

**DESIGN and ACCESS STATEMENT**  
for  
**EXTENSIONS and ALTERATIONS**  
to create a  
**NEW DWELLING**  
at  
**4, ALFORD CLOSE, TILEHURST, READING, BERKS.**  
for  
**STAFFORD DEVELOPMENTS**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Scope

This statement accompanies a Full Planning application by Stafford Developments who are proposing Alterations and Extensions to the existing end of terrace house to create a New Dwelling.

## 1.2. Need

The proposal responds to Clause 4.4.1. of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) which states:

*“There is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area.”* Also, Clause 4.4.3. which goes on to state:

*“However, Reading is a very tightly defined urban area, and sites for new development are limited. The undeveloped land that does exist is mainly either in the functional floodplain or is important public open space. Provision of new housing therefore involves a heavy reliance on previously developed land, and the supply of such sites constrains the amount of housing that can be delivered in the Borough.”*

It is considered that this site constitutes a windfall opportunity, albeit small, to improve and expand housing in the Reading Area.

## 1.3. Outline Proposals

In essence the proposals are to construct side and rear extensions to the existing property, creating two separate 3-bedroomed dwellings, both with integral garages. The large rear garden will be divided accordingly.

## 1.4. Policies

**1.4.1.** A pre-application submission to Reading Borough Council was made to establish the likelihood of a successful application, and a formal response received on 22 April 2021 - see appendix. The applicants requested advice on two options, 1. for extension and creation of 3 flats and 2. A new 2-bedroom starter home. Owing to space limitations, only the second option was considered feasible. As set out in the response, the relevant planning policies and guidance are:

- **National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)**
- **Reading Borough Local Plan (Nov 2019)**
  - CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
  - CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)
  - CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change)
  - CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage)
  - CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development)
  - CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
  - CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
  - EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)
  - EN15 (Air Quality)
  - EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)
  - H1 (Provision of Housing) H2 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix)
  - H3 (Affordable Housing)
  - H5 (Standards for New Housing)
  - H8 (Residential Conversions)
  - H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
  - H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens)
  - TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)
  - TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging)
- **Supplementary planning documents/guidance**
  - Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (Dec 2019)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (Oct 2011)  
Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)  
Affordable Housing SPD (March 2021)  
Residential Conversions (Nov 2013)  
Tree Strategy (2021)

**1.4.2.** The Appraisal highlighted the following main considerations:

- A. Principle of development
- B. Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area
- C. Living conditions of future residents and neighbouring properties
- D. Amenity of proposed dwelling
- E. Transport Implications
- F. Landscaping
- G. Sustainability
- H. Other considerations

This statement will address the concerns and issues raised in that appraisal.

## **1.5. Drawings**

This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted architect's plans:

- 01 – Site Location Plan as Existing – 1:1250
- 02 – Site Block Plan as Existing – 1:500
- 03 – Existing Plans and Elevations – 1:100
- 04A – Proposed Plans and Elevations – 1:100
- 05 – Site Block Plan as Proposed – 1:500
- 06 – Site Plan Landscaping Proposals – 1:200

## **1.6. Application Content**

The application is submitted with the following information:

- Application Form
- Statutory Planning Application Fee
- This Statement
- Architectural Drawings as above.
- Traffic Statement by Messrs. Sanderson Associates (Consulting Engineers) Ltd.

# **2 THE SITE**

## **2.1. Generally**

**2.1.1.** The site is located fairly centrally in Tilehurst, west of Reading. It is one of 10 properties in a cul-de-sac off a secondary residential road.

No 4 is the end of a terrace of 4 of similar properties, but No 1 has been substantially enlarged in the past with a two-storey side extension (planning ref 930169; 11.02.93).

**2.1.2.** Vehicular access is from Alford Close only, via the secondary Conwen Road.

**2.1.3.** Pedestrian access is similarly gained.

**2.1.4.** The front garden is open plan; the rear garden is enclosed and bounded by timber panel fencing.

**2.1.5.** The site area is approximately 342 m<sup>2</sup>.

## 2.2. Surrounding Development

**2.2.1.** The surrounding area is predominately residential with terraces and semi-detached houses of similar style and scale. Houses are mainly two-storey with open plan frontages and enclosed rear gardens. The overall appearance is urban, the area having been heavily developed from the 1950s onward.

External finishes of the developments are a mixture of facing brick, tile hanging and render to walls; various types of interlocking concrete tiles to roofs.

**2.2.2.** Roads are adopted and conventionally laid out and incorporate cycle routes. Some green verges have mature trees.

**2.2.3.** To the south-east of the site is a large wood which has green connections to other woods and common areas.

## 3 EXISTING BUILDINGS

**3.1** As mentioned previously, the application property forms the end of a terrace of four. It is 2-storeys high and has an internal area of 94m<sup>2</sup> including the integral garage, 81.4m<sup>2</sup> without. Ground floor accommodation comprises: Lounge, TV Room, Kitchen, Inner Hall, and Garage; first floor has three bedrooms, a family bathroom and separate WC.

**3.2** The front garden is open plan, which extends to the side of the house. It has concrete paths and a drive with lawned areas between. A dropped kerb to the pavement edge serves the drive.

The rear garden is mainly laid to lawn and has a concrete path and paving slab terrace.

A brick wall divides the garden from the open-plan side garden, and the rear garden is enclosed with timber panel fencing.

There is a small garden shed.

**3.3.** Construction of the house is as follows: -

**Walls** Mainly light multi orange, sand-faced, fletton brickwork, but light grey panel to TV Room and bedroom over.

**Roofs** Timber framed, pitched roof with gable end, finished with grey-brown, interlocking concrete tile. Felted flat roof to garage projection.

**Windows** white upvc

**Doors** white upvc entrance door to side elevation and painted metal garage door.

**3.4.** Given the modern form of construction and minimal alteration to the existing fabric, it is not considered necessary to carry out a bat survey on the existing property prior to construction. Nevertheless, care will be taken in any construction work to ensure there will be no disturbance of bats or nesting birds.

## 4 PROPOSALS

### 4.1. Original House.

**4.1.1.** The main alteration to the existing house is the construction of a single-storey rear extension. This provides a large kitchen/breakfast room opening off the existing lounge. As a result, the ground floor layout is a significant improvement over the existing; the first floor remains much as it is at present.

**4.1.2.** The existing front door will be moved from the side to the front of the property, in line with adjoining terrace properties. Further minor internal alterations follow from this rearrangement.

**4.1.3.** Construction of the new extension will match the existing, with the light multi-orange brickwork and interlocking concrete tiles on a lean-to roof. The roof will include a pair of rooflights to cast daylight deep into the body of the existing house. UPVC doors and windows giving onto the rear terrace will match the existing.

**4.1.4.** The modest scale of the rear extension ensures that there is no encroachment beyond the 60° angle measured from the centre of the rear window to number 3.

**4.1.5.** The gross internal floor area of the resulting house, excluding the garage, is 102m<sup>2</sup> compared with 84.1m<sup>2</sup> for the original. It should be noted the existing property does not meet current minimum space standards as set out in the DCLG's "**Technical Housing Standards- nationally described space standard**" for two-storey, 3-bedroomed dwellings where the absolute minimum is 84m<sup>2</sup> for 4 bed spaces (persons).

**4.1.6.** Resulting bedroom areas are:

Bedroom 1 - 13.8m<sup>2</sup>; double room with minimum width of 2.8 m  
Bedroom 2 – 11.1m<sup>2</sup>; double room with a minimum width of 2.77 m  
Bedroom 3 – 8m<sup>2</sup>; single room with a width of 2.12 m

**4.1.7.** Built-in Storage areas total 4 m<sup>2</sup>, included within the gross floor area mentioned above. In addition, there is attic space, accessed by a loft ladder.

## **4.2. New House**

**4.2.1.** The proposed new end of terrace house will follow existing patterns that will be set back slightly from the main terrace frontage in response to the curving boundary. This also helps round off the terrace comfortably.

**4.2.2.** The house has an integral garage with parking space and a modern open plan living-kitchen to the rear giving onto a paved terrace and generous rear garden. The first floor has 3 bedrooms with a family bathroom

**4.2.3.** Again, construction will follow the existing, all as described above, in order to ensure an harmonious development. The only variation to the general pattern will be the roof to the rear will be hipped rather than gabled to mitigate the massing of the new house and its potential for overshadowing.

**4.2.4.** The projection of the rear wing of the new house ensures that there is no encroachment beyond the 45° angle measured from the centre of the rear window of Bedroom 1 of the existing property.

**4.2.5.** The gross internal floor area of the new house, excluding the garage, is 90.3m<sup>2</sup>, meeting the space standard for a 4-bed (person), two-storey, 3-bedroomed dwelling where the absolute minimum is 84m<sup>2</sup>.

**4.2.6.** Bedroom areas are:

Bedroom 1 - 12.4m<sup>2</sup>; double room with minimum width of 2.75m  
Bedroom 2 – 11.2m<sup>2</sup>; single room with a minimum width of 2.73 m  
Bedroom 3 – 11.4m<sup>2</sup>; single room with a width of 2.53 m.

**4.2.7.** Built-in Storage areas total 6.3 m<sup>2</sup>, included within the gross floor area mentioned above. In addition, there is attic space, accessed by a loft ladder.

## **4.3. Externally**

**4.3.1** Boundaries to the rear gardens will be in 2m high close-boarded fencing to match the existing.

**4.3.2.** The existing cobble stone margin adjoining the property will be retained.

**4.3.3.** The gardens will be partially paved to create terraces and the main area will be laid to lawn with planted beds to maintain a softness for the house gardens. Planting will be chosen to attract birds, butterflies and pollinating insects.

**4.3.4.** The frontage will remain open, and a new drive formed for the garage, the paving being in concrete blocks to maintain a permeable, free-draining surface. A dropped kerb will be formed at the highway edge.

## 5 ACCESS

5.1. Please refer to separate Transport Statement by Messrs. Sanderson Associates (Consulting Engineers) Ltd.

5.2. Paved surfaces link the parking bays with the entrance doors for safe wheelchair access.

5.3. The proposed new entrance doors will have level thresholds, providing in accordance with the disabled under Doc M of the Building Regulations. It is also proposed that the cloakrooms provided by this development will meet the same regulation.

## 6 PLANNING POLICIES

6.1. **Pre-Application Advice** – as mentioned previously, the pre-application advice highlighted the following areas:

### A. Principle of development

The advice concludes that the principle of a proposed new dwelling is considered acceptable “.....*subject to the matters above being satisfied particularly whether the proposal meets the nationally-described space standards, whether the proposal as shown on the plans fits within the site of 4 Alford Close and whether there is access across the side driveway to 5/6 Alford Close*”

Firstly, clauses 4.1 and 4.2 provide evidence that the proposals meet nationally-described space standards.

Secondly, the landownership has been checked and the proposed new house fits within the site.

Thirdly, access across the side driveway to 5/6 Alford Close will remain as existing without being interrupted by the development.

### B. Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

The proposals have been developed to ensure there is no encroachment onto neighbouring land.

The advice accepts that the design is similar to that of neighbouring properties and, as such will complement the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area. Concern was expressed over the lack of soft landscape to the frontage, however, a number of properties in the vicinity have frontages completely paved to accommodate vehicles. Although this would result in the loss of a small, sterile quadrant of grass, the additional hardstanding would relieve the pressure on local roadside parking. As compensation for this relatively minor loss, the rear gardens, which are relatively generous compared with similar, adjoining properties, will be properly landscaped as part of the development. As a consequence, the amount of soft landscape for each unit will still be greater than many similar-sized properties in the vicinity.

### C. Living conditions of future residents and neighbouring properties

The advice concluded that the proposed new dwelling would not be harmful to the living environment of 5/6 Alford Close.

Concerns over encroachment and access over land not owned by the applicant have been addressed in the currently submitted design.

The advice stresses the need to comply with nationally-described space standards and, as has been described above, this has been addressed in the submitted design.

### D. Amenity of proposed dwelling

The advice acknowledges the resulting rear gardens for both properties will in fact compare favourably with those in the area and is, therefore, in accordance with policy H 10.

#### **E. Transport Implications**

Please refer to the Transport Statement prepared by Messrs. Sanderson Associates (Consulting Engineers) Ltd., which addresses, inter alia, the concerns mentioned in the advice, i.e the proximity of the dropped curb to the junction radii and implications for the access to 5/6 Alford Close.

#### **F. Landscaping**

The applicants have prepared a detailed landscaping scheme in line with the Council's Tree Strategy 2021, and this is submitted with the application

#### **G. Sustainability**

The Applicants are committed to providing properties with high levels of sustainability commensurate with the type and scale of development. The following is a (not exhaustive) list of measures to be taken to ensure a sustainable development:

- Installation of a gas-fired Combi boiler which will be future proofed to be capable of being converted to green hydrogen fuel once that comes on stream.
- Installation of photo-voltaic panels on the south-west facing (garden side) roofs.
- Triple-glazed windows with low-E glass.
- Ready-mixed concrete with up to 15% recycled crushed aggregate.
- Construction with Thermalite blockwork which have high insulating qualities, are lighter for transporting and use 80% recycled content (PFA).
- The internal blockwork will be treated with Gyproc Soundcoat or similar parging coat to seal the finish and prevent leakage of heat and sound through the fabric.
- Insulation within wall cavities and in roof voids will be Knauf Earthwool, manufactured from up to 80% recycled glass.
- Installation of a heat recovery system which transfers the heat from warm, exhausted air (extracts etc.) to the incoming fresh air for ventilation.
- All light fittings will be low-energy LED.
- All sanitary fittings will be selected for their low water usage, e.g. dual flush toilets and Eco-heads to showers.
- All white goods will have A-ratings for energy usage.
- Paints will be low-VOC.
- All timber will be FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) certified to ensure it is supplied from sustainable forests.
- All unpainted timber will be recycled for pellet fuel.
- Water butts to both properties to harvest rainwater for the garden.
- Bases for drives and patios will be formed using waste masonry hardcore, where possible, that material will be from the site itself (through demolitions and alterations).
- Skipped waste will be taken to Waste Transfer sites for sorting, batching and recycling.

In principle, the new property would be designed not to exceed the target fabric energy efficiency rate as defined in the 2022 Building Regulations, Part L1.

Being located close to public transport connections, the town centre and public open spaces, the site itself is highly sustainable. There is also a good cycle network.

The main habitable rooms of both properties face south-west taking advantage of the sun path. Not only will this assist with energy efficiency, but also the good quality daylighting will boost health and wellbeing.

As mentioned previously, garden planting has been designed to attract birds, butterflies and pollinating insects. In addition, incorporated in the gable end of the new property will be: 2No. bee bricks for solitary bees; a nest brick for swifts; two universal bird nest boxes; one bat box. With the main work being new build, it is believed there is no requirement for a bat survey. Still on matters of ecology, the new rear fences will

have gaps in their bases for hedgehogs to migrate between gardens, although it is recognised this requires adjoining neighbours to be similarly minded.

#### **H. Other considerations**

**CIL** - The relevant forms will be submitted with the application.

**Affordable Housing** – being a development of fewer than 10 units, a financial contribution will be made for off-site affordable housing. The applicants confirm that the financial contribution will be in accordance with the provisions of Clause 5.10 of the Affordable Housing SPD, adopted March 2021.

### **9 SUMMARY**

**9.1.** The principle of this development has been established through the pre-application process.

**9.2.** All concerns raised in the Case Officer's Pre-Planning Application Enquiry Response have been addressed either in the design or in the foregoing text.

**9.3.** The new property and improvements to the existing house combine to provide two very good dwellings which meet DCLG's technical housing standards, enhancing the housing stock in Reading Borough.

**9.4.** Given the attention to amenity and detail, and the fact that the principle has already been established, it is contended that the proposal is worthy of consent.

### **10 APPENDIX – Pre-Planning Application Enquiry Response**