

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

82 Crescent Road,
Reading,
RG1 5SP

February 2021

Revision A June 2021



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of the proposal for a two storey side extension to replace the existing garage at 82 Crescent Road, Reading. Pre-Planning Advice was received in May 2021 for this scheme to ensure pro-active engagement with the Council at an early stage of the project. The development process that has led to the current proposals and the rationale behind the scheme are set out within this document.

82 Crescent Road is a four storey mid-19th century semi-detached property located on the edge of the South Park Conservation Area in Reading. The property is attached to No.84 Crescent Road and they are estimated to have been constructed between 1865 and 1875.

A single storey garage of more recent construction is located to the side of the property, projecting past the front building line and subdividing the existing side window. A single storey rear extension to the lower ground floor was added to the property in 2012.

The clients have invested in the existing property, restoring and reinstating original features to bring the house back to its intended style and level of finish internally. The existing garage and rear extension are a result of more recent development which do not sit sympathetically with the Victorian property and part of the clients' brief was to bring these elements in line with the style of the property whilst also adding the desired area to deliver the requirements of their longer term needs.



Fig. 01 View from the road looking north-west at the property

2.0 CONTEXT

82 Crescent Road is located close to the junction of Crescent Road and Bulmershe Road. The west the property is attached to No.84 Crescent Road and to the east, the boundary borders an access lane to a set of garages positioned to the rear of 80A Crescent Road. The opposite south side of Crescent Road is primarily occupied by Maiden Erlegh School in Reading school campus.

The property is set back from the road with a red brick boundary wall along both Crescent Road and the access lane. Mature trees and planting line both these boundaries, screening the property from the road. The plot is approximately 0.06 hectares. The garden extends to the north-west of the house with a number of mature trees within the rear garden and along the north boundary.

The existing property is finished in two tone painted rendered finish with quoins, string coursing and window surrounds painted within a darker grey colour tone with larger panels of render in the lighter tone. Slate roof tiles cover the main roof and the lower ground floor extension roof is faux slate.

The property lies on the edge of the South Park Conservation Area and is considered to be a building of townscape merit within the CA Appraisal. In respect of the location within the Conservation Area, Keevill Heritage were appointed to advise and consult on the project to ensure that all aspects of the design are considered and respectful of the Conservation Area and property.



Fig. 02 Location Plan (NTS)

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2.0 CONTEXT (cont...)



Fig. 03 View of the property looking into the Conservation Area.



Fig. 04 View of the property out of the Conservation Area with Maiden Erlegh School in Reading



Fig. 05 View of the property from Bulmershe Road



Fig. 06 View of the property from the Crescent Road/Bulmershe Road junction

3.0 BRIEF

A key aspect of the brief for the project was to provide additional Boot Room and Utility Room space with direct access from the garden whilst maintaining a Workshop/External Store space. A new home office connected to the main property was also a requirement. The current workshop space is used by the owners as a carpentry workshop.

Within the existing main house, there are formal social spaces on the lower and upper ground floors (Living Room, Dining Room and Snug) but the day-to-day functional spaces of a Utility Room and Boot Room are not available. The existing everyday access to the house after walks, bike rides and workshop use is via the bi-folding doors to the kitchen when access via the main formal entrance is not ideal due to muddy boots or other reasons. A ground floor Boot Room will also allow a buggy to be left at the lower level without requiring to lift this up a set of stairs. The existing social spaces are all to be preserved as the original rooms they were intended to be on the ground and lower ground floor, with no desire to sub-divide these rooms to provide these additional spaces, which is a central reason behind the extension proposals.

Over the course of the last year, homeworking has become the new normal and for future necessity the clients want to include a separate office within the main house. This new integrated office space would also be multi-use as a playroom for their young child.

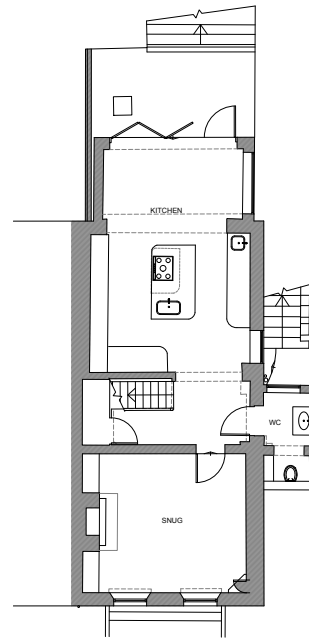


Fig. 07 Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan (NTS)

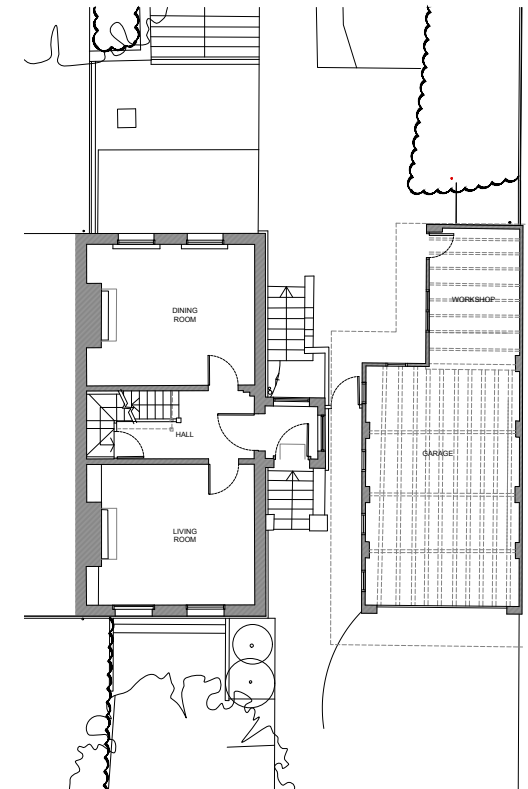


Fig. 08 Existing Upper Ground Floor Plan (NTS)

3.0 BRIEF (cont...)

As noted, the owners have invested in restoring and preserving the original features of the property and would like to extend this intention across the plot, aligning the style of the existing side and rear recent additions to that of the main Victorian house.

The proposals seek to upgrade and readdress the streetscene view of the property, bringing the garage back to a more subservient line behind the main building line and increasing the prominence of the main entrance.

A study of Victorian mews buildings and the hierarchical sequence of side buildings to the grander terrace house has been completed within the design process to ensure an authentic and sympathetic scheme is presented.

Previous Planning Approvals

In July 2012 a Certificate of Lawful Development was approved for a single storey rear extension to the lower ground floor kitchen with a slate pitched roof, bi-folding doors and an angled side window (Fig.09).

In November 2020 an application was submitted to 'Prune one Magnolia, one Walnut and one Bay tree' which was approved.

In March 2017 an application was submitted to 'Prune various trees' which was also approved.

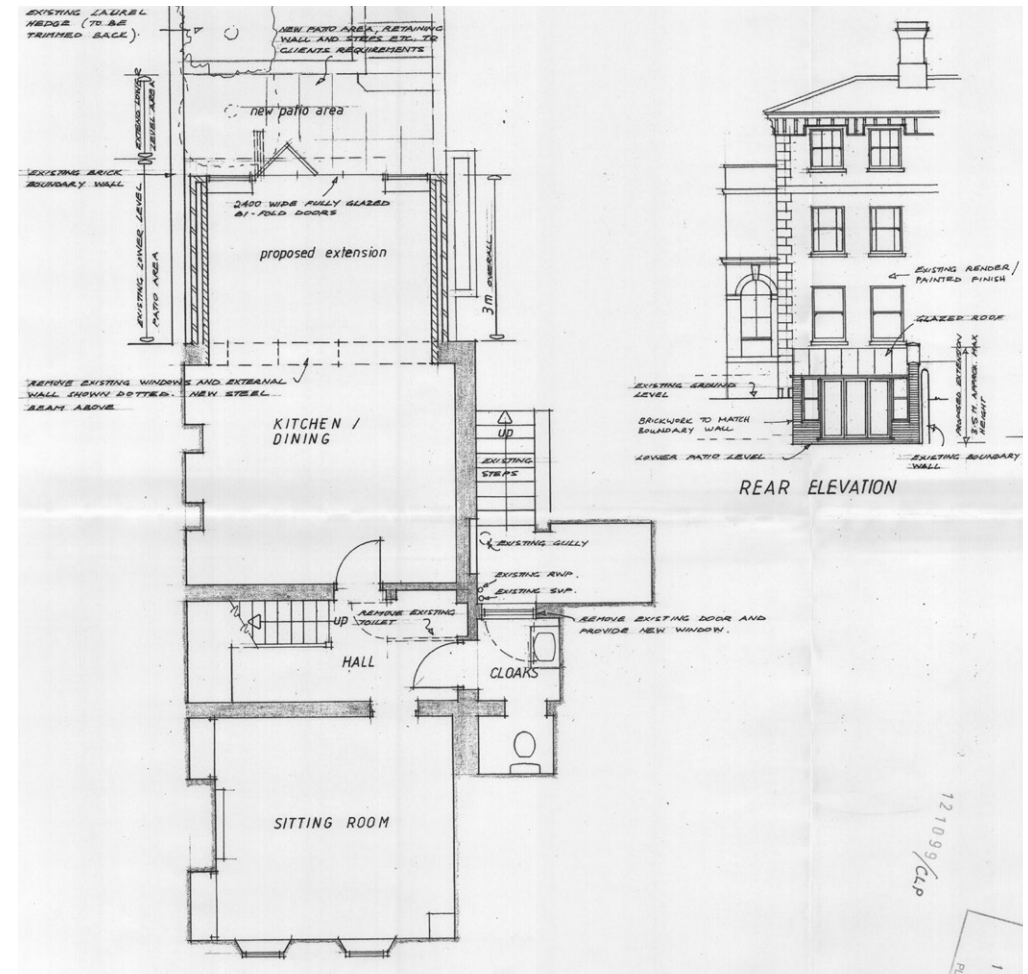


Fig. 09 Approved Lawful Development Certificate Drawings 12/01099/CLP

4.0 EXISTING BUILDING FORM

The existing house remains primarily within the original built form over four floors expressed externally by a vertical hierarchy of window styles with associated horizontal banding. The existing external steps are set back from the main elevation to a two storey side projection (described as an addition within the Conservation Area Appraisal) housing the hall at a raised ground level and a bathroom at first floor level.

The single storey garage in its current form is a more recent addition, but is not listed within the recent planning documents available on the Reading Borough Council Planning website. The existing garage is sited in line with the principal elevation of the property with the overhanging canopy extending a further metre past the garage footprint both towards the street and towards the main house and cutting across the side window of the hall. The garage has not been constructed within a design that is in keeping with the main house and jars with the street view of the property. The side and rear elevation of the garage are constructed of painted blockwork which does not result in an appealing visual.

The rear of the property was extended at lower ground floor level nearly 10 years ago with a faux slate roof extension containing modern bi-folding doors.

It is also noted that the previous owners re-painted the property in altered colours to the original green tones. The clients are looking to reinstate the original colour tone when the property next requires repainting as part of the on-going maintenance of the house.



Fig. 10 The existing streetscene (NTS)



Fig. 11 Rear view of the property in previous colour scheme



Fig. 12 Photographs of the existing garage block

5.0 PRE-PLANNING ADVICE

In order to work proactively with Reading Borough Council's Planning department, a Pre-Planning Advice application was submitted on 3rd March 2021 for a side extension to replace the existing garage at 82 Crescent Road.

The Pre-Planning Advice was received on 26th May 2021. An overall positive response was received in relation to the proposals submitted including that the *'level of detail submitted as part of this application is welcomed and in overall terms, the works proposed which seek to upgrade the dwelling, suitable for modern residential occupation, whilst reflecting its Conservation Area setting, are also welcomed.'*

Principle:

The proposed demolition of the existing garage forms no objections with this having *'little to enhance the appearance of this attractive building'* and the replacement extension *'has been carefully designed to seek to complement the host building'* and is *'not considered to result in any overdevelopment of the site'*. The Council deem that the proposals *'satisfactorily respect the character and appearance of the host building, represent an improvement over and above the existing garage and would not detract from the character of appearance of the street scene or wider Conservation Area.'*

External Works:

No objections have been raised to the proposed alterations to the front porch, or replacement of the existing gate to a pair of double gates.

Integration of the Extension with the House:

The Council note that *'whilst there is no indication within your submission that the internal floorspace of the proposal would be sub-divided to provide more than a single dwellinghouse...it is considered by officers that future sub-division...could occur fairly simple.'* The proposals and discussions with the clients have been for this to be an integrated side extension to the house to be used only as a single family home. The clients would accept a planning condition to ensure that the additional floorspace remains ancillary to the main dwelling.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity:

In relation to the neighbouring properties, *'it is not considered that there would be any loss of amenity in terms of overbearing effects or loss of privacy to the occupiers of the adjoining semi No.84 Crescent Road to the south west.'* It is also stated that due to the distance separating No.82 to No.80a *'it is not considered that there would be any loss of amenity in terms of overbearing effects to the occupiers of this property'* and this statement also refers to the small upper floor east facing window being *'unlikely to result in any material loss of privacy'* due to the distance and vegetation between the properties. Please refer to Section 6.2 Neighbour Amenity for the site analysis that has been prepared as requested by the Council to clearly demonstrate that the proposals would not result in any material loss of light, privacy, overbearing impact to any neighbouring property, in compliance with Policy CC8.

5.0 PRE-PLANNING ADVICE (cont...)

Environmental Protection:

As requested by the Council, a statement has been submitted to accompany the Planning documents to state the provisions to be made for the control of noise and dust during the demolition and construction phase.

Transport and Parking:

As submitted within the Pre-Planning Advice document set, a Parking Provision drawing has been included within the application documents to set out that the driveway can easily accommodate more than the required 2 parking spaces.

Impact on Trees, Landscaping and Ecology:

The Pre-Planning Advice requests a site specific Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, which has been provided by LandArb Solutions. It is noted within the Pre-Planning Advice that the '*frontage trees will provide some screening/softening of the proposal and hence their successful retention is important*'. The gravel driveway will be retained as gravel.

A Preliminary Roost Assessment compiled by Windrush Ecology has been submitted to accompany this application as requested, to address any concerns of bats at the property to ensure the correct mitigation measures are taken.

Conclusion:

The Council deemed that '*in overall terms, there is no objection to the loss of the garage and officers are supportive of the design approach of the scheme and welcome the consideration that has taken place in respect of the proposals to date. The scheme has the potential to provide a good quality extension within the immediate site constraints and the proposals are welcomed in principal subject to the various comments above*'.

The Council's comments on the proposals prior to the submission of the main application are welcomed and all comments have been taken into consideration within the documentation submitted to accompany the application.

6.0 PROPOSAL

A key aspect of the proposals at ground floor level was to retain a reasonable level of external access to the rear garden. This was developed from the existing external access adjacent to the front door into a wider and higher passageway through the extension. This is positioned along the boundary wall via double garage doorsets through the external store and workshop. This ensures that reasonable rear access is not only maintained but improved for bicycles, and any garden equipment.

The workshop area is a vital space for the owners' carpentry use and this occupies the rear of the extension. The street facing section is occupied by an external store entrance through to a boot room with direct access into the main hallway above.

The proposed layout provides improved external day-to-day access into the property via the Boot Room, with a bench seat and storage for sports equipment, a buggy and muddy boots to be left before entering the formal hallway space at the upper ground floor level.

The line of the garage is to be pulled back by 2.5 metres from the line of the main house to provide a considerably more subservient line for the replacement garage. The footprint of the new extension matches that of the original garage/workshop area but infills between the main house and garage volume creating an improved connection across the plot.

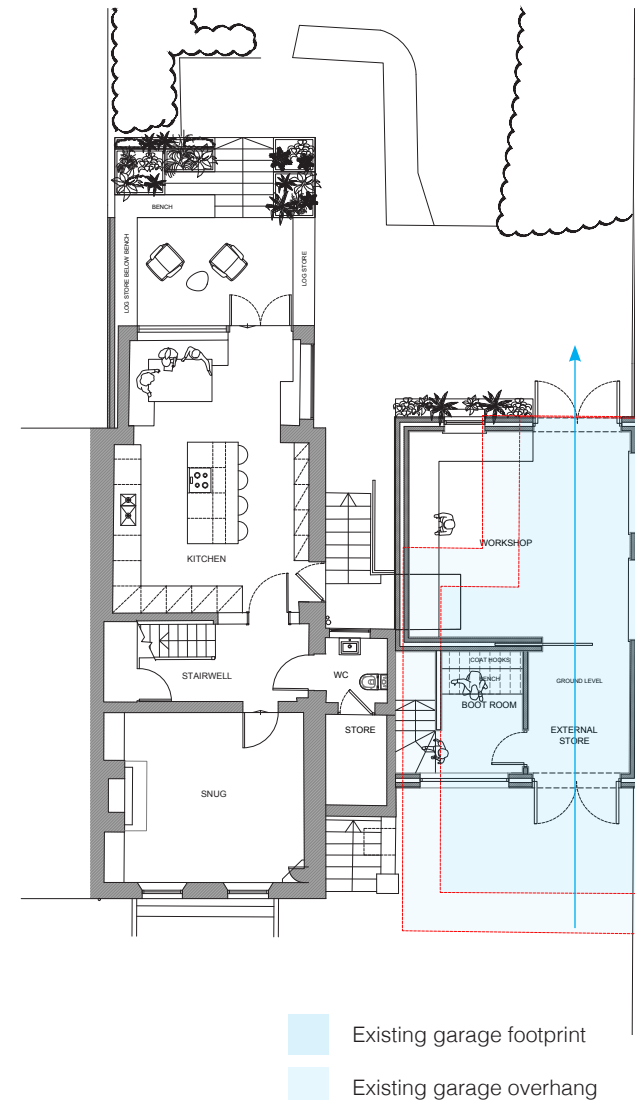


Fig. 14 Proposed ground floor plan analysis (NTS)

6.0 PROPOSAL (cont...)

The existing entrance porch is extended towards the line of the main house, providing a greater assertion of the front entrance and allowing the extension to be set back from this. The key view from the hall through the rear arch window into the garden is retained.

The proposed staircase within the extension is positioned to minimise the level of intervention into the existing property. The new extension is accessed from the hall via level access through the arched window opening. The Boot Room staircase leads up to this landing and then continues to the upper level of the extension. This also reduces the footprint occupied by the staircase.

The new Utility Room and WC occupy the front section of the extension, providing much needed utility space for the property. The only WC not as part of a bathroom is on the lower ground floor and the addition of this further WC will create an improved functionality to the upper ground floor, in particular its adjacency to the new office/playroom.

The spaces on the first floor are integrated into the main dwelling via the existing hallway and, although they are separated by a short flight of stairs, these ancillary rooms will fully complement the existing ground and lower ground floor spaces to accommodate the requirements of modern day family life.

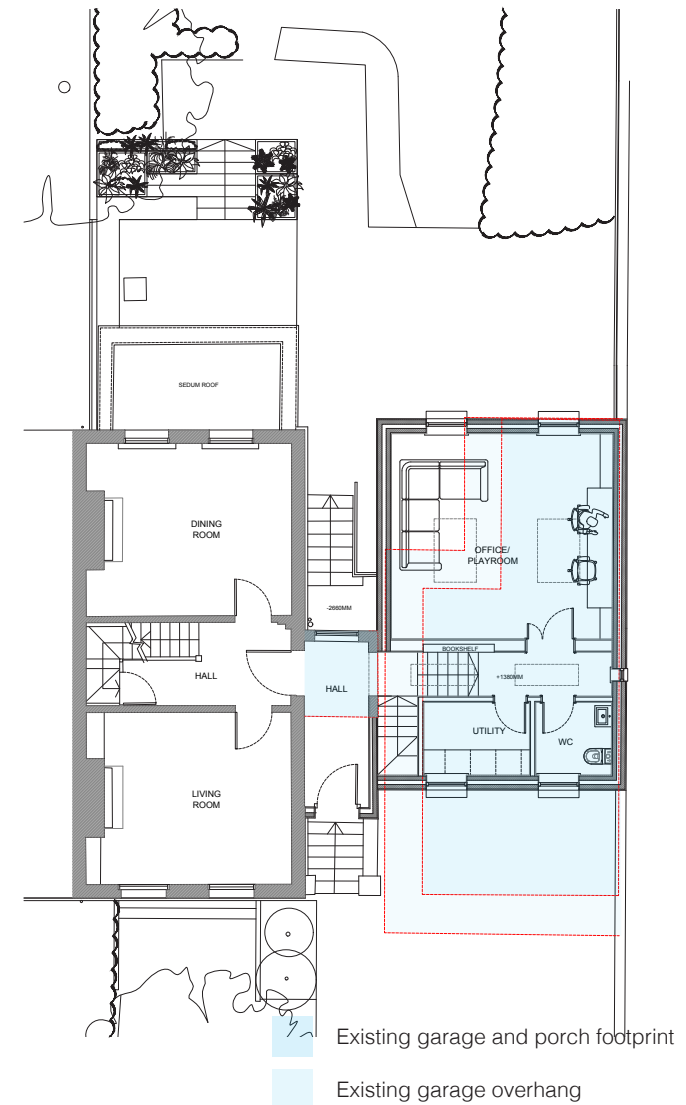


Fig. 15 Proposed first floor plan analysis (NTS)

6.1 FORM AND SCALE

A process of considered site analysis and design development led to the current proposal. The existing garage is a poor fit for the street scene in both style and stature and the clients are looking to improve the property in both aspects. Planning Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6 in relation to the Conservation Area were considered during the design stage and are addressed in this section.

The garage replacement has been developed with a first floor extension over the single storey volume incorporating the additional spatial requirements of the clients. A study of Victorian mews buildings and the hierarchical sequence of side buildings to the style of grander terrace house has been completed within the design process to ensure that an authentic and sympathetic scheme is presented. Figures 16 and 17 illustrate infill development in the style of mews houses between larger principal terraces within a traditional and sympathetic style.

The style and proportions of the extension have been designed to align but not mimic the existing house. The proposal reflects a simplified style of the main house details, reasserting the hierarchy of the scheme, with window proportions which match the more utilitarian lower ground floor windows alongside arched garage doors of a traditional style at ground floor level. The materials align with the main property with the render painted finish with a consistent string course detail continuing from the porch. The position of the string course defines the floor levels, clearly defining this as a further stage of development within the property's life.

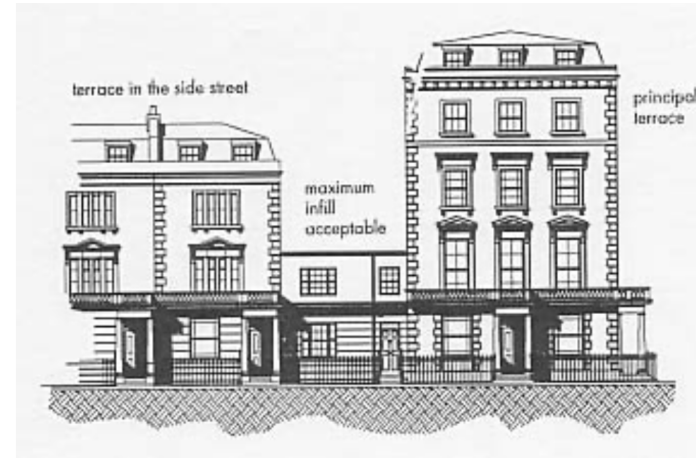


Fig. 16 Infilling the gap at the end of a terrace (Pimlico Design Guide) NTS



Fig. 17 Winchester Street infill example (Pimlico Design Guide)

6.1 FORM AND SCALE (cont...)

The new porch extension is to be reinstated as a replicate of the existing front porch extension to retain the design and detailing of all existing door surrounds, string courses and openings.

A clear void is still evident between the main house and the boundary by means of the extension volume being significantly lower than that of the main house. This is further reinforced by the set back of the extension from the main house line. The proposed streetscene drawing clearly sets out that there would not be a resultant terracing effect.

The siting of the extension will not impact upon daylight or access from the existing property and will also not incur any overlooking to any neighbouring properties or associated amenity due to its location adjacent to the access lane boundary. The three windows which have been included along the property boundary are fixed windows, either at high level (within the workshop) or of narrow width (to the hallway at first floor level) to avoid any overlooking. The depth of the plan is further lit by rooflights within the hallway and the office to ensure sufficient levels of natural light.

The windows are to replicate the size, form and style of the lower ground floor windows in painted timber but improved with double glazing. A small windowbox below each window allows for additional planting on the front elevation. The garage doors are proposed to be painted the same colour as the existing front door. Black heritage aluminium rainwater goods drain the roof via a heritage hopper.

It is also noted that the boundaries to Crescent Road and the access lane are heavily planted with mature trees and hedging. The current photographs show that even in winter with minimal coverage on the trees the siting of the new extension is heavily screened from view unless one is stood directly opposite the property looking through the gates. In the spring and summer months, the foliage will further screen the views of the property from the streetscene.



Fig.18 Proposed Street Elevation (NTS)

6.2 NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

The proposed extension's location on the north east side of the property, will not create any overlooking or overbearing effects to the adjoining No.84 Crescent Road as the extension is situated well away from the adjoining boundary.

The extension is set back from the principle elevation of the house at the front of the property and projects only to a small degree past the line of the rear of the house. The rear first floor windows are nearly 30 metres from the rear boundary of the site to the north, a considerable distance to the side of 65 Bulmershe Road.

The adjacent 80A Crescent Road is located approximately 12 metres from the garden wall at 82 Crescent Road, with mature planting, the access lane and No.80A's brick outbuilding physically and visually dividing the two properties.

Garages occupy the north rear portion of the boundary, with no overlooking issues to this unoccupied, external area.

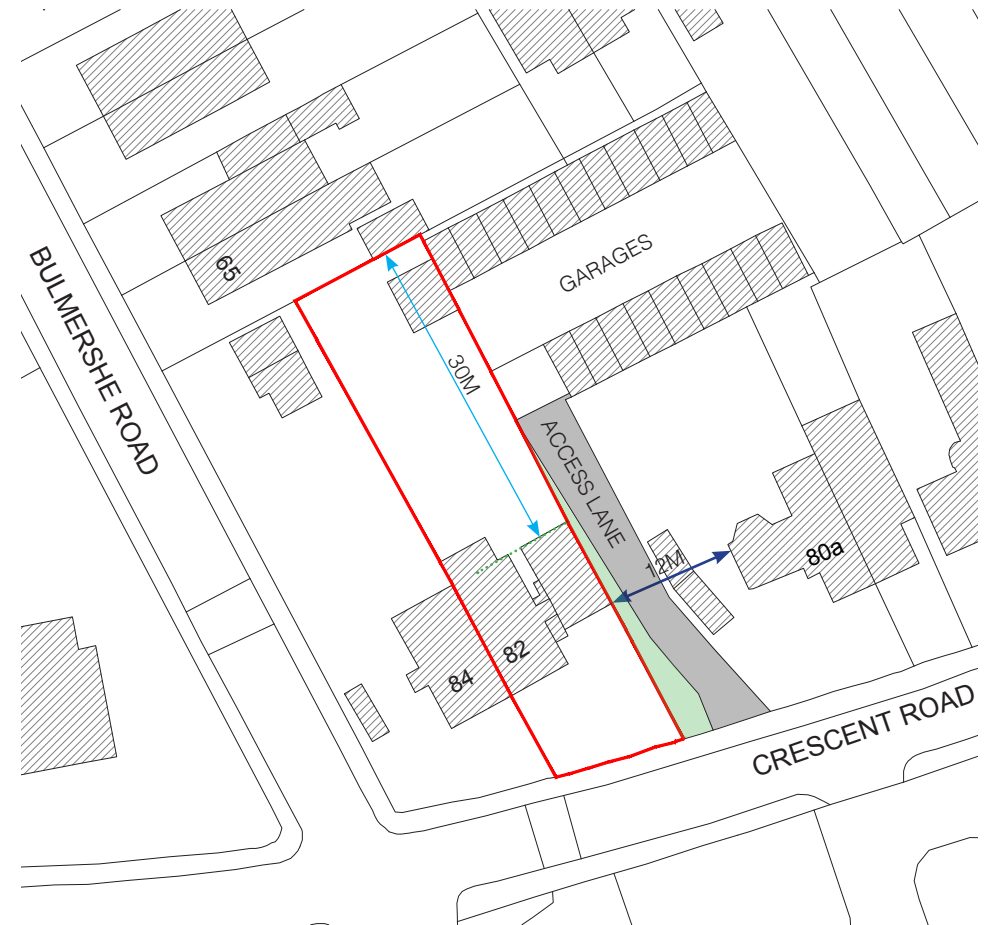


Fig. 19 Neighbour Amenity Diagram (NTS)

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6.3 SUSTAINABILITY

As the proposed scheme connects through to the existing property with a light touch approach, this allows minimal intervention to the existing house whilst being able to maximise the sustainability and thermal efficiencies of the extension. The clients are keen to incorporate renewable and future-proofing technology where possible. This is in accordance with Planning Policies CC2, CC3, EN12, EN14, TR3 and TR5.

It will be reviewed as to whether an air source heat pump is compatible to heat the extension. Firstly this will not add additional capacity onto the existing older heating system, but also will improve the sustainability of the property.

A rainwater harvesting tank is to be buried within the rear garden to allow the surface run-off from the new extension roof to be collected and used for watering the garden. A sedum roof is to cover the replacement kitchen flat roof.

All rooms within the new extension are lit by natural light, reducing the hours by which artificial lighting is required. In addition to this, rooflights have been introduced within the depth of the plan to add to the natural light levels, whilst improving the solar gain to the north facing rooms to the rear.

Bicycle storage has been a key item considered within the design to provide easy and accessible storage and access to the bicycles from the front of the house.

The new thermal elements will be constructed in line with the required u-values for new construction, providing a well insulated extension to the property. This will assist in providing thermal mass to the existing side projection. Where possible, the demolition material of the existing garage will be used within the hardcore for a new concrete slab (subject this being in line and acceptable with the engineer's requirements) to avoid waste leaving the site.

The owners are also looking to future-proof the property by installing an electric car charging point.

No trees are to be removed in order for the proposals to be constructed, retaining the existing biodiversity of the site. In order to improve upon the existing biodiversity, bee bricks, bat boxes and swift blocks will be reviewed within the course of the detailed design to be incorporated where possible in discrete locations within the proposals.



Fig.20 Bee Brick, Swift Block and Tree Mounted Bat Box

6.4 LANDSCAPING AND ACCESS

The existing highways access is to be retained, with the existing single 5 bar gate to be replaced with a set of electric double gates in timber. This is to improve ease of access.

The rear garden is to be retained as existing with all of the existing trees to be maintained. As a minor item, the existing laurel hedge is to be trimmed back to the line of the patio to provide improved access.

The existing rear steps to the lower patio accessed via the kitchen are to be readdressed with planting and bench seating integrated into the steps. The purpose of this is to provide a more desirable view from the kitchen, adding planting and greenery to this area and making this a more pleasant useable space.

7.0 SUMMARY

Careful consideration has been made during the design development of this scheme to provide a high quality proposal which is an improvement upon the existing garage building form, and is complementary to the streetscene.

The pre-planning advice application sought the Council's initial views on the current scheme, to proactively engage with the Council at an early stage prior to the submission of this Householder Application within a Conservation Area.

The Reading Borough Council House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document, the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, South Park Conservation Area document and South Park Conservation Area Appraisal have been reviewed to result in a comprehensive strategy to propose a replacement extension within these guidelines as a sustainable and well-designed scheme.