vehicle manoeuvring from the new parking space will be identical to the existing use of the garage. The proposed garage door also matches other garage doors within the street scene. The fenestration matches with the street. The proposed scale of the new wall will appear sufficiently subservient.

The provision of a dropped kerb on the street and the loss of the grass area to the front of the wall does not detract from the character of the area. The street is not classified and therefore the provision of a dropped kerb does not require planning permission. Also, there are similarly dropped kerbs within the street scene. The proposed development is within a similar appearance and uniform layout arrangement in the street scene and has a consistent scale, form, features, and materials.

As a result of the proposal the external appearance of a property and surroundings is not significantly impacted. The houses are set back from the highway and the dropped kerb would serve as vehicular access to and from the house. The proposal does not result in the total loss of parking as provided by the planning condition in the previous application. The parking arrangement is just being relocated. This meets the 1 parking space as required by the Parking Standard and Design SPD. The proposal does not detract from the local character, or the street scene and is considered favourably.

Policy H8 requires that proposals that include conversion are assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing.

All development is acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the amenity of gardens and other outdoor areas are not compromised. Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact on the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

The development does not harm the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties by reason of overlooking or its overshadowing or other adverse environmental impact. There are no side windows to cause overlooking into neighbouring properties. The property has approximately 15 square metres of garden space which remains sufficient to serve the dwelling. The proposal does not result in the intensification of activities within the street and does not change the function of the street.

NPPF Paragraph 111 states that Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The proposal relates to the relocation of an existing parking space, and so will not have an impact on the highways network.

Policy CC7 aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which development is in terms of layout, landscape, density, scale, height, massing, architectural detail and materials. The proposal would not result in any impact on the openness of the public realm. It is our view that the extension, alteration and conversion constructed here are considered to have an acceptable impact on the built environment, neighbouring occupants, and highway safety. The extension amounts to Sustainable Development which accords with the prevailing policies of the Development Plan and NPPF.

As highlighted from the supplied elevations and plans, the works do not have any significant impact on the streetscape, character, or surrounding amenities. The changes made to the property follow the design principles given in the Council's planning policies.

Conclusion

Following a review of the relevant applicable policy and material considerations, it is our professional view that the development is in compliance with all applicable policies as previously illustrated.

We see no reason for the council to refuse our request for planning approval and kindly request for a timely decision to be made in line with the applicable guidance of the NPFF.