



Design Statement

Yew Tree Cottage
49a Conisboro Avenue

2021
January



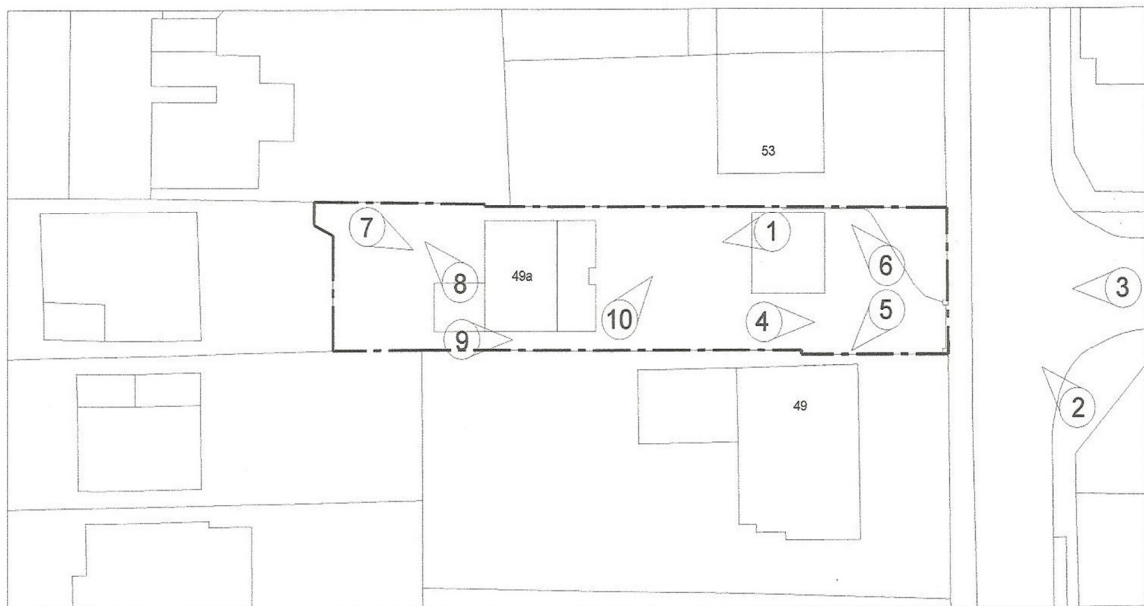
Introduction

Before covering other detail there is one fundamental point about this application which is that it is essentially intended to reinstate a previous consent reference 120331 granted in May 2012.

This new scheme is basically similar to the approved scheme but has reduced scale and is of improved design.

The applicant purchased this property in 2014 and reflects that the easiest route to maintaining a Planning Consent on the plot would have been to re-apply in 2015 at the end of the previous consent period using the approved scheme detail. But it was felt that improvements could be made and there has been a delay in making this submission for various other reasons.

Firstly in this report we are enclosing a selection of photographs of the property for your reference and a key plan :



Site Plan : KEY TO THE FOLLOWING PHOTOGRAPHS



1 The Front (East) of the house



2 The house is quite hidden from the general streetscene of Conisboro Avenue



3 The front of the plot looking West, mostly screened by trees



4 View out of the plot looking East down Sandcroft Road, there are no houses directly opposite



5 The North side of the neighbouring 49 Conisboro Avenue facing into the site with no habitable windows on this side



6 South side of neighbouring 53 Conisboro Avenue facing into the site; the visible side window is to the staircase



7 The rear of the house, facing to the West



8 The rear garden looking North West, from the position of the proposed rear dining room extension



9 The south side of the house looking to the East, toward the rear of number 49. This pathway is proposed to be covered.



10 Looking North East across the front garden toward number 53 Conisboro Avenue

The site

The property at 49a Conisboro Avenue is known as Yew Tree Cottage (YTC).

The immediately unique feature of the house is the fact of it's being set back within the plot.

The house is quite small, detached and within a garden plot which is similar in size to those surrounding it and in the locality, but it is set back.

The reason for this is that the house was built in the 1950's and pre-dates many of the houses surrounding it apart from number 49 neighbouring to the South.

YTC has its own distinct character particularly at the front of the house. It was architect-designed originally, and the style reflects the position behind a neighbouring house. There are small windows on the front, larger at the rear and the place has its own unique style; the house is a one-off.

The plot was once part of the curtilage of the neighbouring no. 49, a larger house whose original curtilage was split into different building plots to the south, north and west sides.

There is hard standing at the front of Yew Tree Cottage adjacent to the front north boundary which marks the position of a small stables which once serviced no. 49 adjoining and is visible on historic OS plans.

The more recently constructed surrounding houses on Conisboro Avenue are traditionally positioned closer to the road.

YTC has both front and rear gardens and a driveway at the roadside. But the rear garden is smaller than the front, and so unusually the front garden is equal at least to the rear, in terms of the quality of amenity space offered.

Again, and in terms of the street scene, the YTC plot is directly opposite Sandcroft Road, there are no facing properties to the East side (photograph 4).

On the front site boundary there is a tall planting bed adjacent to the gateway which conceals the house from the outside East side. This, combined with the house being set back means that YTC is very much hidden away from the roadside and the street scene in general (photographs 2/3).

There are garden sheds within the plot inherited by the owners, a potting shed at the front which is actually adjacent to an almost identical shed for no. 53 over the fence. YTC and no. 53 have similar plot depths albeit that the respective houses are positioned differently within the plots; this is a natural shed position for 53 and matched at YTC.

Also, there is a shed in the rear garden and two in the driveway which are to be replaced with the new garage proposed largely as per the earlier approval.

The background to this scheme is something of a lack of accommodation in the YTC house.

YTC is a three bedroomed house albeit that two of the bedrooms are small single rooms; BR3 is of small box room size and BR2 is not much larger.

On the ground floor there are basically two rooms, a good lounge and a kitchen which wraps around the end of the lounge in an 'L' shape. It is functional but not ideal.

There is no ground floor WC or second bathroom and limited living space.

The local area is one of medium to larger sized family houses; there is scope to make improvement at YTC as the previous approved scheme indicated in principle, albeit now, that the applicants wish to implement a different approach now to improving the accommodation.

The previously approved scheme proposal was to transform the house into a standard-looking developer style property, more plain and frankly of slightly strange proportions, ignoring the existing character.

The new scheme proposed improves the house at an appropriate scale and actually brings in more of a cottage style, or again in other words, works with and enhances the existing character of the house.

Comparison to the previous Approved scheme

The previous consent was dated May 2012, application no. 120331.

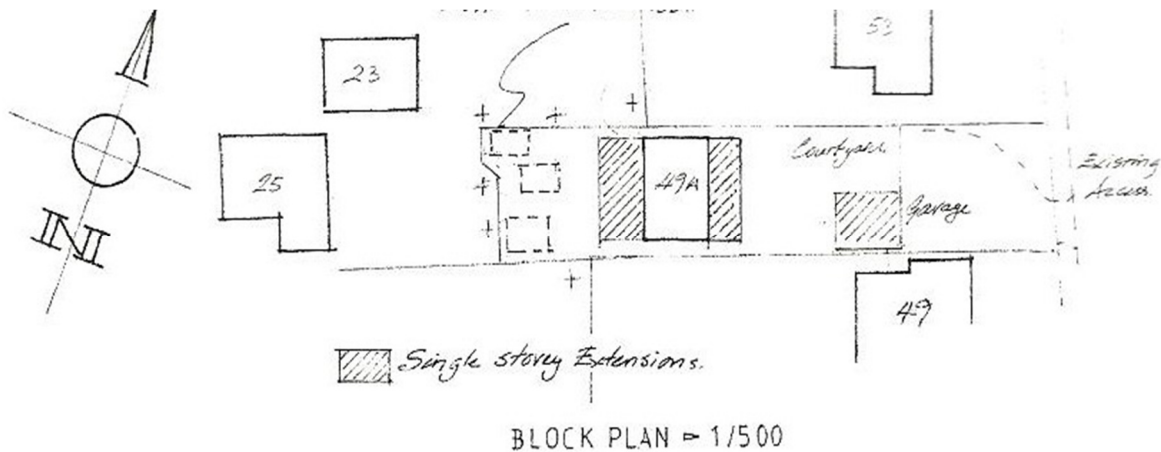
We are enclosing with this new application, the previous approved detail for ease of reference.

There were essentially four aspects of the approved application :

- a front extension,
- a rear extension,
- a dormer extension and raising of the roofline,
- a new garage proposal.

This new scheme is improved in every aspect of the approved scheme.

The Approved Block Plan :-



New Block plan for `comparison (green indicates two areas improved for example) :-



Block Plan 1:500

The aspects of the application again -

1. Front extension

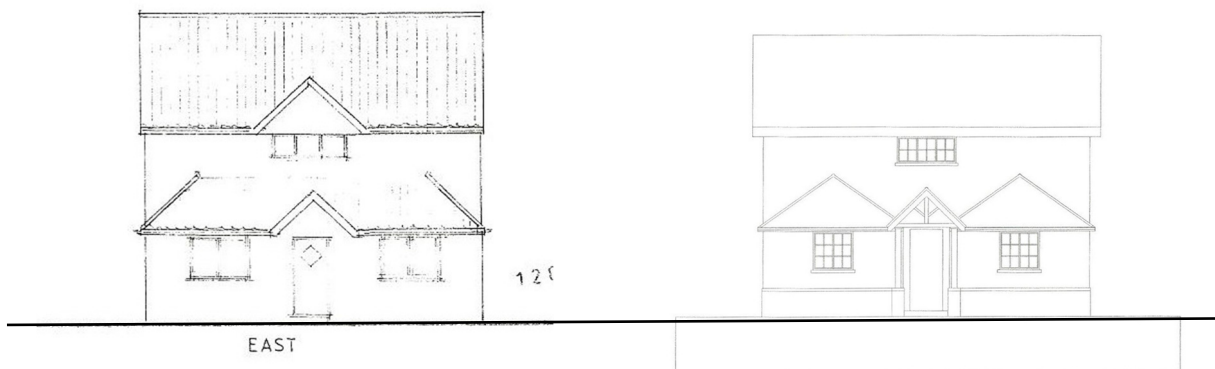
The consented front extension has essentially the same footprint as this new application. In the consented scheme, hipped roofs were suggested but at a lower pitch East to West than both the existing main roof and it's proposed replacement.

The new scheme uses hipped roofs but now at a pitch which matches the existing main roof, which is to be retained unaltered in a detail following the RBC design guide.

The lower pitched roofs of the approved scheme would have precluded the use of roof tiles appropriate to the house.

The now proposed roof pitch of matching 35 degrees allows for plain tiles to be used which are in keeping with the scheme and the area and can be seen on other houses locally of a similar scale.

The new application is therefore of similar scale to that previously approved and is of a more appropriate design :-



APPROVED FRONT ELEVATION: above

Proposed East Elevation

NEW SCHEME FRONT ELEVATION: above :

Improved design detail

Existing character better preserved

New roof form broken up, the existing pitch matched

Main roof height is not raised, containing the scale

2. Rear extension

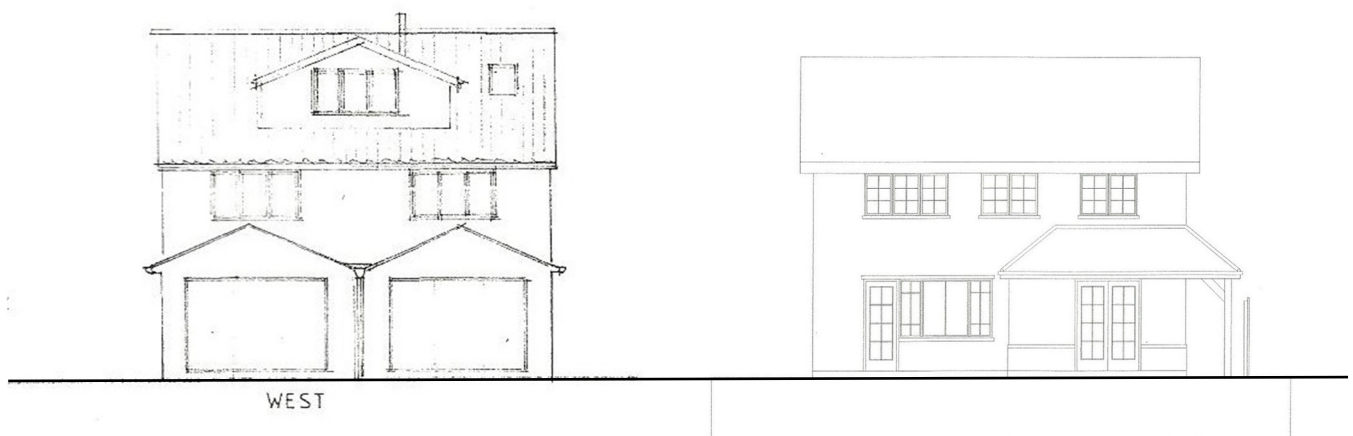
The approved scheme 120331, includes for a rear extension depth of 4.5m out from the main house and all the way across the width of the house - all the way across the back.

The new application includes a reduced rear extension to less than half of the width of the house, in order to form a new dining room.

The, now proposed roofline is no higher than that previously approved.

The new design of the rear extension is more in keeping with the character of the existing house and allows for fenestration which is directly in keeping, whereas the previously approved scheme did not.

The new application is therefore smaller in scale to the approved and the design is more in keeping with the existing house.



APPROVED REAR ELEVATION: above

Proposed West Elevation

NEW SCHEME REAR ELEVATION: above :

Existing character enhanced and not weakened
Rear extension is much smaller
(in fact essentially within the bounds of permitted development).
Overall scale is reduced

3. Dormer extension

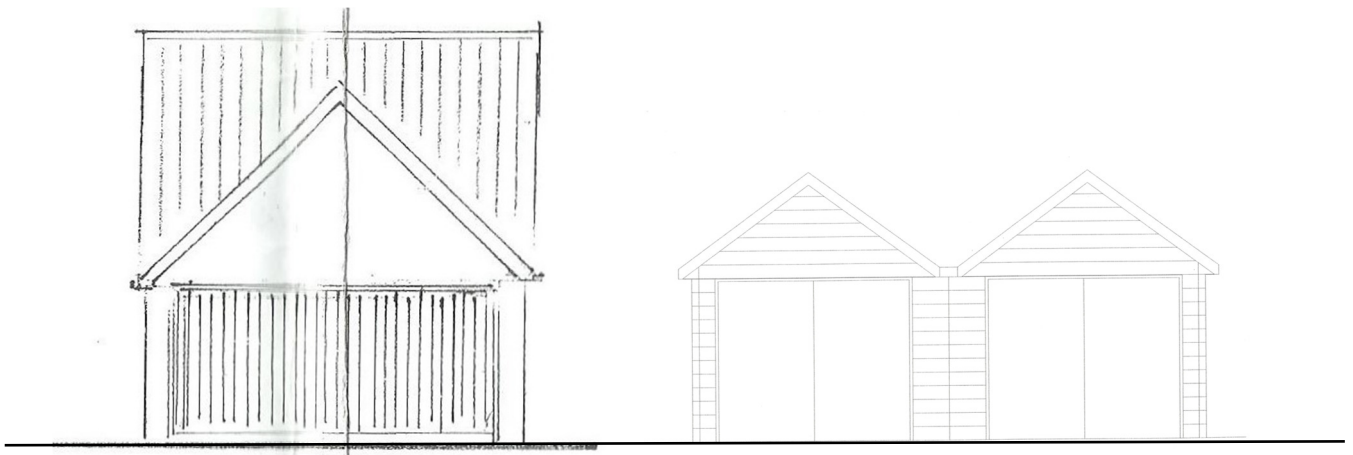
The previously approved dormer extension and associated raising of the roofline are not part of this new application.

The new application is therefore again at a reduced scale to that previously approved.

4. Proposed garage

The approved scheme included for a double garage directly fronting the driveway entrance and importantly, immediately adjacent to the neighbouring house at no. 49, obstructing their side openings, see the location block plan earlier in this report.

Our proposed garage is lower in height and smaller in volume. It is to be more discreetly positioned on the plot, largely hidden away from view from the frontage behind the front boundary planting and away from the house at no.49; in fact in line with the garage position at no. 53.



The previously Approved garage was unnecessarily high

The new proposed garage is significantly lower

Further Detail of this new application scheme

Impact on the Existing Dwelling

(a) Size & Scale

The proposed single storey extensions to the house are small in scale and are discreet adaptations to the existing house improving the level of accommodation which is currently quite basic.

The proportions, window styles and roof pitches proposed are in keeping with the existing house. The existing windows at the front and sides of the YTC house are cottage-style and this style has been taken into the new work to match. The existing rear windows are purely utilitarian and will also be improved to be in keeping as the proposals show.

The plot itself is quite large enough but the accommodation falls short of current standards. There is only one small bathroom and no current ground floor WC for example.

There is a single living room and the kitchen is quite inadequate in its layout for a family home.

There are three bedrooms but small - BR3 literally could hardly be smaller as a single bedroom and BR2 is not much larger.

The purpose of the rear extension is to provide a separate dining area so that there are two habitable rooms on the ground floor of the house.

The front extension allows for a better Kitchen to be formed and a new bedroom to the North side. The previously approved scheme also allowed for an additional bedroom.

But the proposal did not respect the existing construction/subdivision of the house and simply created a large open living area at ground floor level for example.

This new scheme works with the existing house construction to provide essentially the same improved family accommodation as previously proposed but at a smaller scale.

There is an environmental benefit written into this approach.

An underlying intention for the applicant is to make changes to the house which will better serve elderly occupants. Sleeping/living/eating and sanitary accommodation will all be on the ground floor level now; the existing stair is too tight to accommodate a stair lift for example.

The proposed double garage plus the driveway allows for at least three cars to be parked on the plot and off the roadway adjoining.

(b). Outdoor Amenity

In this proposal, the gross floor area of the house once completed, is less than the area of the rear garden area as defined in the Reading design guidance.

But in addition here, the unique nature of the plot can be remembered : the front garden area does provide amenity space equal in quality to the rear garden in fact being the largest garden area of the two and so could also be considered relevant in this calculation in addition.

Impact on Neighbouring Properties

(a). Boundaries

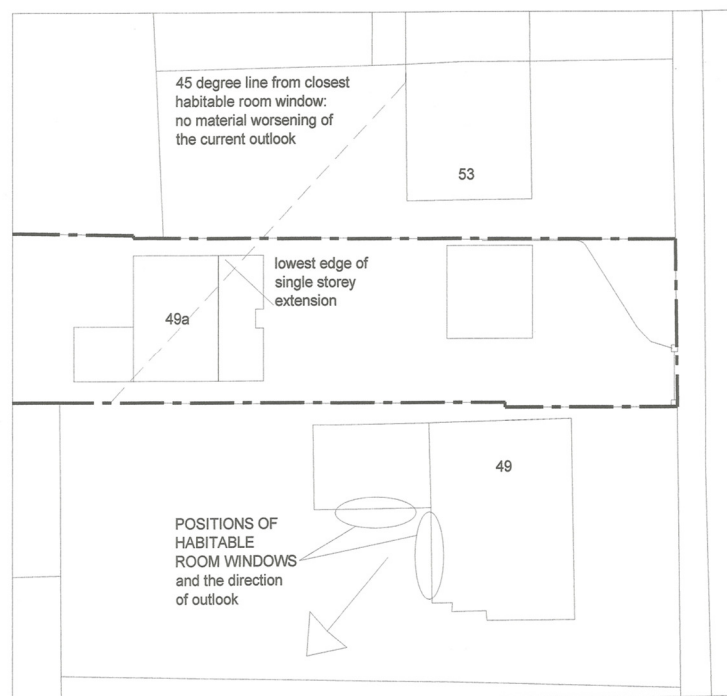
The new work at the North side of the house does not encroach closer to the boundary line. Along this boundary is a tall close boarded fence which conceals the ground floor of the existing house from No. 53 to the North and will also conceal the small front extension.

At the South boundary the massing of the accommodation is again not closer to the boundary albeit that there is a covered walkway proposed. The scale and extent of this covered way is in the range of Permitted Development in fact. The reason for this element of the scheme is to enhance privacy for YTC and also to provide useful storage. The detail is not a new one but coincidentally is also seen toward the front of the plot on the North side of number 49.

(b). Relationship to neighbouring houses

The existing two-storey house is positioned uniquely to the rear of neighbouring houses as already noted. The work does not have a realistic impact on number 53 to the North. The main habitable rooms in 53 are to the North side of that house and further away from YTC.

Regarding number 49, the main habitable rooms at ground floor level are at the South West corner and not visible at all from YTC; the orientation of views from these rooms is to the South and away from YTC, there is complete privacy between the houses.



The applicant has had meetings with both neighbouring owners. The proposed drawings and 3d views (attached following), and also the previously approved scheme were discussed and the neighbours were content with this new scheme and saw the improvement made by comparison to the previously approved version.

The Natural Environment

(a). Green Network

The YTC plot is outside areas described under the Green Network.

(b) Topography

There are no topographical issues, the site and those neighbouring YTC are all on a level.

(c). Trees

We are not attaching a tree survey. There are trees in the vicinity but not sufficiently close to the house to have a material impact on the proposed changes which are small in scale. The proposed garage will sit on existing paving and will not require a foundation to be built.

Streetscene

The proposed changes to the house will hardly be hardly visible from Conisboro Avenue, due to the position of the house (see earlier photographs).

The materials to be used will match the existing house. The plan is to adapt the house in a style which can be perceived to be original to the plot. The new work is to be discreet in scale and with materials which match the existing house.

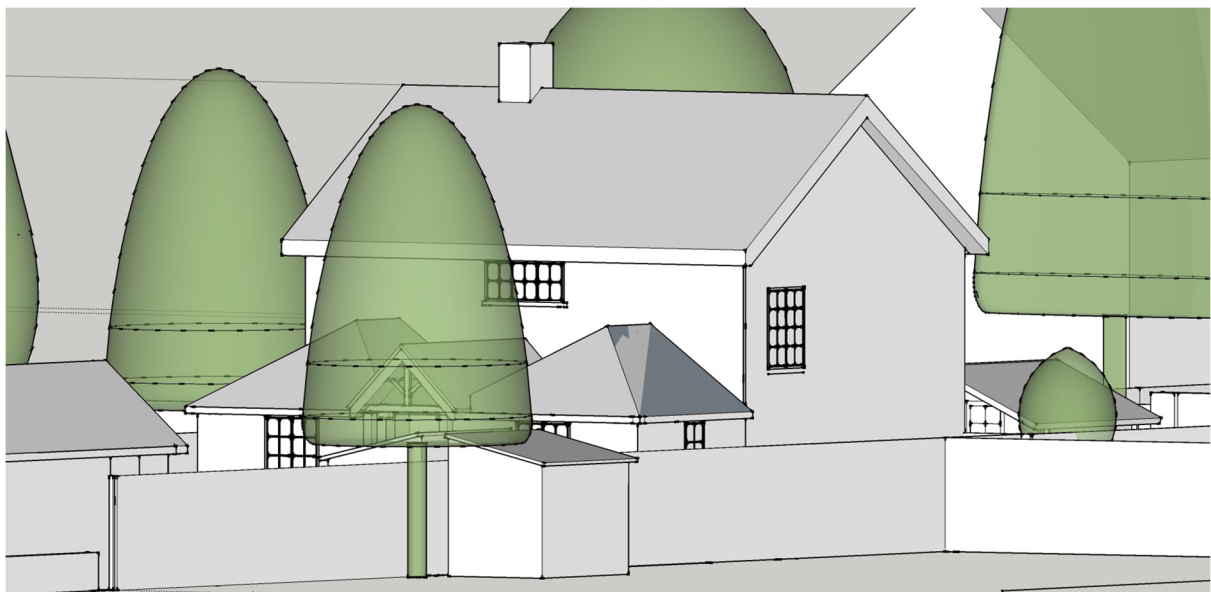
Red facing brickwork will match the existing. Roof tiles will be clay plain tiles, traditionally typical of this style and age of cottage-styled property; several examples can be seen in the local area close to the YTC plot.

Some 3-d illustrations, also discussed with neighbours
and illustrating the scheme follow overleaf ...

Overall View. YTC is central, no. 49 to the left and no.53 to the right hand side : -



View across to YTC from the rear garden of no.53.
There is minimal difference to the existing massing visible of YTC : -



View across to YTC from the rear garden of no. 49 :-



View into the YTC site from Conisboro Avenue.

The new work to the house is discreet and the new garage is hidden away behind the front roadside planting (see Photograph 3). :-

