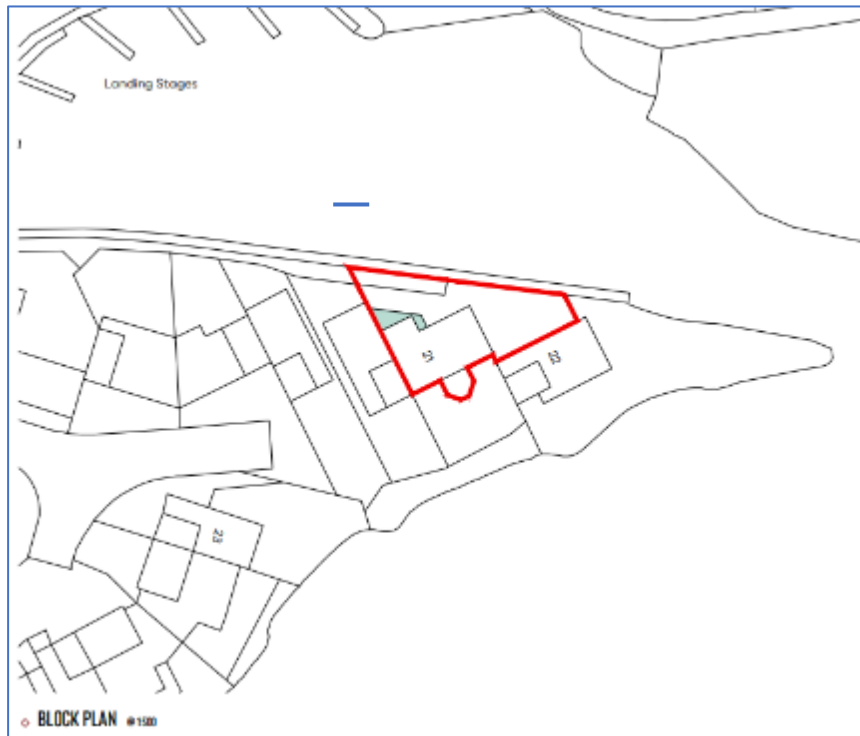


Planning, Design & Access Statement

Householder Planning Application
for ground, first and second floor rear extension, provision of accommodation within revised
roof space and associated internal and external alterations at;

21 Heron Island, Caversham, Reading.



Introduction

This statement has been prepared in support of a householder Planning Application for improvement works and alterations through a combination of a multi floor rear extension, with related internal alterations and a loft conversion to the semi-detached single-family residence known as 21 Heron island in Caversham.

(see location Plan and 3D aerial of the site above – Not to scale)

The property currently comprises a semi-detached 3 storey family home in a unique setting on Heron Island and is located within the settlement boundary of Reading.

The property is not statutorily or locally listed and nor does it appear on a local list of heritage assets (ie 'Buildings of Merit'). The site does not lie within a conservation area or in close proximity to any other heritage assets identified by the Council that would be impacted by the proposals.

Accordingly in this instance a heritage impact assessment report is not deemed necessary.

It is the applicant's intention to continue to occupy the property as their family's principal residence and the proposed works as outlined below reflect the need to address identifiable shortcomings and other issues that are present, such as to embrace the opportunity to upgrade and modernise the property.

The proposed sympathetically designed and arranged new spaces and features employ appropriate architecture, details and materials, and will thus protect the character of the property whilst giving it greater flexibility and bringing it more in to line with modern day living expectations for such a home.

These works will create a much improved residence, fully respectful of both its own setting, and that of adjoining and nearby occupiers. The reasonable residential amenity of these neighbouring occupiers are also protected.

The new works also duly pay proper regard to the buildings setting and to the contribution that this element of the site makes to the character of the wider area.

The proposed works also address the need to enhance the home's energy efficiency and thus its future sustainability credentials.

Site specific characteristics and planning policy.

The property lies within the built-up or 'developed area' of Reading where the general policy principle for works such as those proposed are generally considered acceptable in planning terms subject to any material considerations.

The relevant planning considerations that have been addressed and met by the subject proposals are set out below;

These policies are all framed positively and whilst this suggests the 'principle' of development may be acceptable here, it remains necessary to demonstrate that the impact of the proposals upon the local environment and visual appearance of the area is acceptable and that such character will be preserved and enhanced.

Planning policy considerations:

Principle of Development

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF also emphasises the importance of good design as key to making places better for people to live and goes on to state that the design of development should help improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

It adds that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

Para 134 of the NPPF goes on to confirm that significant positive weight should be given to:

- a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
- b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.*

It is contended that the proposals are fully compliant with the above design requirements as set out in the assessment section of this statement.

More 'local' Development Plan policies are found at Policy H9 of the adopted Reading Local Plan 2019 which outlines the key design considerations in this regard. it states;

"H9: HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION

An extension to a house or other householder development will be acceptable where it:

- Respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;*
- Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and any important existing building line;*

- Does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or a large blank façade to public areas; and
- Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.

In explanation to this key policy the Local Plan goes on to say that;

“It is important to read this policy in conjunction with Policy CC8 on safeguarding amenity, as most of the planning issues associated with house extensions relate to impacts on neighbours. Policies on private outdoor space (H10), loss of trees (EN14) and the Council’s SPG on House Extensions are also relevant. The policy relates to all types of extension and ancillary accommodation, such as porches, dormer windows and ancillary buildings (e.g. garages and sheds).

Reading is a dense urban area, and there is limited land for new housing development. When household needs change, particularly through growing families, the ability to extend a house can give an alternative to moving to a larger property, often in a less accessible location, or out of the Borough. Such a movement of families can act against creating mixed communities. Therefore, it is important to ensure that, where a household wishes to stay in an existing house, there is as much flexibility as possible to do so. However, extensions can cause undesirable planning issues, and these must be addressed in policy.

Extensions to the side and front of houses are particularly visible, although rear extensions may also be visible from streets, public spaces and footpaths. In these cases, it is important to reflect the character of the street and ensure that an extension is not visually dominant in a way that detracts from its surroundings. Extensions should reflect the building line, or, preferably, be set back from the building line. They should also ensure that, where gaps between dwellings are a key part of the character of the street, they are retained. Some types of additions, for example box-shaped dormer windows facing the highway, are unlikely to be acceptable under the terms of this policy.”

In developing the subject proposals the architects have paid due regard to the above advice and the resultant subject proposals have sought to blend the existing contemporary design and materials of the existing dwelling with complimentary features and additions to directly address the need to meet the needs of users and to significantly enhance the energy efficiency and thus sustainability credentials of the resultant build.

Given the arrangement of the existing property and its juxtaposition and relationship with its neighbours and adjoining residences it can be shown that the proposed works will not cause any loss of amenity by virtue of the proposals being considered overbearing or by causing opportunities for overlooking or loss of light or privacy.

The principle extension, whilst over 3 floors is set in to the existing ‘corner’ formed by the property’s rear elevation and the projecting blank return façade of the adjoining property at no. 20 Heron Island.

Fenestration and balcony positioning and design similarly protect adjoining occupiers from any loss of their reasonable residential amenity.

The property retains its existing access and parking and private amenity space.

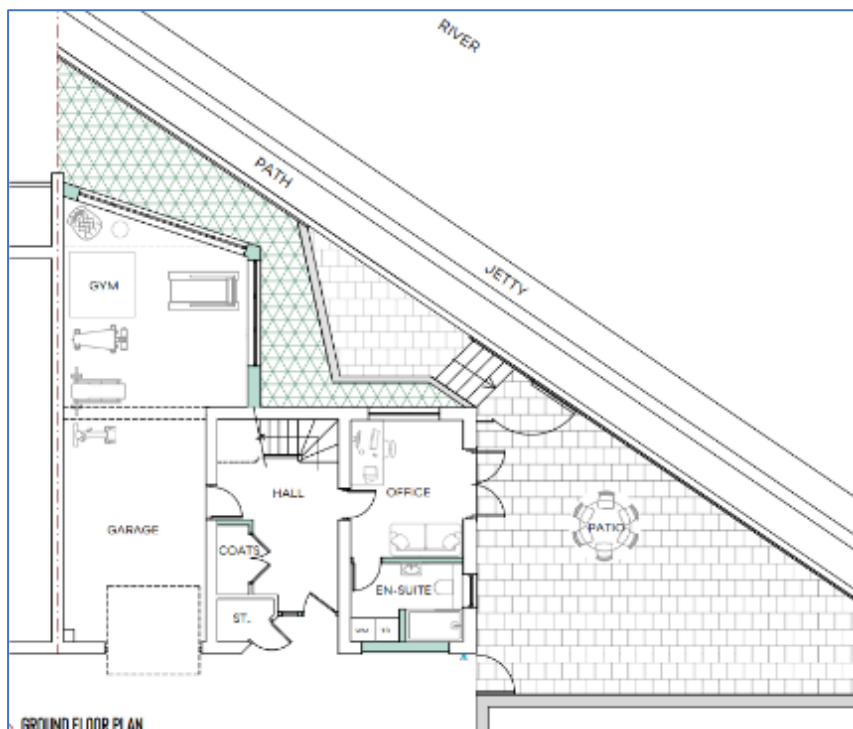
The Proposals;

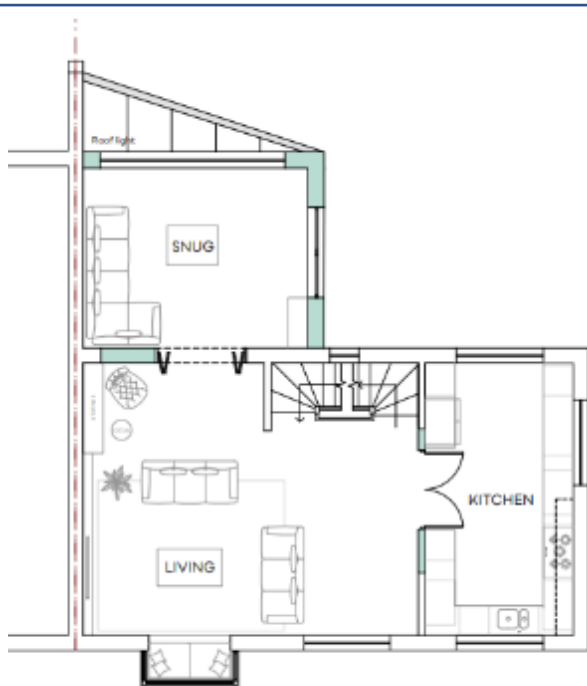


Developed in the light of all of the above policy considerations, Planning Permission is sought for:

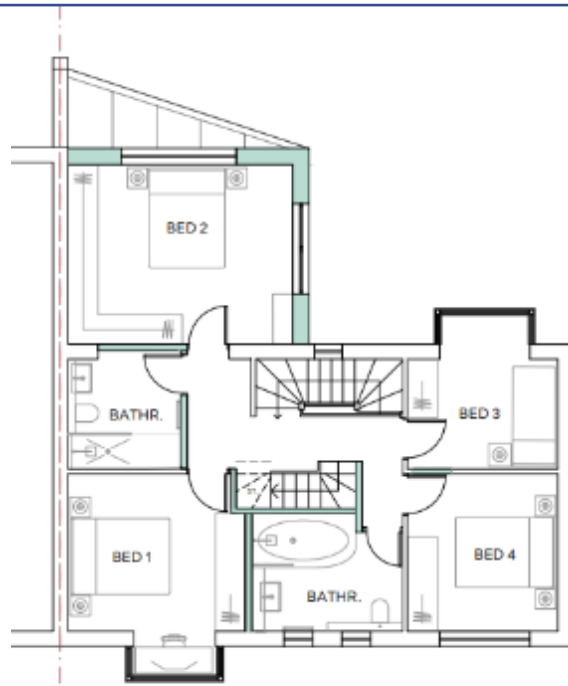
- A three level rear extension comprising a relocated gym / office to the ground floor, snug living room at first floor – which itself is reconfigured internally to become the main kitchen / dining / living space and an additional bedroom at second floor.
- The roof is altered to accommodate a home office with external verandah / terrace.
- No existing trees or note worthy landscape feature are impacted by the proposals

(Proposed Ground, First, second, and roof arrangement – drawing extracts not to scale)

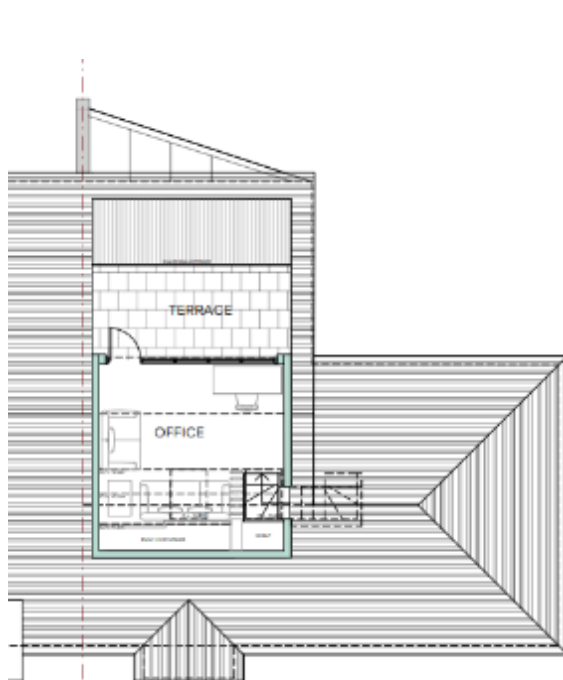




◇ FIRST FLOOR PLAN



◇ SECOND FLOOR PLAN



◇ LOFT PLAN



Proposed rear Elevation – roof terrace set within pitched roof

Impact Assessment

The application site lies within a built-up area where such extensions and improvement works to 20th century houses such as this are common place.

The works, and property as a whole will remain well screened from important public viewpoints by virtue of the unusual siting of the property, existing landscaping and the discreet nature of the new build.

See public realm (river side) view toward the application property below;



The proposals do not involve the loss or removal of any features of 'Historic' or architectural significance or interest, nor any noteworthy landscape features .

The proposal introduce a well-integrated contemporary architecture which blends harmoniously and will complement the host building, as required, and which will ensure that no material harm will result to the quality site itself or indeed to the existing character of the immediate area.

The contemporary extension and sympathetic alterations are considered to enhance the existing host building both architecturally and most importantly in the way it will subsequently function for its 'users' as a highly sustainable single-family home.

The new structures remain largely hidden from public realm viewpoints and the setting of the home and site as a whole is retained and maintained much as existing.

In relation to 'harm' therefore the proposal provides an opportunity to create additional and flexible ancillary residential accommodation which will enhance the host building and its functionality whilst causing no harm to the character and fabric of the existing house or the existing qualities of the wider area. Indeed, both are considered to be enhanced by the proposals.

The Impact upon the reasonable residential amenity of adjacent residents has also been addressed in developing the proposals. The positioning and detail of the proposed new fenestration ensures that no loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers will occur through overlooking or loss of privacy and being mostly 'set-in' (or within the roof space) the new additions will not appear overbearing.

The Government's overarching planning policy framework (NPPF) provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It makes it clear that for decision taking (on applications for planning permission) this means:

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay;*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - i. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - ii. *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

The presumption is therefore that planning permission should be granted unless there are good reasons in an up-to-date plan to resist such.

The proposal is also not in conflict with any of these overarching national or local development plan planning policy objectives but rather addresses the need to provide the home with a sustainable future that meets the needs of the occupiers in a way which functions well, and which is sympathetic to the existing 'host' building.

In the light of this and the complementary design and materials employed it is contended that those practical improvements presented by the new buildings and resultant lack of significant harm caused is sufficient to allow for the development to proceed.

This in turn will thus preserve and enhance the characteristics of the area in the vicinity of the application site.

Other Matters

Impact upon trees; The additions and new buildings are located over existing built form / hard surfaced areas. There will be no storage of materials under any tree canopies and no mixing of concrete within 10m of any trees. No new drainage / service routes are proposed with the new work connecting into existing services.

Bats and Biodiversity; The applicants have commissioned an appropriate assessment of ecological impact of the proposals

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Peter Charij to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at the site.

The survey was required to inform a planning application for a rear extension and landscaping of the garden (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development").

A copy of this assessment is included as part of the application package of documents

The applicants are happy to accept soft landscaping conditions on any consent to reinforce planting areas where this is considered practical or desirable to facilitate biodiversity enhancement.

Flood; In common with the existing property and its neighbours the finished floor levels of the existing house were designed with flood resilience measures in place to address risk from flooding when the properties were originally constructed.

These levels and related measures will be maintained at ground floor and no new sleeping accommodation is proposed at this level.

A full Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared by STM Environmental which forms part of the application package of documents, and which concludes that the proposals are compliant with planning policy and the NPPF.

Sustainability;

Materials used for the extension will be primarily selected to best match the existing dwelling. That said the new work will seek to exceed the standard of thermal and energy efficiency performance presently required by building regulations.

Appropriately environmentally friendly insulation will be used and opportunities for thermally efficient glazing and solar gain will be utilised wherever possible.

This will maximise thermal performance, air tightness and energy usage and the new rooms will incorporate energy efficient appliances. Water consumption will be minimised by fitting dual flush toilets and aerating taps to any new rooms and water for toilets.

CONCLUSION;

The context of the application site and the surrounding area has been carefully considered and fully taken into account by the architects in designing the application proposals.

The Government's NPPF states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and avoid conflict between the character and appearance of an area and the identifiable need to improve the appearance and functionality of existing property.

This guidance which looks for planning decisions to address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment should ensure that sustainable development is permitted where proposals respond to local character and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials.

The proposal also addresses directly the importance of securing the property in its optimum viable use as a family home and to improve its related functionality and sustainability credentials.

This particular proposal presents an interesting and noteworthy contemporary uplift of an existing residence that presently fails to maximise opportunities presented by its attendant plot.

The new design integrates elements of the existing house into new energy efficient improvements that introduce positive enhancements both to the appearance of the property and the way it functions and meets future expectations.

The proposal will not materially damage the prevailing character of this established residential area nor the quality and character of views to it or within it.

The proposal is of a high-quality design, finish and materials and is of a size, scale and arrangement that is appropriate to the host building, commensurate with the plot size and compliant with the prevailing policy.

The proposal complies with the Local plan and related design guide in respect of: residential amenity, Design/Character, garden depth, separation distances and adopted parking standards.

Accordingly, it is hoped that the Planning Department can recommended the application for conditional approval.

