
Design, Sustainability and Access Statement

Erection of a new 4 bedroom detached house on
land at Autumn Close, Emmer Green, RG4 8UL



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1.0 Background

This document accompanies the submission of a planning application to erect a new detached house on the land adjoining 5 Autumn Close and to the rear of 3A and 3 Kiln Cottages. It should be read in conjunction with drawings prepared by Deepsea Engineering Ltd as submitted to Reading Borough Council. This application seeks to develop the site and constructing an environmentally sustainable and energy efficient family home.

2.0 Analysis of Site and Context

2.1 Location and Site Description

The application site is located at the north edge of Emmer Green, approximately 1km from Emmer Green shopping precinct and within the settlement boundary of Reading borough as defined on the Local Plan Proposal Map. Emmer Green town centre is located at the southwest end of Kiln Road. The application site of approximately 0.175 acres is formerly part of disused garden of No. 3 and 2 Kiln Cottages and No. 5 Autumn Close. The proposed development site nests between No. 5, No. 6 Autumn Close and No. 2, No. 3 and 3A Kiln Cottages. The site is not within a Conservation Area.

The site has public transport connects with regular bus services serving Emmer green, Caversham and Reading town centres and train station. Emmer green town centre is within walking distance.

Birdseye views (Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2) illustrates the location of the site and its relationship with the surrounding buildings and roads.



Figure 2-1: Satellite View of the Proposed Development Site



Figure 2-2: Birdseye View of the Proposed Development Site (3a Kiln Cottages not shown)

2.2 Building Form

There is a relative uniform scale and type of dwellings in the surrounding area. There is a predominance of detached post war and 1970s housing grouped in a reasonably regular pattern around residential cul-de-sac. Being mass developed in the similar period, the buildings to the east of the site has a strong uniformity in size, style, form and materials. To the southwest of the site and to the edge of the countryside, there are four 1.5 storey Victorian terraced cottages known as Kiln cottages and traditional style semi-detached houses known as Felix cottages.

Autumn Close is a cul-de-sac serves 8 residential houses and connects to Kiln Road to the southeast via Marchwood Ave. The dwellings at Autumn Close are modest size 1970s developments including a mix of two story houses and bungalows similar in scale, style and massing, featuring yellow/red brick construction and a shallow pitched gable roof. The two storey houses are clad in brown/black tiles/timber cladding at the first floor level. Southwest side of the development back on to the rear gardens of Kiln Cottages, which are two storey Victorian terrace cottages with high pitch red clay tile gable roofs. To the Northeast, the site adjoins the side of the long garden of No. 2 Felix Cottage. No. 1 and No. 2 Felix cottages are 2 storey traditional red brick houses featuring high pitch gable roof with red clay tiles.



Figure

2-3 Photos of Neighbouring Area

The site has 5 immediate neighbours:

No. 5 Autumn Close: [Figure 2-7] 1970s detached house

No. 6 Autumn Close: [Figure 2-8, Figure 2-9] 1970s detached house

No. 2 and No. 3/3a Kiln Cottages, Kiln Road: [Figure 2-10] 1.5 storey Victorian terrace cottages

No. 2 Felix Cottage, Kiln Road: [Figure 2-11] Traditional semi-detached two storey house



Figure 2-4: Site Photograph (view towards 2 Felix Cottage)



Figure 2-5: Site Photograph (No. 6 Autumn Close)



Figure 2-6: Site Photograph: View from Autumn Close



Figure 2-7: No.5 Autumn Close



Figure 2-8: No.6 Autumn Close



Figure 2-9: No.6 Autumn Close

2.3 Views

There are limited views into and out of the site. Views to the site are restricted to the close range views from Autumn Close (Figure 2-6). The proposed driveway is in between No. 5 and No. 6 Autumn Close. Part of the proposed dwelling may be visible from Kiln Road through the spacious front garden of No. 2 Felix cottage, however the view may be further blocked by the construction of the approved detached house at the side of No.2 Felix Cottage.



Figure 2-10: No. 2 and No. 3 Kiln Cottages, View from Kiln Road (Prior construction of 3a Kiln cottages)



Figure 2-11: No. 2 Felix Cottages, View from Kiln Road

3.0 Review of Planning History

3.1 Planning History:

Outline planning application for the erection of new bungalow (Access and Layout Only) with Reference: 09/01889/OUT has been refused on 09 March 2010 and subsequent appeal (APP/E0345/A/10/2135967) dismissed on 15 March 2011. The proposed layout in the outline planning application is shown in Figure 3-1.

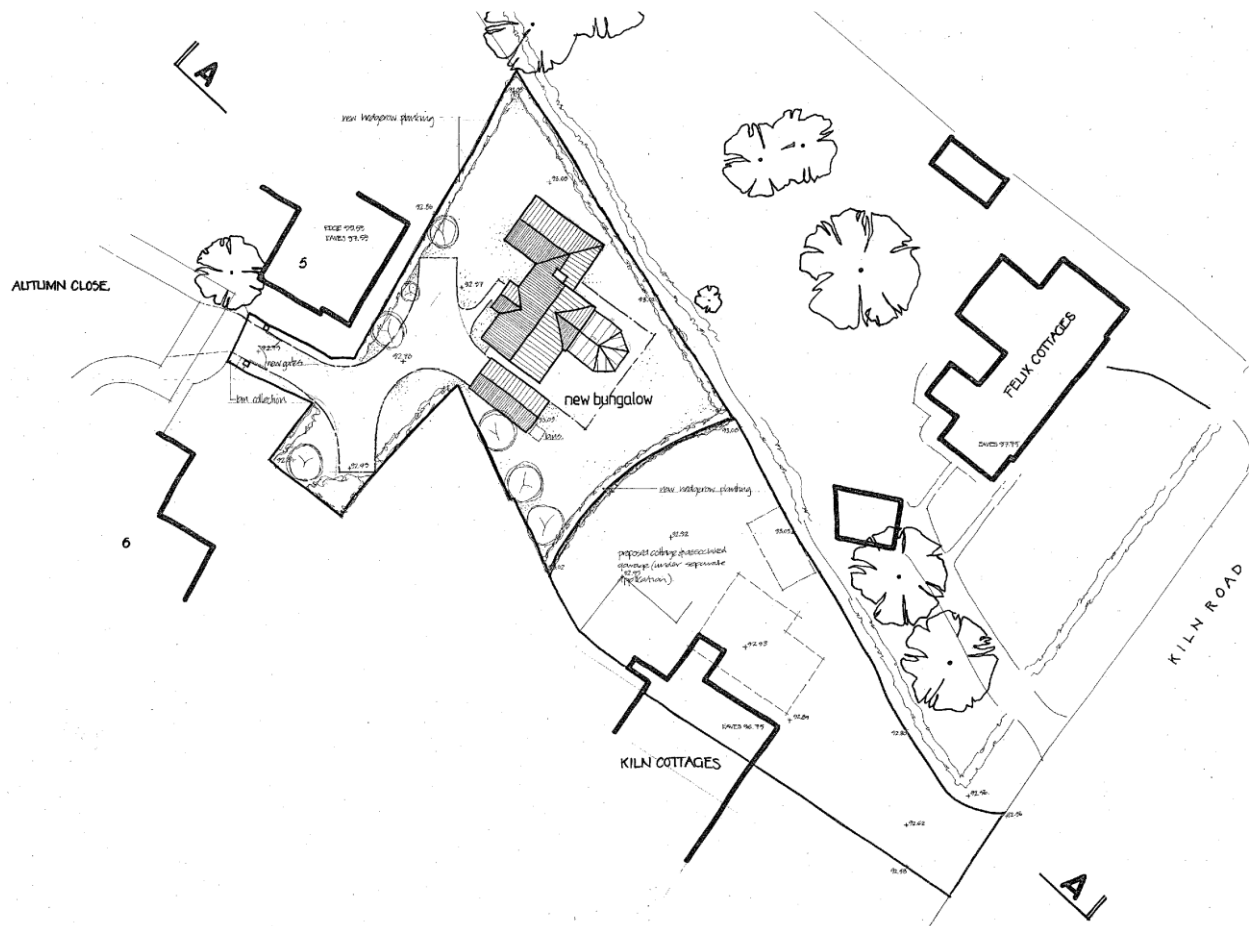


Figure 3-1: Previously Refused Outline Planning Application for a Detached Bungalow (Ref. 09/01889/OUT)

The main reasons for refusal are:

- The harmful extent of the layout of the large access, drive and parking and turning area would dominate the frontage of the plot and would be at odds with the regular rhythm and open appearance of the frontages of the existing dwelling.
- The application fail to demonstrate that the layout of the new development will provide adequate privacy from other dwellings
- Absence of sufficient information to demonstrate the appeal site has any right of access over the strip of land which separates it the public highway.
- The proposal does not make adequate provision for meeting the appropriate standards under the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- Lack of S106 unilateral undertaking.

The proposed scheme in this application has addressed all the issues arise from the previous outline planning application through careful site analysis and innovative design. The above issues are therefore overcome by:

- A more efficient and compact parking and turning arrangement in the frontage.
- Carefully designed building orientation and position of windows and doors to ensure privacies of other dwellings and the proposed dwelling.
- Supporting title plan is submitted together with this application as a proof of access right to the public highway without passing third party land.
- The requirement of Code of Sustainable Homes has been withdrawn by Reading Borough Council in 2015, thus no longer applicable.
- The applicant is willing to make S106 agreement.

Full planning application has been made for a 4 bed detached house, Ref 190087 on 17th January 2019. The application has been refused by the planning committee on 19 November 2019 despite the support of the planning officer. The reasons for refusal are:

1. The proposed development, by reason of size, detailed design, materials and layout would fail to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), and Policy H11 (Development of Private Residential Gardens) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. The proposed development, by reason of its bulk, scale, and massing and proximity to adjoining properties would be overbearing to, and result in a loss of privacy and outlook for existing residents contrary to Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
3. The proposed development, by reason of its lack of an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, and in the subsequent absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, including an obligation for Affordable Housing to be applied on a cumulative basis should the building subsequently be extended / altered (to create further units) or units sub-divided, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to policy H3 (Affordable Housing) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013.

Both the applicant and the planning officer disagree with the refusal. The publication of NPPF since March 2012 recognises how good design, good planning and sustainable development are related. The NPPF also makes clear that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles, or stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or style. The surrounding houses are of 1960s-70s post-war mass development with no architecture significance. The previous proposed development in the applicant opinion is well in keep with the massing, material, better sustainable design of surrounding houses and offer much improved character of the local area. All the privacy issues have been carefully resolved and spacing around the buildings are well beyond the recommended standards in most local authorities and above national standards. It is a disappointment to be refused by the local planning committee on the basis contradicting the NPPF guidance.

Nevertheless, the revised proposed design scheme in this statement is to seek a more acceptable design by taking into the recommendations from the planning committee regarding the orientation and style to overcome the previous refusals. The section 106 agreement draft has been previously agreed in

principle with the planning department, but was not formalised because of the application has been forwarded to planning committee and thus it should not be an actual refusal ground.

4.0 Design Proposal

4.1 Design Principles

This proposed design has been prepared following a review of the reasons for refusal of the previous outline and detailed planning applications and the analysis of the site and surrounding context as outlined in the above sections. This planning application proposes the erection a two storey detached house with detached double garages. The proposed dwelling will be accessed from Autumn Close with new dropped curb at Autumn Close. A driveway and double garage will be provided in front of the dwelling with space for permanent parking of 3 cars. The access and double garage arrangement is the same as the previous proposal which has been agreed with the planning department and highway agency. The additional off street parking at the front of proposed dwelling is relocated furthest away from No. 5 Autumn close to minimized any potential impact.

Following the previous planning committee recommendation, the revised proposed dwelling is orientated along the north-south direction following the shape of the plot. The new proposed building has a simple linear ridgeline, shape and scale as the surrounding houses at Autumn Close and the surrounding area. All rooms are oriented towards the east direction to avoid overlooking into neighbouring houses and vice versa.

A key design approach is to ensure transparency and connection between the internal spaces and the garden. This has been achieved through the use of full height glazing and large sliding doors within the living spaces on the ground floor. With well-proportioned rooms and large open plan space, together with full sized downstairs bathroom not only allows flexible use of space as a family home but also allowed it to be easily reconfigured to suit multi-generation living, disabled accommodation and work-home arrangement which are scarce in the local housing supply.

4.2 Use

The proposed use of the site for a single residential dwelling is consistent with the broadly residential area in which it is located. The application site is located in an area of predominantly detached houses with modest size gardens. The use of the site as a single dwelling will maintain this existing character.

4.3 Amount and Scale

The proposal will have a gross internal area of 180 square metres and a foot print of 103sqm. The GIA is 15 sqm smaller than the earlier refused proposal. The proposed footprint is significant smaller than the previous proposal of 127sqm. The double garage will have a GIA of 39sqm occupying the irregular corner of the site and is the same as the previous proposal. The overall foot print and garden space are similar to those of nearby properties in Autumn Close (i.e, No. 5, No. 8, No. 3) and the new build at No.2 Felix Cottage.

To proposed design further reduced the hardstanding from the previous proposal to 104sqm. (including driveway). The total garden space increases to approximately 428 sqm. The scale of the garden space is considered appropriate for the size of the development and the character of the area and satisfies the standards defined in Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance "appendix 4: Space Around Dwelling (March 1994).

4.4 Layout

Environmental design has played an important role in every aspect of the design. The proposal has been conceived to take full advantage of the environmental opportunity within the constraints of the site.

The detached double garage will be sitting and occupying the irregular corner at the east of the site. There will be a parking and turning area between the garage and the front of the dwelling. Additional parking is provided at the front of the property. The layout arrangement significantly reduces the hard surfacing required and provide a regular shaped front garden which will be in keeping with the character of the surrounding houses.

All principle windows are facing towards the east. There are living room, kitchen dinner, a bathroom and a utility room on the ground floor and four bedrooms with en-suites on the first floor. It is position at a significant distance from No.5 (approx. 5m) and no side windows except the ground floor bathroom window which will be obscured towards No. 5. The distances between the other side gable and the rear of No. 3 and 3a Kiln cottages are in excess of 16.5ms and there is no window on this side towards the Kiln cottages. This layout ensures that the living condition (i.e. sunlight, privacy) at all the surrounding neighbours will be unaffected by the new building.

The principle garden wrap around the proposed dwelling on three directions. All the habitable room are oriented facing the rear garden. The layout and sitting of the proposed dwelling have been informed by the context of development in the area and characteristics of the site. The orientation of the building follows the recommendation given by the planning committee and follow the shape of the plot in the north-south direction.

4.5 Form

Critical to the design approach is the importance to root the proposal within the existing characteristic of the area. The design has sought to echo the existing massing and features around Autumn Close and Kiln Roads. The proposed building adopts a simple linear gable form which follows the same design style of the two storey houses in the area. As a result, the proposed development sits well within the contexts.

4.6 Appearance

Many traditional vernacular characteristics, details and material has been analysed and incorporated in the design. The simple gable roof form is consistent with the local building form. Material proposed is also in line with the surrounding buildings, brick faced ground floor and timber cladding on the first floor. Metal roof (Zinc or Steel) is proposed instead of concrete roof tiles used in the surrounding buildings. This will give the proposed building a more contemporary feel comparing to the tired low quality 1960s looks as the other houses. As a result, the design of the proposed dwelling is functional, contemporary and follows the proportions of adjoining dwelling to ensure that it is contextually acceptable.

4.7 Landscaping

The front parking and driveway have been designed to minimise the hardstanding areas. Flowerbed and shrubs will be planted at the all area not essential for parking and turning. To further minimise the impact, SuDs grass pavers are to be used on the driveway. It not only reduces the surface runoff but also encourage biodiversity on driveway. This is a significant improvement from the typical driveway material and landscaping scheme used in the local area. The proposed landscaping design in the current

proposal further reduces the hard standing area from the previous proposal by relocating the driving parking space further to the south.

The spacious rear and surrounding garden at the east, north and south of the site will be mainly laid lawn with native flower beds, hedges and trees to enhance the open characters of the area and create habitation for wild life. There are no mature trees at the development site. All existing fences and hedge will be retained and improved. New 1.8m wildy friendly wooden fences will be erected along the boundary to the footpath adjacent to No.2 Felix Cottage which replaces the existing wired fences.

It is noted that the sympathetic development of the site and alongside the provision of an appropriate landscape scheme to the frontage and rear gardens will significantly improve the outlook of the existing site both from the street and from neighbouring properties.

4.8 Access and Parking

The proposed access and garage parking arrangement are the same as in the previous proposal which has been discussed and agreed with the highway department and the planning department.

Vehicular access to the site would be from Autumn Close through the land between No. 5 and No. 6 Autumn Close (currently fenced off with access gate as shown in Figure 2-4). The access is approximately 5m in width and 7m in length. The new vehicular access will require a dropped curb to be constructed at the turning head. It is noted that there is already vehicular access with dropped curb at the opposite side of the turning head in front of No. 2 Autumn Close and thus the proposed new access is conform to the existing traffic arrangement at Autumn Close.

The entrance to the proposed development will be visible from Autumn Close with clearly identifiable house sign and the inclusion of electric operated gate. The design of the gate (i.e. use of wooden panel gate) will be carefully selected such that it will blend in well with the surroundings and create minimal disruption of the rhythm of frontages and the spaces in between while still highlight the presence of the new dwelling. The proposed access will substantially improve the overall appearance of currently site.

The garage has an internal dimension of 7.7m width by 5.2m long. This differs from the Reading Borough Council Revised Parking Standard and Designs SPD recommended 5.5m width x 7m long; However space for storage to accommodate bicycle would be provided at the side instead of at the rear as suggested by the SPD as the reason for the extra length required. The proposed garage layout has been confirmed to be acceptable by the highway department in the previous application. In addition, this layout also provides opportunities for accessible parking if required. One additional permanent parking space is proposed at the front driveway in front of the main entrance. Provision of 3 permanent car parking spaces are provided within the scheme.

Given the development is serviced off a minor road and serve a single dwelling with sufficient off street parking spaces, it is considered that the intensification is not significant to cause any harm to highway users or increase the on street parking needs in the area. Furthermore, the site facilitates sufficient room for turning at the front driveway within the site area to ensure the entrance and exist of motor vehicles in a forward gear. Service and emergency vehicles can easily position themselves within 20m of the dwelling entrance.

Concerns regarding pedestrian safety have been addressed in the design process. The followings demonstrate that proposed access satisfy the local and national highway safety requirements and summaries the strategies used to further enhance the safety.

- Being at the end of a cul-de-sac, the traffic and pedestrian level at the site entrance is extremely low. The only pedestrian or vehicle passing the site will most likely be the residence and those visiting No. 5 Autumn close.
- Three permanent parking spaces have been provided on site and further more temporary parking spaces can be provided at the spacious front drive or the large side garden if required. These are considered to be sufficient to avoid potential on street guess parking at autumn close.
- Two convex blind spot mirrors will be installed at the entrance of the driveway. This will give both the driver and pedestrians a wider and clear viewing of the surrounding traffic.
- The pedestrian sight slays has been assessed. As demonstrated in Figure 4-1, there is sufficient pedestrian visibility at the site entrance, exceeding the required standard allowable of 2.0m (adopted by most local authorities).
- As shown in Figure 4-1, vehicles exiting the site will have a clear line of sight of the coming vehicles from both directions.
- Some local residents are particularly concerned about potential parking at the turning head; however, parking shall be prohibited at the turning head as per Highway Code regardless the existence of the proposed property. A “No Parking” sign will be displayed on the front gate together with CCTV monitoring to provide further assurance that no car shall block the driveway of both No. 5 and the proposed property.

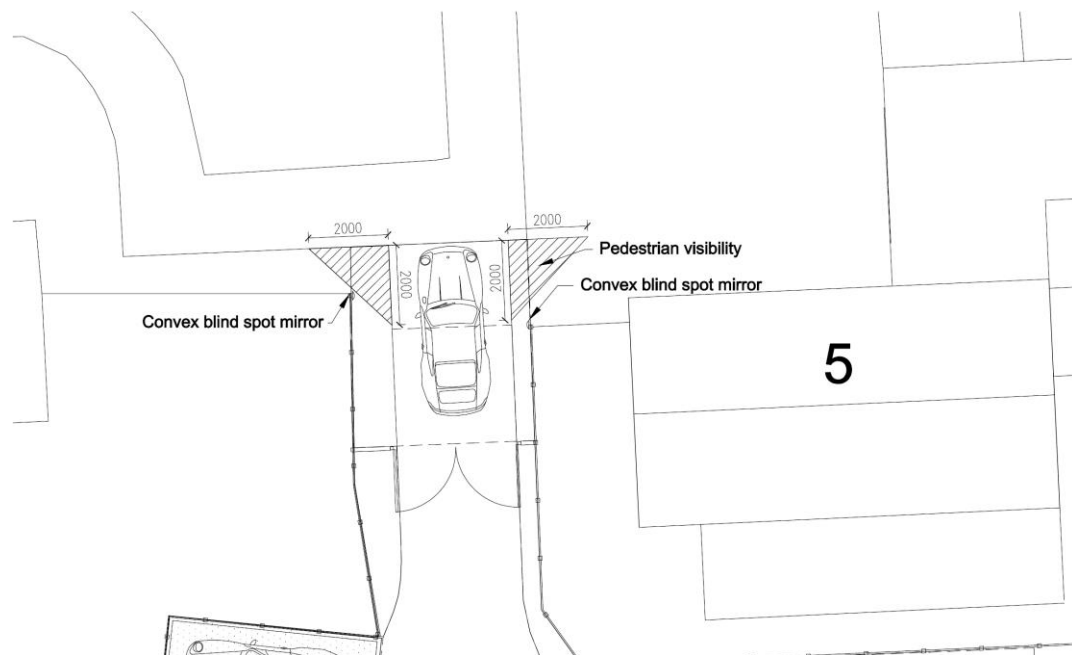


Figure4-1: Site Access Visibility and Safety Measurement

4.9 Lifetime Home

The propose development will meet Lifetime Homes criteria whenever possible. The following summarised the key areas of compliance associate with this planning application:

- Entrance level accessible bathroom on the ground floor;
- The large ground floor living room or kitchen can be easily repartitioned and adapted to be used for disabled person and carer;
- Wide staircase and sufficient turning space conform to life time home standard;
- Levelled thresholds throughout the development;
- Width of hallway and doors allow wheelchair access;

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- Windows sill levels in living space are no higher than 800mm from floor level
 - Extra wide garage

4.10 Amenity of Neighbours

Due to the nature of the site, one of the key design considerations in the proposal is amenity of neighbours. The development site is surrounded by 6 immediate neighbouring plots, No. 5 and No. 6 Autumn Close, No. 2, No. 3 and 3a Kiln Cottages, No. 2 Felix cottage (or the new house next to No. 2 Felix cottage).

No.5 Autumn Close

No. 5 Autumn Close is situated on the northwest of the proposed site. The principle orientation of the dwelling is in the southwest-northeast direction. There are three first floor windows facing the proposed site. On the ground floor there are two side windows serving the dining room facing the proposed site. There is also one window facing southwest serving the dining which will not be affected by the proposed development. One window and patio door at the new rear ground floor extension are also facing the proposed site across the width of its garden. There are 1.8m wood fences between the site and No. 5.

The proposed building is oriented along the north-south direction with the side gable facing No 5. The proposed building is positioned more than 6m away from No. 5. There is no window on the first floor facing No. 5. There is only one obscured window serving the ground floor bathroom facing No. 5. Ridge heights of both structure elements satisfy the 25 degree as recommended by Building Research Establishment Report "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice". Due to the large distance in between and orientation of the proposed building, there is no shadow and overbearing effect to this property and no overlooking issues between the two properties.

No.6 Autumn Close

No. 6 Autumn Close boundary abuts the proposed site at the southwest boundary, adjacent to the proposed drive way and detached garage. Distance between the main dwelling and boundary is approximately 14m. Only the single storey wing and the garage is within the sightlines of No. 6 Autumn Close. Therefore, the proposed development would not have significant effect on this neighbour.

No. 3 and 3a Kiln Cottages

Rear elevations of No. 3 and 3a Kiln cottages will be facing the side gable of proposed dwelling. The distance between the proposed dwelling and Kiln cottages are in excess of 16.7m. There is no window facing these two neighbours; therefore there is no privacy issues between the proposed dwelling and these two neighbours.

No. 2 Kiln Cottages

The proposed dwelling is positioned 2.5m from the boundary fences at the rear of No. 2 Kiln Cottages. There are two windows serving the ground floor living room are positioned on the side facing the boundary fences with No. 2 Kiln cottages. On the first floor, there are three windows, one serving the staircase and two serving the en-suite bathroom (obscured) serving facing the No. 2 Kiln cottages' rear garden. Because none of the windows on the first floor is serving habitable rooms, there will be no overlooking issue between the two properties.

No.2 Felix Cottage and new house

Majority of the principle windows of the proposed dwelling will be facing the east direction towards the end of long rear garden of No. 2 Felix cottages (or the new house once constructed) but separated by the principle rear garden of the proposed dwelling and public footpath. Due to the large distance (well in excess of 20m) between the proposed dwelling the No. 2 Felix cottage and the nature of oblique orientation between the two properties, it is considered that proposed dwelling does not have significant effect on the living condition, privacy and sunlight on No. 2 Felix cottage and the new house under construction. In addition, the disused footpath and vegetation between the two properties will provide further privacy to both sites. Additional screening can also be achieved by landscaping boundaries.

4.11 Sustainability

This proposal by way of its location on previous garden land, supported by good local infrastructure, responds well to these principles. In addition to its location, there are many principles that have been applied to the scheme in order to achieve a sensitive and sustainable design. Key issues such as orientation and natural daylight were integral to the design of scheme from the outset. A number of design principles covering performance in key areas have been addressed as follows:

1. Energy conservation and CO2 emissions
 - a. The orientation of the building is such that it maximises passive solar gain and minimises heat loss; large opening to the southeast elevation and small opening to the northwest.
 - b. A narrow floor plan ensuring maximum penetration of daylight into the building and providing a highly insulated wrapping element, to minimise heat loss and make use of solar gain from the south.
 - c. An airtight building envelope is proposed, exceeding the targets set down by the current building regulations.
 - d. Dedicated low energy fitting encouraged throughout the building.
 - e. Natural daylight to all living spaces is provided.
 - f. The building will seek to exceed the minimum energy efficiency standards specified in part L of the Building Regulations.
 - g. Integrated cycle storage provided.
 - h. Efficient heating systems proposed.
 - i. A+ rated appliances will be installed.
2. Water
 - a. Aerated taps to be provided.
 - b. Dual flush WC cisterns to be provided.
 - c. Water butts will be provided to collect rain water from the roof and used for watering the garden.
3. Materials
 - a. Low environmental impact materials are proposed eg. Timber cladding.
 - b. The scheme will endeavour to use locally sourced materials where possible.
4. Surface water run off
 - a. Permeable surfaces to driveway and garden are proposed to permit percolation through to the subsoil to reduce water discharge.
 - b. The scheme incorporates new planting and other soft landscaping which will reduce surface water into main drain network.
 - c. Excessive rain water will be dispersed through soakways.
5. Waste
 - a. Provision of recycling bins and dedicated bin store.
 - b. Standard sized products will be used where possible, minimizing cutting and possible wastage.
6. Pollution

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- a. Insulating materials to have low embodied energy and NOx emission.
 - 7. Health and wellbeing
 - a. Natural daylight and sky views to all habitable rooms.
 - b. Acoustic performance in excess of Building Regulations Part E
 - 8. Adaptability
 - a. The open plan ground floor layout and the separate single storey wing promote superb flexible arrangements that allows for residents choice and customisation. The single storey wing could be used as bedroom or annex for elderly and disabled person, home office, addition living spaces and etc. The layout allows flexible configuration of the ground floor if needed.
 - b. The open plan layout and wider corridors provide adequate circulation space for wheelchairs.
 - c. Car parking space with direct and convenient access. Accessible parking is available within the extra wide double garage.
 - 9. Ecology
 - a. The scheme will incorporate planting and other soft landscaping to encourage biodiversity.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposal dwelling is considered to be of a design that is respectful of the character of the existing dwelling and the character of the surrounding area in terms of its layout, proportions and materials.

The previous issues raised by the planning officer and planning inspectorate and planning committee in the outline planning application and detailed planning application have been fully resolved through the design process. Comparing with the previous refused detailed application for a detached dwelling, the current proposed design is less in massing, scale and intrusive to the neighbouring properties. It is also more in harmony with the local area by adopting the similar design style and material.

The application believes that the current proposal is contextually more appropriate, enhances the appearance and character of the area and accords fully with the principle of the requirements of local and national planning policies.

Should the Local Planning Authority require further clarification on any area of the scheme, or wish to discuss matters in further detail they are ask to contact the agent at the earliest possible opportunity.

6.0 Supporting Documents

- (1) Land Registry Title Plan BK19495
- (2) Affordable Housing Statement
- (3) CIL form