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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

in respect of erecting a new house at

Land adjoining 1 Woodcote Way, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire RG4 7HE

1. ENVIRONS

The 0.1Ha site, lying on the west side of Woodcote Way, Caversham, is situated amongst residential properties. Its immediate neighbour along Woodcote Way is a two-storey house situated within its own garden; beyond a public footpath along the western site boundary are the back gardens of similar 2-storey houses in Upper Woodcote Road, which converges upon Woodcote Way to its east. The neighbouring house at No.3 Woodcote Way forms the end of a line of semi-detached houses which matches a similar row on the other side of that road, all with hipped roofs and front bays with gabled roofs projecting toward the road. No.1 Woodcote Way and the houses in Upper Woodcote Road are of various shapes and styles but, along with the semi-detached houses in Woodcote Way, are generally of traditional brick or rendered construction surmounted by timber-framed pitched tile roofs. Nearly opposite the site are the similarly constructed bungalows of Westdene Crescent.

The site is not only immediately surrounded by residential properties, but it lies well within this distinctly residential part of Caversham.

2. THE SITE

The site is currently a large, roughly triangular shaped, domestic garden. An existing house with brick and rendered walls surmounted by a tiled pitched roof occupies the northern part of the site, separated by about 4 metres from a large rear garage to the west. The house is in good habitable condition.

The area around the house is used as a generous domestic garden, with various flowers, shrubs, and paved areas, but beyond the ground cover is maintained as a grassed lawn. There are small greenhouses and an outhouse within the curtilage.

The site has the benefit of a 43 metre long road frontage, generally with a tall timber fence around the southern part of the site forming its private amenity space up to the back of Woodcote Way pavement on its eastern boundary. Only that part of the frontage passing the existing house has a lower brick boundary wall which links to similar boundary treatments in the neighbouring properties of Woodcote Way opposite the site and to the north. There are two vehicular accesses served by existing crossovers, one to the north of the house and the other immediately to its south, each leading to short driveways which provide off-street parking for at least three vehicles. A large rear garage provides covered parking for a fourth vehicle.

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3. PROPOSALS

3.1 PREVIOUS APPLICATION

In September 2006 application was made for a similar house on this site, council's ref: 06/01225/FUL. This was refused consent in January 2007 as the proposal was considered:-

- 1. To result in overlooking private amenity spaces of adjoining properties (presumed to be in Upper Woodcote Road);
- 2. To produce cramped development out of character with the surrounding area;
- 3. To result in unacceptable loss of amenity space to the existing dwelling on site;
- 4. (In view of the other reasons) To fail to make suitable contributions required at the time.

3.2 CURRENT APPLICATION

As before, it is proposed to demolish the rear garage in order to provide additional amenity space to serve the existing house, and to construct a second house to the south of the existing one, but at an angle subtended by the public footpath along its western boundary between the site and the properties in Upper Woodcote Road.

The previous Reason **No.1** for refusal has been addressed by orientating the new house so that the first floor window to bedroom 1, being the only window serving a habitable room that could have conceivably overlooked the rear gardens in Upper Woodcote Road, will now face almost due south toward the junction of that road with Woodcote Way.

Regarding Reason **No.2**, as before, the new house will have a footprint area of about 71.5m² and contain three bedrooms, and will be served by the remaining garden tapering off to its south, providing 167m² of private amenity space, mostly in a large tranche exceeding 132m². This should be adequate for a 3B5P dwellinghouse, is comparable with surrounding properties, and is therefore in keeping with the surrounding area.

Regarding Reason **No.3**, the existing house would retain over 140m² of private amenity space to its rear (western) and southern sides shielded by new and existing tall fencing and an existing wall projecting from its south-eastern corner. The angle of the new house separates it from the existing house by between 4.0 – 6.0m, while its rear garden, as before, would provide a further tranche of private amenity space between at least 6.0 and 11.0m wide. Given the proposed demolition of the existing garage to the rear of the existing house, this compares favourably with the available amenity space at the neighbouring No.136 Upper Woodcote Road, with No.4 Woodcote Way opposite the site, as well as with many of the nearby properties in Westdene Close. It would therefore not be out of character with other properties in the locality, as illustrated on the submitted block plan.

Reason No.4 is addressed in the Supplementary Statements submitted with the current application.

4. ACCESS STATEMENT

The proposals include for opening up part of the front fencing to form an 'in-and-out' driveway to reduce the need to reverse onto Woodcote Way, which is relatively busy. The existing driveway would continue to serve the existing house. All four of the parking spaces would be sufficiently uncluttered to allow them to be used by wheelchair users, although they would not be specifically designated as such. In full compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations, the entrance to the new house would be by means of a flush threshold, so that wheelchair users would be able to enter the house from the parking spaces unaided. Also in accordance with those regulations, sanitary provision is to be accessibly located at ground floor level, but with the added provision of a shower facility. The staircase would be constructed to enable the introduction of a future stairlift, if found desirable.

5. DESIGN

The proposals have been designed after pre-application consultations with the local planning authority which identified alignment, quality of private amenity space, and overlooking neighbouring properties as the principal issues to be addressed on this site. The written response dated 10 May 2005 to an initial approach appeared to have been prepared without the knowledge that a nom.1800mm high timber boundary fencing already surrounds the southern part of the site, including forming the boundary between the private amenity space and the back of Woodcote Way pavement, to provide privacy to the large side garden serving the existing house. It is proposed to retain most of its length to continue its use in that capacity.

Following further consultations with the local planning authority, the principal aims of the design were determined as follows:

5.1 To form a fully accessible house to enhance the existing residential area by using traditional forms and materials, including those presently used in the existing house such as red brickwork and clay tile hanging to walls, surmounted by pitched plain clay tile roofs;

5.2 To exploit the southerly aspect of the new house, with major rooms having windows facing in that direction to enjoy the benefits of passive solar heat gain;

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5.3 To provide a second dwelling, along with the remaining house, each served by generous garden areas consistent with the local pattern of development;

5.4 To locate windows in such positions as to avoid overlooking neighbouring residential properties, but where they can provide full enjoyment of views of the garden;

5.5 To limit the height of the new house, in the context of its position close to the existing house, by forming 'rooms-in-the-roof ' with traditional dormers so as not to overshadow or dominate the existing house;

5.6 To provide off-street parking and an 'in-and-out- driveway in the interests of highway safety and to reduce potentially congesting the relatively busy Woodcote Way;

5.7 To maintain the privacy of neighbouring properties, the existing house and the new house without detriment to the street scene by retaining the existing tall fencing along the neighbouring public footpath and at the back of the pavement in Woodcote Way, and by locating the new house sufficiently distant from its neighbours.

October 2006