



Planning Design & Access Statement

Replacement dwelling

Norbrook House (formerly Hilgay),
Caversham Heights, Reading, RG4 7EB



Design Team

Prepared by:

Gregor Hosie &
Kayleigh Mansfield of:



In consultation with:

John Wenman of:



On behalf of:

Mr. & Mrs. A. Norton



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Introduction

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This planning design and access statement has been prepared by STL Architecture & Planning, to support a detailed planning application submitted on behalf of our clients; Mr. and Mrs. Norton for a replacement dwelling at Norbrook House (formerly Hilgay).

This statement has been prepared in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted November 2019 and will cover the history and 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 material considerations, including impact on: character, neighbour amenity and highways safety are acceptable and the wider objectives of the relevant local and national planning policy are therefore met. In addition to this statement, the application is accompanied by the relevant planning application forms ownership certificates and drawings. The relevant application fee has also been submitted via the online planning portal.



Figure 1: Existing Block Plan



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Introduction

1.2 Planning Policy

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2019;

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards

RBC Local Development Framework

Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

- CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaption to Climate Change
- CC5: Waste minimisation and storage
- CC6: Accessibility and the intensity of development
- CC7: Design and public realm
- CC8: Safeguarding amenity
- EN14: Trees, hedges and woodlands
- EN18: Flooding and sustainable drainage systems
- H1: Provision of housing
- H3: Affordable housing
- H5: Standards for new housing

- H7: Protecting the existing housing stock
- H10: Private and communal outdoor space
- TR3: Access, traffic and highway-related matters
- TR5: Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable housing (2013)

Revised parking standards and design (2011)

Planning obligations under section 106 (2015)

Sustainable design and construction (2011)

1.3 Planning History

There is no relevant planning history for the application site.



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1.4 Existing Site

The site to which this application relates is a residential site, known as Norbrook House situated within the built up limits of Caversham Heights, north of Upper Warren Avenue. The site is bound to the south by Upper Warren Avenue, to the east by Belstone and to the west by Cramond, with further residential development to the south and north. Both Belstone and Cramond are residential dwellings and an application for a replacement contemporary dwelling at High Ridge to the south east of the site was approved in February 2021 under reference 201331. Norbrook House is a five bedroom 2.5 storey dwelling made up of yellow facing brickwork and yellow clay roof tiles which in itself is contrary to immediate and wider character of the area. The site is mostly level and benefits from a well tended to garden, laid to lawn with a variety of trees, hedgerows and a significant number of outbuildings being present on the site, particularly to the front and flank boundaries. The site is approximately 1,521 metres squared in size and within walking distance to public transport and outdoor recreational opportunities. The application site does not form part of a Conservation Area nor does it unduly impact the setting of Four Corners, a Grade II Listed Building. The site is located in Flood Zone 1.

Introduction

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1.5 Wider Context

Dwellings along Upper Warren Avenue offer a wide range of architectural styles - Red brick and white render elevations with red clay roof tiles are prevalent in the street scene. Dwellings are mostly two storeys in height and traditional in form, typically addressing the street scene.

The existing landscaping features of Upper Warren Avenue afford high levels of privacy between dwellings and also soften the impact of the built form on the street scene.

A number of properties benefit from access security gates set back into the plot. All dwellings have on site parking with large areas of hardstanding. Garden sizes vary from one plot to another but all benefit from a good level of private amenity space. The street scene is lined with trees and hedgerows throughout, contributing to the verdant character of the Upper Warren Avenue.

Context

2.1 Contextual Photos

2.2 Site Photos



Figure 3: Warren Cottage

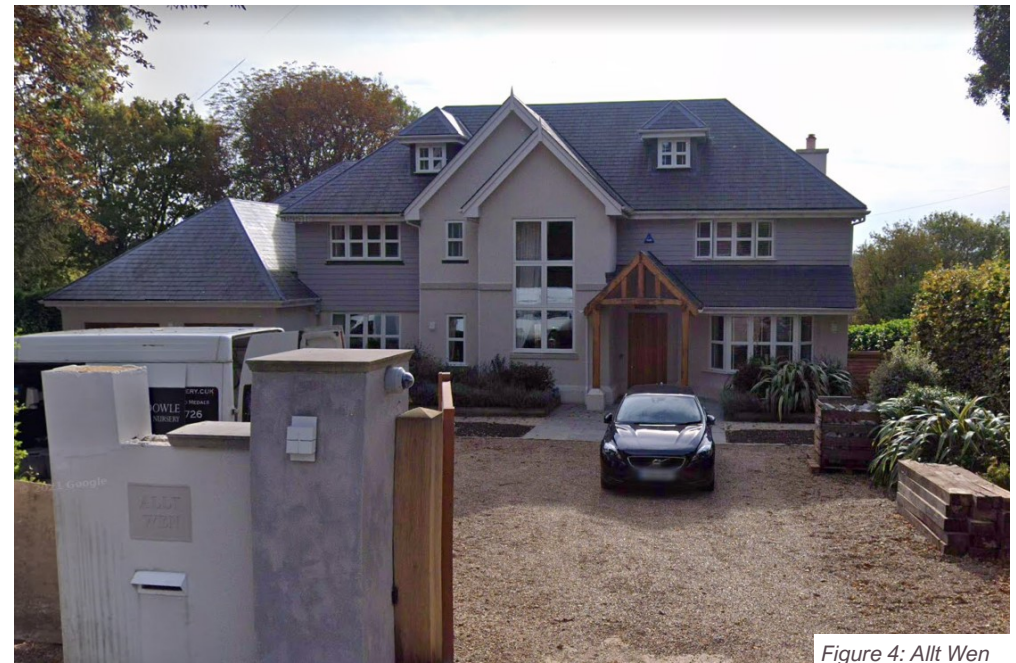


Figure 4: Allt Wen

Contextual Photos



Figure 5: Avenue House



Figure 6: South Hill



Figure 7: Existing front elevation



Figure 8: XXXX

Site Photos



Figure 9: Existing rear elevation



Figure 10: Existing outbuildings

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Proposal:

3.1 Scale and Appearance

3.2 Amount and Layout

3.3 Access and Landscaping

Proposal

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3.1 Scale and Appearance

The proposed replacement dwelling will be split over ground floor, first floor with second floor accommodation within the roof space. The dwelling will be approximately 8.8 metres in height to the main ridgeline with additional height afforded for the chimneys. The proposed increase in height is more commensurate with the prevailing scale of development along Upper Warren Avenue. The maximum ground floor width is proposed at approximately 28.8 metres which is a reduction of approximately 4.0 metres when compared to the existing building width of 32.3 metres. This reduction provides a much improved relationship from shared boundaries ensuring the dwelling creates the separation between dwellings experienced along the street scene of Upper Warren Avenue. The dwelling is also proposed to benefit from an outdoor pool.

The combination of materials, differing roof heights and form, with minor elevation offsets break up the overall mass and bulk of the dwelling resulting in an exceptional example of traditional architecture with contemporary styling. The proposed dwelling will enhance and compliment the character and appearance of the area and markedly improve the existing character and appearance of the site.

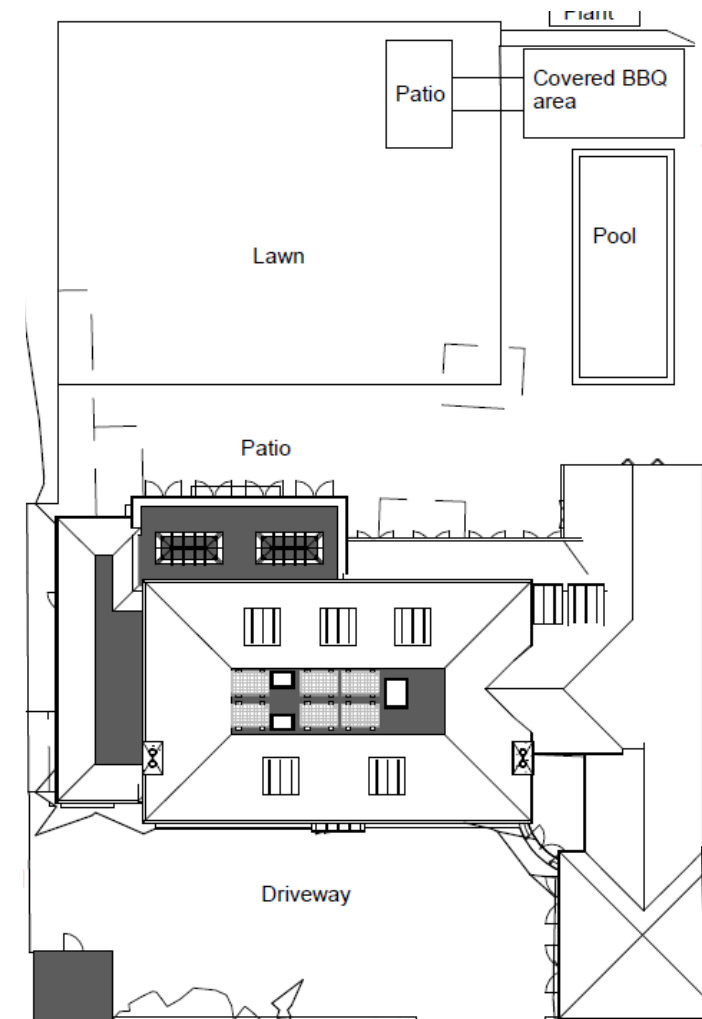


Figure 11: Proposed block plan



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Proposal

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Figure 12: 3d model of proposed front elevation



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Figure 13: 3d model pf proposed front elevation



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Figure 14: 3d model pf proposed rear elevation



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Figure 15: 3d model pf proposed rear elevation

Proposal

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3.2 Amount and Layout

The site is occupied by a single dwelling which is to be replaced by another single dwelling. As such, there would be no change in the number of dwellings, location, or orientation thereof. The proposed dwelling includes an increase in floorspace resulting in an 457m² with a volume of 1669 m³. As such, there will not be a loss of residential accommodation on the site.

The proposed dwelling will be located approximately 3.2 metres at its closest point from Cramond and approximately 8.1 metres at its closest point to Belstone . The proposed garage will be sited adjacent to the shared boundary with Belstone and Upper Warren Avenue but will be largely screened by existing trees and hedgerow. The dwelling itself will be distanced approximately 13 metres from Upper Warren Avenue, providing an area of hardstanding for parking and turning within the site .

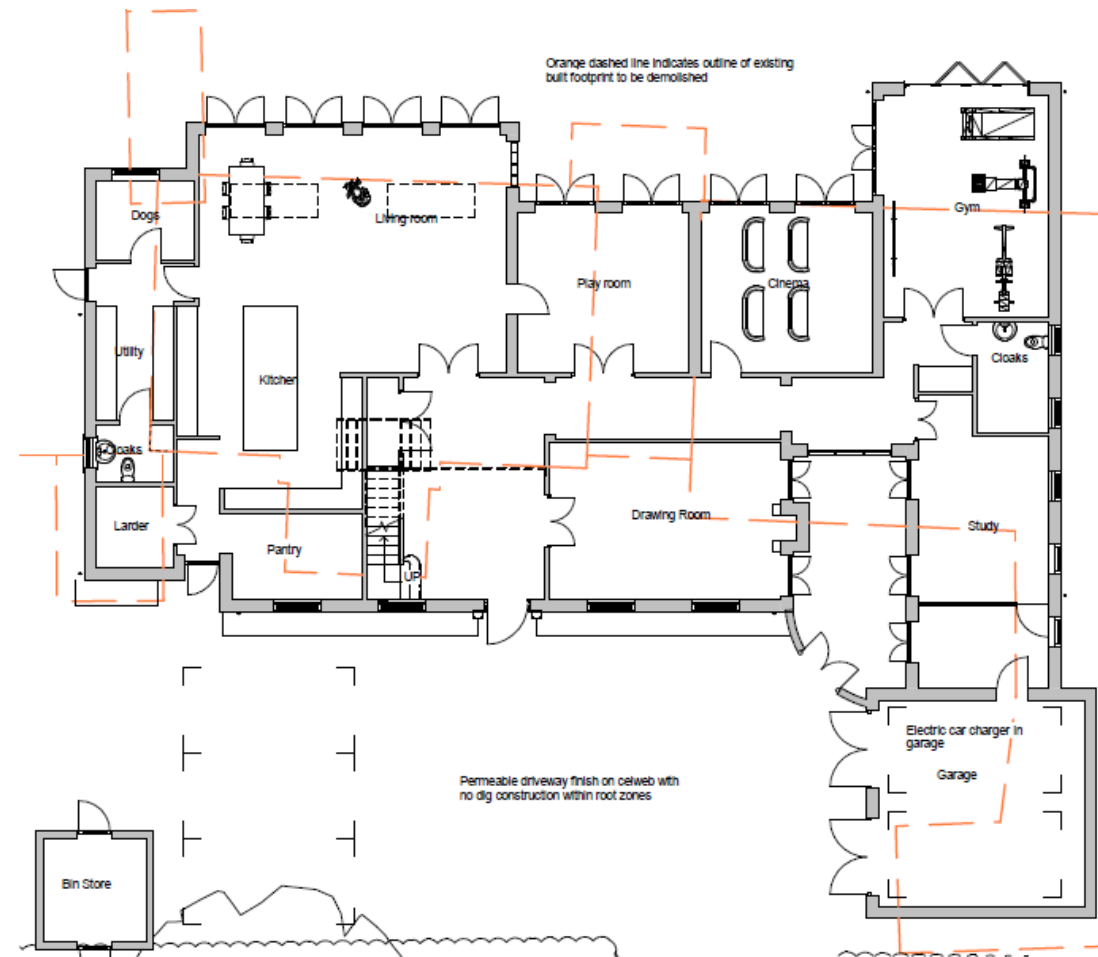


Figure 16: Proposed ground floor plan



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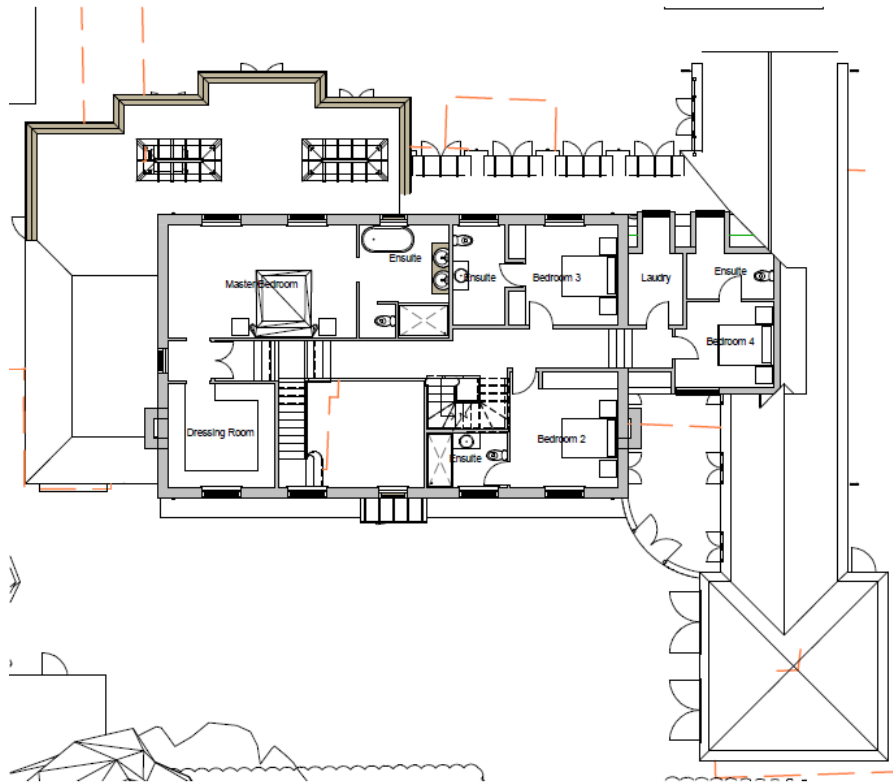


Figure 17: Proposed first floor plan

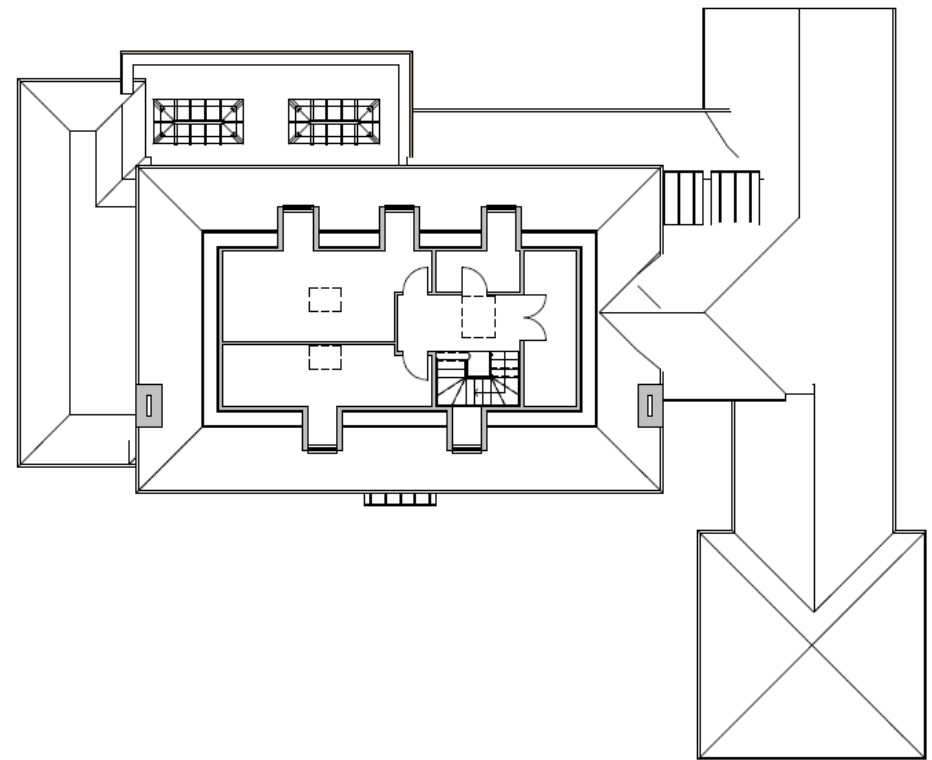


Figure 18: Proposed second floor plan

Proposal

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3.3 Access and Landscaping

There is an existing access which benefits from good visibility in both directions along Upper Warren Avenue. The application site will benefit from an area of hardstanding to facilitate visitor parking and turning on site and the double garage is proposed to be 6 metres by 6 metres internally. The bin and cycle store is proposed to be located in the front garden and bins will be presented on Upper Warren Avenue on the respective bin collection days as with the existing arrangement.

As previously mentioned the new dwelling sits within the existing built form and existing footprint. There are therefore no excavations into root protection areas proposed. Appropriate replacement planting to be provided to ensure there is a good level of landscaping throughout the site resulting in biodiversity benefits as well as aesthetic enjoyment.



Figure 19: Existing access arrangement



Figure 20: Existing garden landscaping



Figure 21: Existing garden landscaping

Existing Landscaping



Figure 21: Existing garden landscaping



Figure 24: Existing garden landscaping

Policy Justification

4.1 Development Principle

4.2 Impact on Character

4.3 Residential Amenity

4.4 Highways and Parking

4.5 Heritage Impacts

4.6 Landscaping and Trees

4.7 Biodiversity

4.8 Adaption to Climate Change



Policy Justification

4.1 Development Principle

The existing dwelling has limited architectural merit and does not form part of a conservation area or any other landscape designation. The site is surrounded by residential development at all sides and as such, there should be no objection to the replacement of a single dwelling with another single dwelling - Subject to all other material planning considerations being acceptable.

4.2 Impact in Character

The overall character of the area is varied, with a mix of traditional and modern architecture. Although larger than the previous dwelling, the proposal moves the building away from Cramond, centralising it on the plot. There will therefore be a separation distance of approximately 3.2 metres between the replacement dwelling and Cramond and approximately 8.1 metres from Belmond. This will contribute to the sense of spaciousness between plots when viewed from the street scene and will ensure an improved separation distance between the proposed dwelling and neighbours.

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. Although views into the site will remain limited, the contemporary 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 and application site than what currently exists. Whilst the proposal would alter the character of the plot due to the change in style and increase in floor space, the change would not be so significant as to harm the character and appearance of the area would be maintained, in accordance with the aims of Policy CC7. In terms of the architectural design, the proposal represents a high-quality example of Georgian design with appropriate, form, massing and detailing. As previously mentioned, the character and appearance of Upper Warren Avenue has no dominating scale, design or architectural influence. High Ridge was recently awarded planning permission for a contemporary design, similar to the aspirations of this proposal. The constraints in character impact terms between these two sites are broadly the same and as such it would not be appropriate for officers to resist a traditional design approach at Norbrook.



Policy Justification

The site benefits from a number of small trees which contribute to the verdant character of the Upper Warren Avenue. The existing trees and hedgerows predominantly line the frontage and flank boundaries, softening the impact of the existing built form on the street scene and adjacent neighbours. Although there are no trees protected through Tree Preservation Order on site, much of the landscape features across the site are proposed to be retained. A mature Lime Tree exists within the Highway verge and as such no excavations are proposed for the driveway to avoid the root protection area. Three overbearing evergreen trees located in the rear garden are proposed to be removed which will be replaced with semi—mature native trees. The proposal complies with the nature and pattern of development by maintaining the established frontage build line and separation distances between dwellings afforded along Upper Warren Avenue.

The overall character of the area is wide ranging with varying material pallets and architectural styles. Dwellings in the vicinity are typically detached benefiting from large plots and rear gardens. The existing dwelling is therefore somewhat at odds with the prevailing character in terms of plot size and scale and appearance. The proposed dwelling will be sited to address the street scene and the proposed scale and height will be more consistent with neighbouring dwellings. The replacement dwelling is proposed to be traditional in appearance and form. The proposed layout broadly accords with the existing in terms of siting, albeit larger in size. The material proposed for the dwelling comprise of rendered walls and Welsh slate roof tiles. The garage building elevations will also be rendered to match the dwelling.

4.3 Residential Amenity

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 useable rear garden space also far exceeds the relevant requirements.

The only first floor western side facing window is distanced approximately 5.5 metre from the common boundary, and is proposed to serve the first floor hallway. Whilst this window overlooks the front driveway of Cramond it doesn't result in an unneighbourly arrangement.



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Policy Justification

This is also an improvement on the existing situation where there are three side facing habitable windows. There are no other windows proposed which could be deemed as resulting in a loss privacy of neighbours. As described, the site benefits from a good level of privacy owing to existing landscaping features along the boundaries. The extent and scale of this landscaping, coupled with proposed distances between neighbours, provides no concerns with respect to loss of light or overbearing effects. The applicant seeks to retain the existing boundary landscaping in perpetuity and therefore accepts any condition relating to such safeguarding. The proposal further complies with Local Plan policy CC8 by not resulting in any undue harm by way of, outlook, noise and disturbance, artificial lighting, vibration, dust and fumes, smell, crime and safety or wind.

4.4 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 also space on site to accommodate secure cycle spaces in accordance with the Councils Parking Standards and Design SPD.

Bin storage will be located in a separate low level structure, which will comply with Manual for Streets and British Standards 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings. All refuse bins will be presented onto Upper Warren Avenue 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 and proposed parking comply with this requirement. The proposal will provide a single electric vehicle charging point as shown on drawings Ground Floor Plan & Garage Plans 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.



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Policy Justification

4.5 Heritage Impacts

As a replacement dwelling would only impact to the setting of Four Corners, 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 marked improvement on the character and appearance of this street scene. The proposal will deliver net biodiversity gains across the site as well as creating jobs throughout the construction process.

The impact of a larger structure on adjacent site, High Ridge was previously assessed by officers in application 201331. Officers concluded, the distance between buildings and existing vegetation on this boundary will ensure the proposed dwelling will not have prominence in the setting of Four Corners. The increase in scale and floorspace was therefore considered to be acceptable in the setting of the Grade II Listed Building and in accordance with the relevant local plan policy. The assessment of this relationship is not considered to be materially different to the proposal at Norbrook House and as such is considered to protect the significance of Four Corners and accord with Local Plan policy EN1 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

4.6 Landscaping and Trees

In accordance with Local Plan policy EN14; individual trees, groups of trees, hedges will be protected from damage and removal, except where necessary and enhanced with supplementary and replacement planting. As addressed earlier, the boundary landscaping is a feature of the site the applicant wishes to largely retain to safeguard and maintain neighbouring amenity relationships and street scene character. However the three evergreen trees on the eastern rear boundary are overbearing and block available light into the property. They are of little to no landscape or ecological value, however replacement native planting will be delivered. As per 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. New planting is proposed for the site, however, should a more comprehensive landscaping plan be required - this can be secured by pre-commencement condition.

Policy Justification

4.7 Biodiversity

As part of this planning submission, John Wenman Consultants have undertaken both the pre-liminary bat survey and subsequent emergence surveys. The proposed demolition would result in the permanent loss of a common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*) day roost, and in the absence of mitigation, the demolition work could result in any bats present being disturbed and potentially injured or killed. A European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) will be required to allow the work to proceed lawfully, and the site would qualify for registration under the Bat Mitigation Class licence WML-CL21. All licensable works to the property i.e. removal of hanging tiles, will be undertaken outside of the winter hibernation season (mid-November to February) to minimise the risk of disturbing torpid bats. Before the demolition work begins, one Schwegler 2F-DFP box (or equivalent woodcrete box) will be fixed to a suitable mature tree, building or purpose-built pole on site and will be in place for a minimum of five years (boxes can only be removed after the five years if no evidence of use has been found at this stage). The tree-mounted Schwegler 2F-DFP (or equivalent woodcrete box) will provide long-term replacement opportunities for day roosting common pipistrelle bats (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

4.6 Adaptation to Climate Change

In accordance with Local Plan policies CC2 and CC3, the proposal seeks to introduce a number of measures across the site to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the dwelling, to include, six solar panels and an air source heat pump. These measure will be supplemented with a fabric first approach through high levels of insulation and air tightness to save energy and reduce carbon generation across the site. Other measures include, an electric vehicle charging points, use of sustainable building materials, and maximisation of solar gains through appropriate glazing. The proposal will utilise the existing drainage infrastructure which includes a septic tank for foul sewage and surface water will be discharged into the proposed soakaways. Further details of this sustainable design can be provided by way of pre-commencement condition.

Conclusion



This Planning Design & Access Statement has demonstrated the proposed development is acceptable in principle. Material planning considerations have been analysed and it is concluded the site can be developed as proposed without adverse impacts to the character of the area, amenity of neighbouring land uses, highway safety 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. We would be happy to accompany any officers who feel our attendance may be useful on site. 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 determination.

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Appended Plans & Reports

- Block and Location Plan
- Existing Floorplans
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