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Planning, Design & Access Statement

Revision A

Full planning permission for
the erection of a new
dwelling, following
demolition of the existing
bungalow.

**Meadow View, Blagrove Lane,
Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DX**





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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This planning, design and access statement has been prepared by STL Architecture LTD on behalf of our clients Sean Carney and Tara Walsh to support the detailed planning application for a new dwelling at Meadow View, Blagrove Lane, Caversham, RG4 7DX.

This statement has been prepared in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted 2019. This statement will cover the context of the proposal and outline the necessary information required to provide a determination by Reading Borough Council planning officers.

The resulting conclusion is that key materials considerations, including the impact on; character, neighbours, highway safety and trees are acceptable and the wider objectives of the relevant local and national planning policy are met.

In addition to this statement, the application is accompanied by the required technical reports, planning application forms, ownership certificate and drawings. The relevant application fee has also been submitted via the online planning portal.





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2.0 The Site

The application site (0.2 acres) fronts onto Blagrove Lane and contains an unoccupied single storey three bedroom bungalow. There is an existing Holly tree located along the southern boundary and Pear tree located at the rear along of the site. There are a number of hedgerows spread across the site, totalling approximately 40 metres, cumulatively. The site is bound on all sides by close boarded fencing.



The site also benefits from an existing vehicular access with acceptable visibility splays and ample space for parking at the front of the site.





3.0 Location and Context

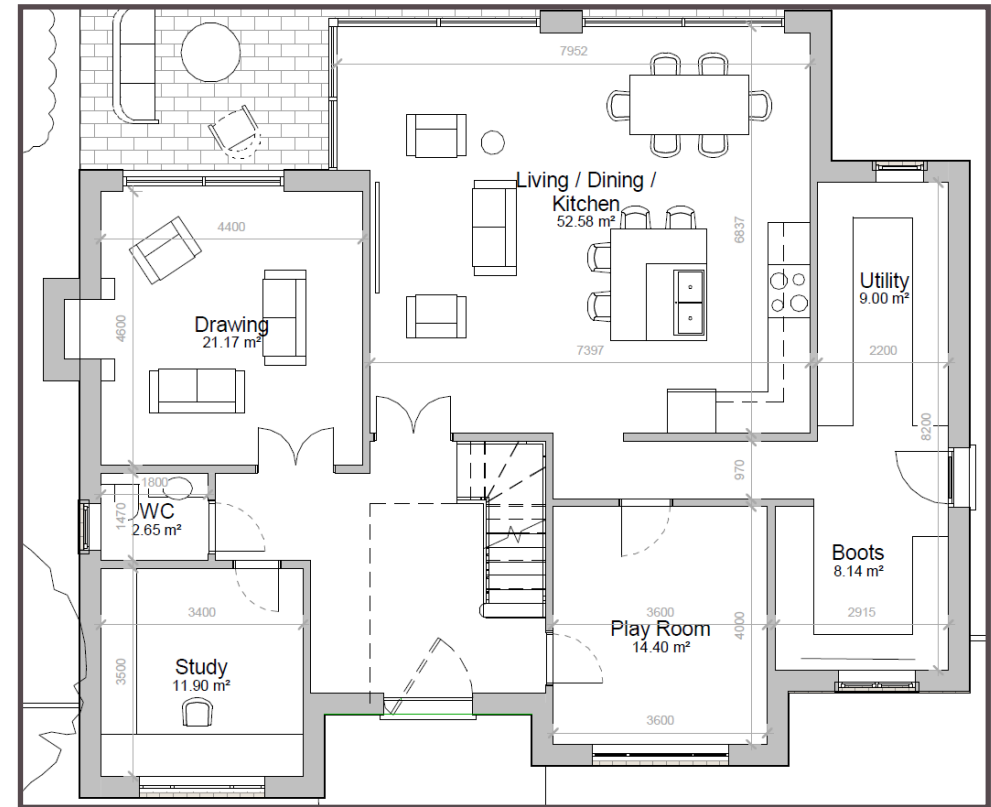
The application site is located in the settlement of Caversham and is contained by residential development to the north, south and east, with open countryside located beyond Blagrove Lane itself. The application dwelling is distanced approximately 115 metres from 3 Blagrove Lane, a Grade II Listed Building, (formerly listed as Old Gravelhill Cottages). However, it is not considered the replacement of Meadow View will harm the setting of this important local historic asset.



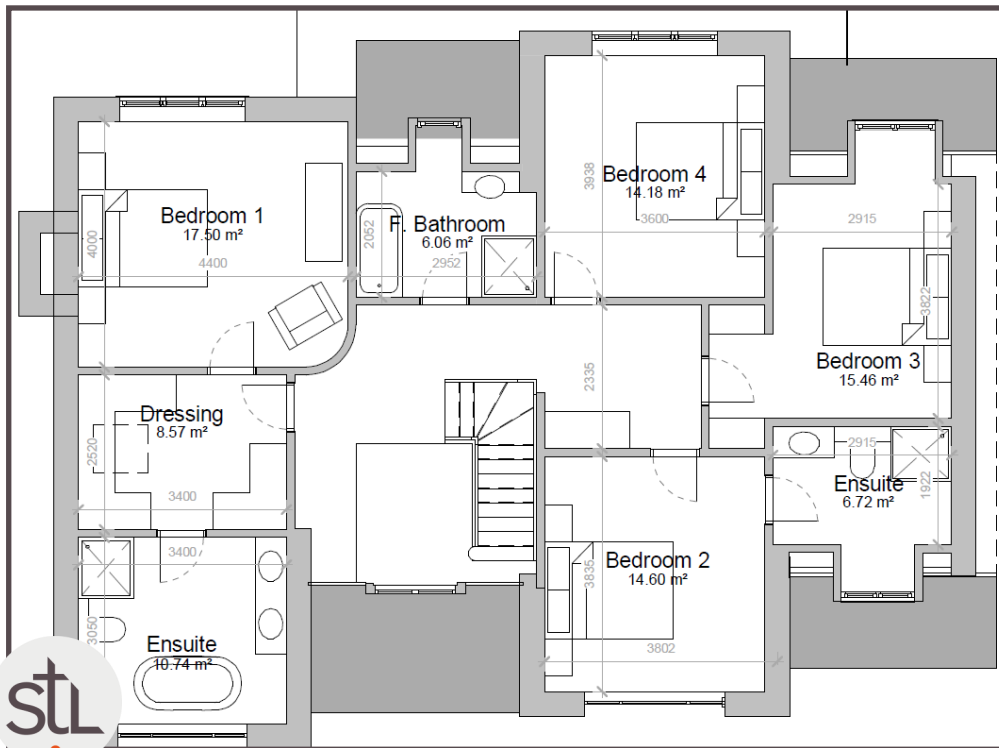


4.0 Layout and Amount

The proposed dwelling is to be located approximately 1.1 metres forward of the original dwelling and set back from the front elevation of Ambleside by 10 metres. There is no established build line along Blagrove Lane and as such the siting of the building has been led by the location of the existing dwelling and its neighbours. The proposed dwelling will be sited 7.7 metres at its nearest and 21 metres at its furthest from Blagrove Lane, leaving an adequate rear



garden for the property and sufficient pedestrian access down both sides of the dwelling. The dwelling itself will have 4 bedrooms and a modern open plan kitchen, dining, living room with a good level of daylight provided throughout. A small basement is also proposed for storage purposes.





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5.0 Scale and Appearance

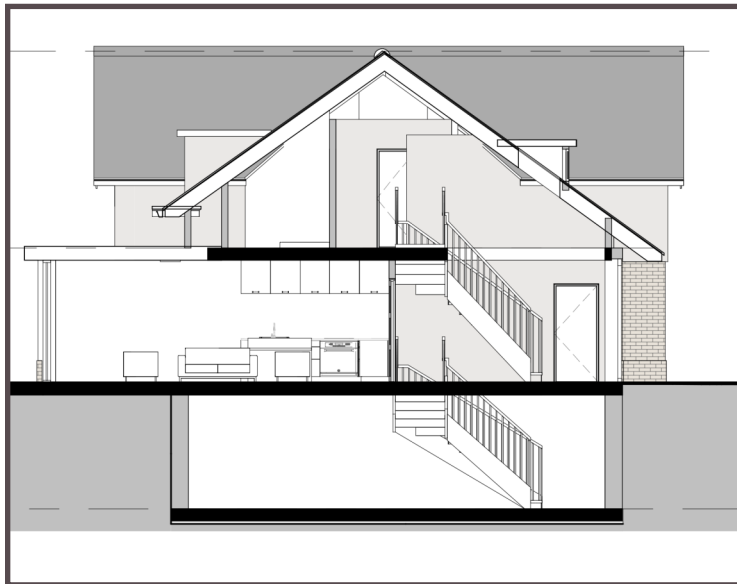


The maximum height, width and depth of the dwelling is proposed to 6.7 metres, 15.0 metres and 11.6 metres respectively.

Although the scale of the dwelling will be larger than the existing, the lowered eaves and material pallets break up the overall bulk and form.

The traditional form is complemented with modern fenestration detailing, significantly enhancing the character of the site and wider street scene.

The proposed material palette includes, facing brickwork, limestone render and grey slate roof tiles.





6.0 Access and Parking



The site has an existing access arrangement which is proposed to be stopped up and re-sited to improve visibility splays in both directions. There is sufficient space within the application site to provide parking and turning spaces to standards, allowing egress from the site in a forward gear. Bicycle storage will be located to the rear of the site with refuse storage being located at the front of the site. Refuse will be collected from roadside as with the existing arrangement on Blagrove Lane.



7.0 Trees & Ecology

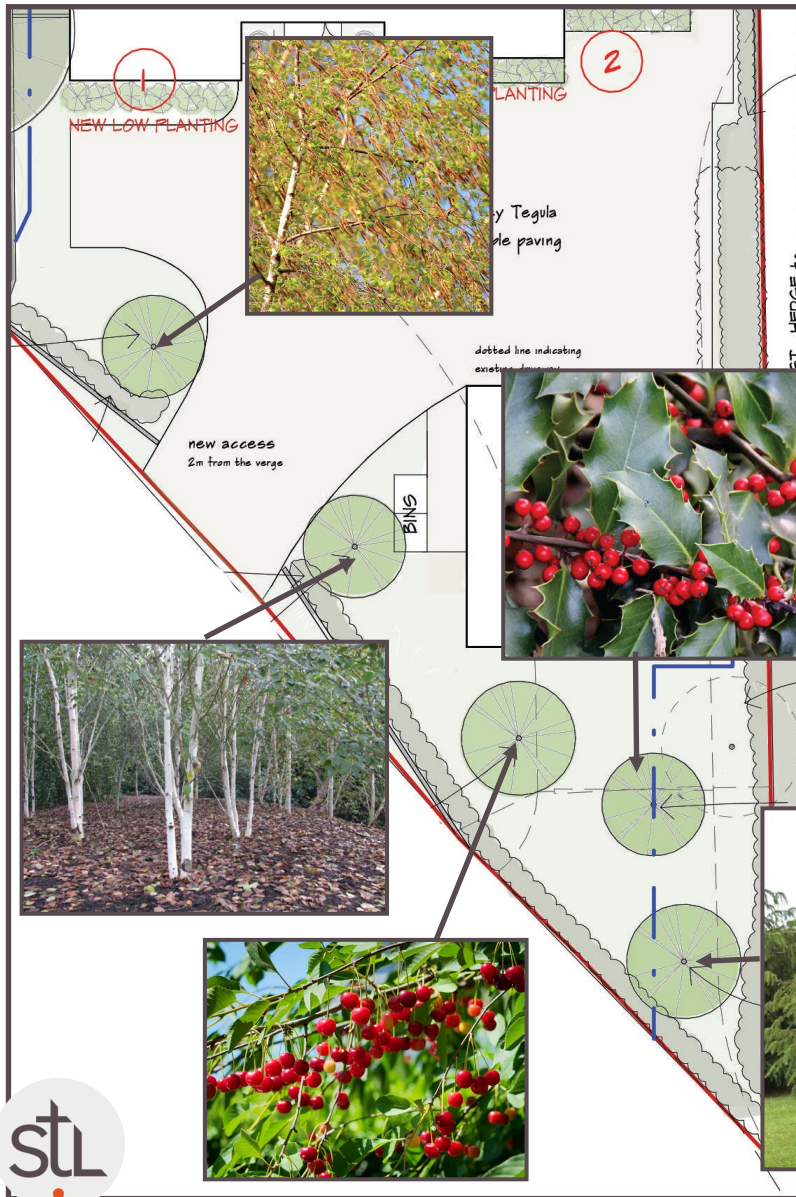
The proposal includes the removal of one *Ilex aquifolium* and the addition of five new trees, to include one *Betula Pendula*, one *Betula jacquemontii*, one *Prunus cerasus*, one *Taxus baccata* and one *Ilex aquifolium*. Further to this 23 metres of new native hedgerow is proposed to be included on the site with a 50/50 mix of *Fagus sylvatica* and *Carpinus betulus*, planted in staggered rows at 400mm centres.



The proposed hardstanding it proposed to include Grey Limestone paving for the rear patio area and Grey Tegula Priora permeable paving for the front driveway.

A preliminary ecological survey was undertaken followed by a bat emergence survey. The preliminary ecological survey recommended the inclusion of a Schwelger 1SP Sparrow terrace, as shown above. The

emergence survey did not identify any bats in the building, there were however bats recorded travelling across the site. As such it is proposed to include a single Schwelger 1FR bat tube as shown. Both boxes are to be



Principle of Development

The existing dwelling has limited architectural merit and has been left in a condition unfit for purpose. The application site is located in the built up limits of Caversham but does not form part of a conservation area nor any landscape designations. The site is surrounded by residential development on three sides with open countryside to the west, beyond Blagrove Lane. As such there should be no objection, in principle to the replacement of a single dwelling with another single dwelling, subject to all other material planning considerations being acceptable.

Impact on Character

Local Plan policy CC7 outlines development must be of a high design quality and should maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the area. The design of the replacement dwelling would not be considered harmful to the street scene and would certainly deliver a more positive contribution to the street scene and application site than what currently exists. Whilst the proposal would alter the character of the plot due to the change in style and the increase in the amount of developed area, the change would not be so significant as to harm the character of the area and the appearance of the area would be maintained, in accordance with the aims of Policy CS7. In terms of the architectural design, the proposal represents a high-quality example of traditional form with contemporary design elements with appropriate massing and detailing. As previously mentioned, the character and appearance of Blagrove Lane has no dominating scale, design or architectural influence. The overall character of the area is varied, with a mix of traditional and modern architecture. Of particular relevance is, New Frogmore, Wroxham and Marsden which have successfully delivered replacement dwellings in recent years. The constraints in character impact terms between these sites are broadly the same. The proposed dwelling would be larger than the previous dwelling by (98) square metres. Although the proposed dwelling will be two metres wider than the existing, it will retain separation from each flanking boundary by over 1.5 metres. The maximum height of the dwelling will reach 6.7 metres, which is 800mm higher than the existing.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The replacement dwelling would provide an exceptional standard of accommodation, with large and regular shaped rooms providing favourable verdant outlooks, natural lighting and ventilation throughout. The internal floorspace exceeds the minimum gross internal floor area required by national guidance and the rear garden also far exceeds the relevant design guide requirements.

Neighbour Amenity

There are no first floor side windows proposed to ensure there is no overlooking between dwellings. First floor windows are proposed in the front and rear elevations only. The first floor element of the dwelling containing bedroom 3 and bedroom 2 ensuite has a hipped roof and eaves which are approximately 2 meters lower than the eaves of the main building. This part of the design has been led by the relationship with Ambleside which although has a much larger footprint, it is single storey.



8.0 Policy Assessment

It is considered that the proposal safeguards privacy and daylight into the Ambleside and does not result in an overbearing relationship. There are no identified concerns with The Coach House which is a two storey dwelling, distanced approximately 7 metres from the shared boundary. As such, the proposal complies with Local Plan policy CC8 and does not result in any undue harm by way of external lighting, vibration, dust and fumes, smell, crime and safety or wind.

8.0 Policy Assessment

Highways and Parking

The site is understood to be located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Councils' adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. As such the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD requires an on-site parking provision of 2.0 space for a 4+ bedroom dwelling. The proposal will provide a two-bay garage with ample space in the front driveway for turning and visitor parking. There is a bike store proposed at the rear of the site to accommodate 2 secure cycle spaces in accordance with the Councils Parking Standards and Design SPD. Refuse storage will be located adjacent to the proposed garage and refuse bins will be presented onto Blagrove Lane on the respective days, as with the existing arrangements to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods.

Local Plan policy TR3 requires accesses to meet the adopted standards. In this case, the existing access it proposed to be re-sited to provide improved visibility in both directions. The proposal will provide a single electric vehicle charging point as shown on the proposed site plan in accordance with Local Plan policy TR5. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal is considered to comply with the relevant Transport policies and standards.

Landscaping and Trees

In accordance with Local Plan policy EN14; individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and vegetation will be protected from damage and removal, except where necessary and enhanced with supplementary and replacement planting. In this case one Holly Tree is proposed to be replaced and the existing Pear tree will be retained at the rear of the site. Further to this, 16 additional metres of hedgerow is proposed as part of the scheme. The existing boundary landscaping is a feature of the site the applicants wish to retain to safeguard and maintain neighbouring amenity relationships and street scene character. In line with Local Plan policy EN14, the proposal also seeks to contribute to carbon reduction through the implementation of solar panels and will cater for ecology on the site.

Biodiversity and Ecology Impacts

The proposal is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Bat Emergence Survey undertaken by Arbtech. The PEA outlines; owing the size of the site and small extent of habitats recorded, it is not considered the site is suitable to support a significant population of protected birds or notable population



of breeding birds. The PEA did not identify any badger sets or suitable habitats for reptiles owing to the enclosed nature of the site and associated urban infrastructure. The PRA recommended a single dusk emergence or dawn re-entry bat survey to determine the presence of bats which did not identify bats in any of the buildings on the site. Local Plan policy EN12 states, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. As such, a single bird box (Schwelger 1SP Sparrow terrace) and single bat box (Schwelger 1FR bat tube).

8.0 Policy Assessment

Heritage Impacts

As a replacement dwelling would only impact to the setting of 3 Blagrove Lane, it is considered the proposal would have *less than substantial harm* to its significance. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the harm on the setting, should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case the redevelopment of the application site will result in an improved appearance that what currently exists. The proposal will deliver net biodiversity gains across the site as well as creating jobs throughout the construction process. The application site is distanced from 3 Blagrove Lane by approximately 115 metres (as the crow flies) and as such the proposal is considered to protect and maintain the significance of 3 Blagrove Lane and accords with Local Plan policy EN1 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

Development Contributions

In accordance with Reading Borough Councils CIL charging schedule, the proposed development does not attract any CIL liabilities as the applicants seek to self build and live in the dwelling full time for the indefinite future. As the proposed dwelling is a replacement, it is not subject to affordable housing contributions, in accordance with Policy H3 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

This Planning Design and Access Statement has demonstrated the replacement dwelling is acceptable in principle. Material planning considerations have been analysed and it has been demonstrated the site can be developed as proposed without adverse effect on the character of the area, amenity of neighbouring dwellings, highway safety, adjacent heritage asset, existing landscape features and ecology. Overall, the proposal is compliant with the relevant local and national policy and guidance and has sought to respond positively to policy and planning context. Should there be any issues which officers' feel can be addressed by minor revisions or pre-commencement conditions, we ask you to contact us ahead of issuing a decision.

