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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.01 Scope

This statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application for the part demolition of an existing permanent double garage and erection of a two storey side extension. The existing garage is largely unaffected with only minor changes to the left side and rear. The process of the scheme is explained and how the project team and client have developed the proposal, including its suitability within the context of its site and positive sustainable credentials.

1.02 Brief

The project seeks to construct a high quality two storey extension with a room in the roof, reflecting the existing style and typology noted along the street scene, as well as using local cues of previously extended buildings to ensure a harmoniously integrated scheme. The existing garage is largely unchanged, thus ensuring the proposal is not visually too different from what exists currently.

The high quality design will have minimal impact upon neighbouring properties and delivers a 'future proofed' family home with outstanding environmental credentials. The existing large plot is currently more than twice the width of neighbouring properties and therefore provides a great opportunity to introduce a side extension without impacting the local street rhythm or reducing the clients amenity space.

2.0 CONTEXT

Located towards the lower end of the private Road, Balmore Drive, the site comprises of 473.4sqm of gently sloping ground towards B481 Peppard Road. Balmore Drive consists of private dwellings only, with a covenant enforcing this. The architectural style largely reflects the 1930's vernacular, the decade in which the lower half of the road was constructed. However a large number of architectural interventions have taken place over the years following and most properties are now of 3 stories with a varied layout and building form. Many have large side and rear extensions, large box dormer additions to the side and rear roof pitches and changes from hipped to gabled roofs. These are all visible within Balmore Drive itself.

The land to the front of the property is consistent in its sloping topography and is utilised to ensure the proposed extension is subservient to the existing property by lowering the new ridge. The result is a sensitively extended property that ties in the approaches by many householders over the years and directly responds to the properties directly opposite and alongside no.87.

Importantly, the site does not fall within the flood plain, areas of Outstanding Beauty, Conservation areas, nor is it listed.

Caversham itself is an attractive village suitably located for London commuters with ample public transport including a 2 minute walk to a frequent bus stop and 20 minutes to Reading train station. The village also consists of a buzzing high street which includes a post office, butcher, gym, pubs and restaurants to name a few of its amenities. Within Caversham there is a wide variety of dwelling types, architectural style and design from many different periods.

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The site follows the same format as the other existing properties whereby the front garden is largely used as car parking and has a notable sense of openness, with the rear garden much more private with 2m close boarded fencing bounding the perimeter and to the northern edge large mature trees providing privacy to the well tended garden. It is also located to the end of a private roadway which further reduces the plots impact on neighbours and the passing public.

3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT & POLICY

The following highlights the key planning policy relating to this householder planning application. Including the Local Plan and the design guide to house extensions SPD (2020) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.01 Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019)

CC2 Sustainable design & construction – This policy largely refers to the commercial development undertaken within RBC and unfortunately with the collapse of the Code for Sustainable Homes this policy becomes more subjective with no firm measure other than the latest relevant approved documents. However as an Architectural practice we have extensive experience with high quality extensions and new homes during this time, meeting the highest levels of sustainability and achieving carbon positive results and formerly meeting CfSH level 6, the highest achievable. This wealth of experience will ensure a building that greatly surpasses the required building regulations, and will have a highly positive impact on the existing building with the existing and proposed viewed as one holistic design scheme.

CC3 – Adaption to climate change - This has carefully been considered throughout the design stage to ensure the orientation, glazed elements and structure create the most efficient opportunity to provide a high quality family home. The existing orientation has been utilised for the extension to ensure both the old and new maximise natural solar gain, further retained and enhanced by the use of material with high thermal mass properties to obtain and retain the sun's warmth throughout the year, releasing it slowly. Directly linked to this is the passive ventilation strategy adopted for the entire house. This is achieved by large openable expanses of glazing and a natural stack-effect being utilised to aid the cooling during hot summer months. The landscaping is fundamental whereby the existing mature wisteria shall be carefully re-planted in front of the building along the south face (current orientation) to aid in the cooling through evaporation. A multitude of additional plants, shrubs and trees are included to enhance the green space and not only provide a perfect natural habitat for birds and insects alike, but provide natural shade to the amenity space of the occupants. Allowing them

to make the most of the garden all year round. The final and primary change to the site at no.87 will be the reduction in surface water run-off. Despite extending to the ground floor, the proposed scheme actually significantly reduces the hard area of the site when taking into account the current garage building, expansive concrete hard standing/ pathways and the green house outbuilding base to the rear. The front concrete parking area shall also be removed and replaced with a free pouring SUDS parking area that ensure water run occurs within the site only and the concrete to the rear removed in lieu of soft landscaping and planting.

CC7 Design and the Public Realm – The proposed scheme is considered to be of high design quality, creating a clear dialogue with its local street scene and using existing materials to link the extension harmoniously with the existing character, honouring and respecting the surrounding vernacular.

CC8 Safeguarding amenity – The area of extension proposed currently consists of a double garage and a substantial amount of concrete hard standing/ tarmac. This provides a low quality environment and one that would benefit from an overhaul whereby an extension could easily be provided without any damaging effect on natural light, privacy or visual dominance. The layout and orientation ensure the habitable rooms have a front to back direction which allows for views over the private garden spaces to the front and rear, with only a single window located to the east which is obscured by virtue of it being the existing stained glass. Importantly the retention of this window enhances the east elevation for the neighbour and creates a dialogue to the existing elevation.

EN12 Biodiversity and the green network – This site does not fall within the parameters of the green network as noted on the proposals map. It does however seek to use this opportunity to increase the biodiversity of the site by increased planting of shrubs, plants and trees. As noted above the current extensive areas of hard landscaping and poor quality habitat is to be removed and SUDS laid in its place where required for parking, or soft landscaped where not. This shall greatly enhance this site and ensure it sits comfortably and functionally within the natural environment.

EN14 Trees, hedges and woodlands – As noted previously additional trees and shrubs shall be planted.

H8 House extensions and ancillary accommodation – The consideration of planning clause H8 has been a driving force behind the entire design. The proposal is appropriate in terms of the scale, both with the existing property and with the site, ensuring a subservient design. The location is consistent with many extensions along the road and reflects the multitude of approaches to gaining additional living space. It is also sensibly located to not only reduce the impact along the street scene, but also maximise the opportunity for natural light, solar gains/ shading and a whole house passive ventilation strategy. The material choice is consistent with the existing material palette and includes matching facing brickwork and matching roof tiles.

The proposal respects the pattern and character of the street and is set back from the existing wall.

H9 Private and communal outdoor space – The proposal has ample levels of external amenity space, which is subsequently broken into outside seating areas, children's play area, home food production, organic waste composting, bin storage and cycle storage. It is important to note the existing plot size is over twice the width of the neighbouring plots and as a result can be successfully extended to the side with minimal impact on the existing appearance.

TR3 Access, traffic and highway-related matters – The proposal does not seek to alter the existing vehicular or pedestrian access.

TR5 Car and cycle parking - The proposal does not seek to change the existing number of parking spaces. It does show the addition of 2no. secure cycle spaces (refer to the proposed block plan). The site is within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Councils Revised Parking Standards and Design SPG 2011 which characterises this area as containing a variety of land uses, within 400m walk of high frequency bus services.

3.02 Siting and Design

The proposed side extension to no 87 has been carefully considered and reflects many changes following a recent planning withdrawal for a separate dwelling house and further changes to the revised scheme showing a dramatic reduction in mass/ volume and material changes and directly responding to the attached neighbouring properties previous planning approval ref.061038, the unattached neighbour's recently undertaken extension at no 88 and the two properties directly opposite at no's 1 & 2.

Following feedback from the planning department and neighbours a new and more appropriate scheme is put forward to simply extend the existing house in line with those aforementioned. This takes into account all of the information within the local development plan and house extensions SPD as well as good design practice.

It is important to note the majority of the ground floor extension consists of the existing double garage which has only very minor amendments but mostly left unchanged.

The layout of the first floor reflects the style of the existing houses where they step in at the first floor. The step down also creates a clear distinction between the old and new, with the risk of terracing being clearly mitigated, as in accordance with page 10 of the supplementary design guide.

Further to this the proposed hipped roof reduces the impact of volume along the street and ensures a soft inset from ground to first floor and from first floor to roof. This dialogue is utilised with great effect along the road and this scheme seeks to continue this trend.

The overgrown nature of the rear garden and east side of the front garden also adds to this visual seclusion. Retaining these mature trees and encouraging flora is considered central to this scheme.

The impact on the amenity space ensures the finished scheme substantially surpasses any requirements and allows for car parking, cycle parking, bin store/ composting and a range of external uses such as clothes drying, hard landscaped SUDS areas for outside living and soft gardens for children's play and gardening. The site layout ensures the amenity space is usable to both the front and rear of the properties, ensuring economic use of space and allowing for the importance of private and secure outdoor space.

3.04 Biodiversity

The existing garage building has closed eaves and verges. Following an investigation from a bat surveyor (please refer to survey report) there is no evidence to suggest that the building is occupied by protected species. Likewise, the closely tended garden, substantial amount of concrete hard standing and surrounding area does not support such species. The proposed site shall retain as many existing plants, trees and shrubs as possible and be fully landscaped to encourage flora and fauna to thrive. The nature of retaining the existing garage further reduces the impact on plants and animals on the site, as well as reducing the visual impact. The existing Wisteria is also to be carefully removed and relocated following the completion of the extension, helping retain the existing plant and associated insect/ bird wildlife and visually softening the extension.

3.05 Highways

The driveway is accessed off of the private roadway, Balmore Drive, which is in turn accessed from the B481 Peppard Road. The proposal provides commensurate levels of parking by retaining the 2no. parking spaces. The new driveway shall be of a permeable sustainable SUDS design to ensure the surface water is discharged within the site. This will actually reduce the current levels of water run-off whereby the concrete hard standings and existing garage footprint create a much larger 'hard area' than that proposed.

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3.06 Consultation

Pre-Application Advice

Pre-application advice was received for a different, previously withdrawn scheme but the information is still relevant and greatly used within this proposal. The aforementioned scheme also received multiple comments from the neighbours which have been sifted through one by one and implemented. The comments from the planning department have also been taken on board, hence this revised scheme.

Community Consultation

Whilst a formal community consultation would have been inappropriate at this time whilst in the Coronavirus lockdown, the design team was able to go through the appropriate comments from the previous proposals and implement within this scheme.

4.0 DESIGN

4.01 Design Concept

The proposed side extension has been carefully and sympathetically developed to ensure a cohesive design that directly responds to the surrounding styles and previously completed extensions.

The positioning of the extension to the side of the host building and the subsequent retention of the existing garage ensures minimal intervention is required.

The existing building line has been maintained with no development going beyond that line. It is important this scheme respects the sensitive nature of extending and follows the extensive precedent noted along the road.

The drop in ridge height of the proposed extension is a clear approach to ensure the bulk is reduced, visually the extension is clearly defined and that it is subservient to the existing property.

The overall form and massing is designed to minimise impact on the surrounding area, which combined with the chosen materials creates an extension that sits comfortably within its context. The mass added in this scheme is seen with every house located in this direct area, thus the local precedent strongly supports this approach.

With regards to fenestration, the extension has been orientated north-south to provide a continuation with the existing building and ensure the best quality light is obtained without the risk of overlooking onto the neighbouring properties. The width, height and general proportions of the proposed windows have been directly lifted from the neighbouring extensions, directly responding to the existing house.

The existing stained glass window positioned to the East elevation shall be carefully removed and re-located once again on the east side of the house. This ensures a continuity and familiarity with the extension, whilst adding interest and variation for the neighbour at no.88.

4.02 Building Elements

The proposed extension seeks to provide additional living space for the modern growing family, whilst heavily referencing the existing vernacular of 1930's architecture. The neighbouring properties and proposed extension have a strong visual aesthetic, spread over a multitude of forms whereby each household has taken on the challenge of adding additional space in many ways. Some have extended the ridgeline and pushed to the side, some heavily extend towards the rear with others adopting many dormer styles and hip to gable extensions to achieve this.

Some of the key elements ensuring a successfully integrated and cohesive design include the following;

Form to match existing

The proposed extension directly responds to the existing form of no.87. A single storey ground floor set back from the existing building line, this is stepped in at the side with the first floor, defining the extension area and existing garage to be retained and a hipped roof to ensure a reduction in potential volume and reference the form noted along the length of the road by both the existing and extended residencies.

Roof pitch and style to match existing

The angle of the roof pitch is a fundamental aspect to ensure visual cohesion. It has been adopted by many householders along the road thus far and is used within this scheme with great effect. It is however not only the pitch that has been reflected in this extension, but also the style of the hipped roof and material finish. The retention of the hipped roof ensures the most appropriate form and greatly reduces the impact along to neighbouring properties and street scene more generally.

Lower roofline

By lowering the proposed roofline a clear and proportionate stepping is achieved. This is important in reducing the potential visual impact, volume and ensures a 'terracing' effect is not encouraged.

Windows match in width, style and proportion to reference existing

The proportion of the fenestration has been carefully considered and directly matches that employed to the existing and neighbouring building.

4.03 Materials

The palette of external materials has been carefully chosen to directly reflect those already employed along the road.

Red facing brickwork

The proposed brickwork shall match the existing, both in colour, material and texture.

Clay plain roof tiles

The roof tiles shall match that of the existing house.

Glazing

High performance glazing is employed throughout, ensuring natural light enters deep into the building, adding architectural interest and capitalising on the views of the landscape, notably the established mature trees to the rear.

4.04 Site Strategy

The landscaping design proposal is based on the following key principles:

- (i) To successfully integrate the building into its landscape - the garden is to reflect the architecture of the existing house and extension to creating a single cohesive design.
- (ii) To create a garden that is sensitive to its context, utilising the existing topography where possible to add interest.

(iii) To create a landscape that is multi-functional, responding to the orientation and arrangement of accommodation in the house. The landscaping, like the building will be composed of a simple palette of materials and link the external with the internal.

(iv) To provide appropriate cycle accommodation, recycling and waste bin storage as well as usable amenity space.

A planting strategy will be developed that uses local and indigenous planting and shrubbery to soften edges and help integrate the building into the landscape. Existing trees and hedgerows are to be kept where possible and enhanced with additional planting. The existing site retains a good degree of screening through mature trees towards the rear and east side of the plot which shall be retained without change.

4.05 Landscaping

The following provides a summary of the primary elements within the proposed landscape plan:

- fruit trees and bushes for human and animal consumption promoting enhancement of animals and insects
- permeable SUDS roadway provides vehicular access to the site, whilst having minimal impact it will be accompanied by planting to help meld into the landscape
- there will be diverse planting, including trees, shrubs and flowering species to the existing and proposed plot
- composting heaps provide biodegradable waste for the garden and excellent recycling
- bird boxes to encourage indigenous species.

5.0 ACCESS

5.01 Vehicular Access

Vehicular access to the site will be via the existing dropped curb on Balmore Drive. This is substantial in size and shall ensure no change to the front street scene. The new driveway shall be constructed from lightweight permeable SUDS, ensuring surface water is not displaced off the site.

The existing number of parking spaces shall be retained.

5.02 Inclusive Design

Pedestrian access to the extended house will also be from Balmore Drive as it currently exists. Emergency escape is achieved on all floor levels by the use of opening windows or escape routes in full compliance with current building regulations. It is important to note all circulation within and around the building is designed to meet both approved document M and the DDA regulations. The ground floor offers an ambulant toilet with an outward opening door and room for sleeping accommodation should this be required in the future. Level thresholds are to be used throughout the project.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY

To ensure the building performs as well as possible during its life cycle, all aspects of its operation in terms of its energy have been considered throughout the design process, and the most efficient methods utilised to incorporate the existing property and associated poor thermal performance levels. It shall use the additional extension as an opportunity to surpass all regulations and produce an overall building performance that should rival any new build. The following have been implemented within the design:

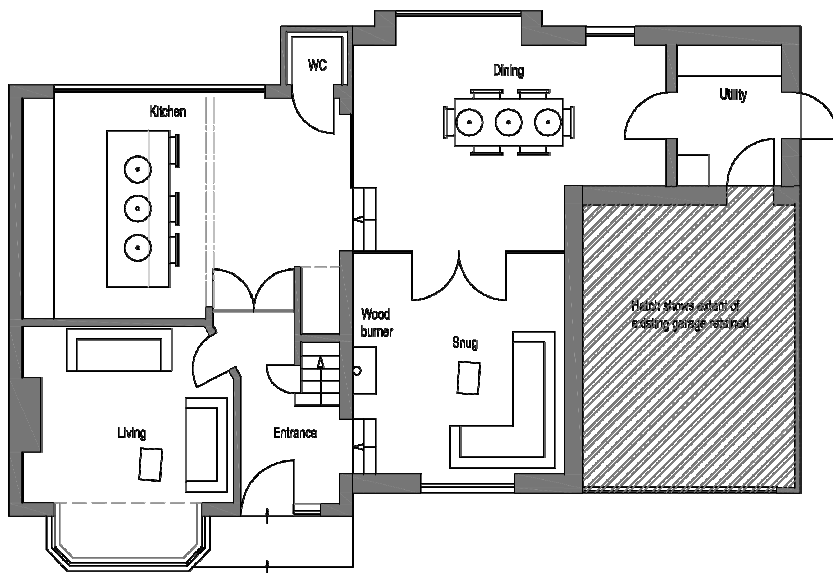
- Orientation and building location, maximising solar gains, natural light and ventilation/ cooling
- Maximising insulation to reduce heat loss and minimise heating requirements.
- High levels of air-tightness
- Thermal mass of exposed solid floors will moderate any change in internal temperature
- The use of passive ventilation reduces the requirement for mechanical ventilation. This is used via a stack effect solar chimney internally.
- Ample high-performance glazing reduces the electrical lighting requirement and helps provide a healthier environment with abundant natural light and natural ventilation
- Orientation of the internal layout maximises the use of solar energy
- Non-concussive taps and dual-flush toilets reduce water consumption
- Insulation material with zero rated ODP and timber sourced from managed forests (FSC/ PEFC)
- Under-floor heating to the extension ensures efficient heating and full use of thermal mass
- Reduced rainwater run-off from the site using SUDS and an overall reduction in hard standing
- 2 cycle storage spaces encourage sustainable modes of transport
- Local materials and labour will be used where possible
- Low-energy lighting is employed throughout as LED are highly efficient
- Recycled materials will be used whenever feasible

7.0 CONCLUSION

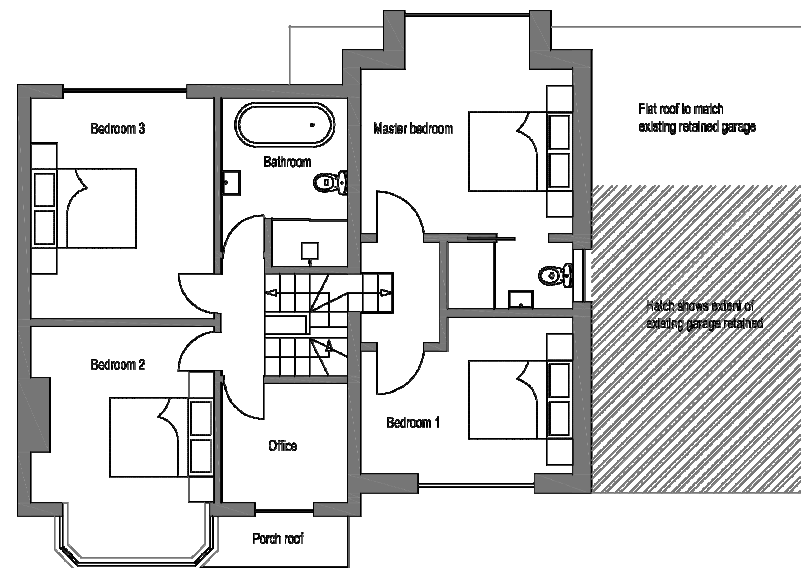
The proposed extension to 87 Balmore Drive provides the opportunity to create a home that is suitable for modern living and an expanding family. It is sympathetic in design, largely reflecting the existing materials and architectural language noted along the road and allows for a much improved level of sustainability. The mass is directly seen among neighboring properties and is in keeping with existing extended houses located either side and opposite this proposal.

The scheme has been carefully considered to ensure a strong dialogue between the architecture and the landscape, with an emphasis on improving the current levels of planting to increase the opportunity for flora and fauna to thrive. The extension uses a simple palette of materials to directly tie it with the existing fabric generated along the street scene, with the extension itself using the multitude of existing approaches in which others have responded to the challenge of increasing their living space.

The result is an extension that directly responds to its environment and respects its surrounding architectural styles, history and context whilst fully conforming to planning policy.



Proposed ground floor plan



Proposed first floor plan