

Design & Access Statement
Planning submission

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Proposal for first floor extension to form a 2-bed flat to replace the existing balustrade/parapet wall, shed and entrance cupola, together with associated revisions to landscaping and access

at

35 Dover Street, Reading, RG1 6AX
2661-012P5 - 22 April 2020

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access statement supports a new planning application following refusal of application 181846 on 12th April 2019.

The application was further considered at appeal (APP/E0345/W/19/3233269) where the inspector concluded that:

“Whilst I have found no harm to the character and appearance of the area or to the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties, I have found that the proposal fails to provide inclusive access and fails to provide the required contribution to affordable housing. For these reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.”

In the current application we have addressed both of the remaining issues raised by the inspector:

Inclusive access has now been provided by inclusion of an external lift to allow level access to the new flat, all in line with part M4(2) as required by council policy.

The client has provided valuations and wishes to confirm that he will enter into an agreement to deal with off site affordable housing contributions

Most importantly the inspector confirmed that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area, or the living conditions of neighbours. We trust that as the scheme design has not altered, the council would see fit to approve this application, which would create an additional family dwelling within a sustainable location near the town centre, whilst addressing the only remaining issues for previous refusal.

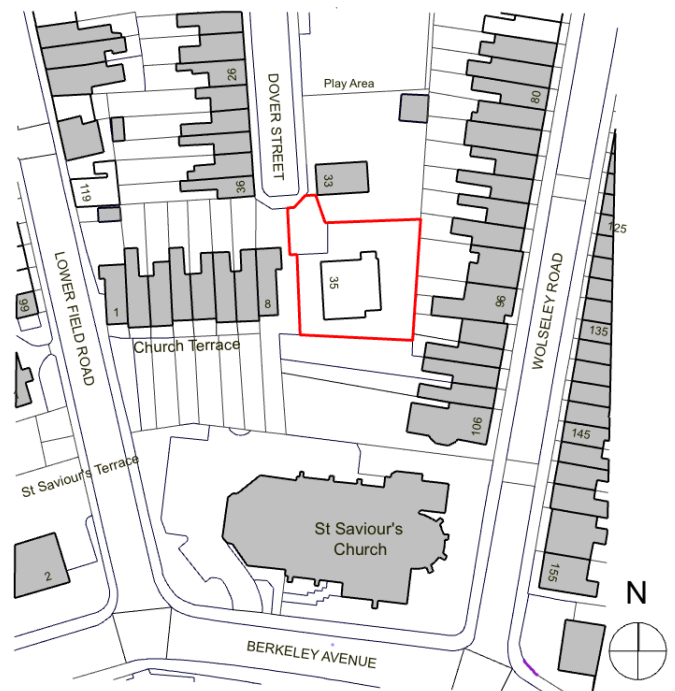
SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

35 Dover Street is a single storey house, which has an unusual access arrangement as the main entrance is at the flat roof level, via a 'lantern'.

The remainder of the roof is also accessible, and includes solid brick parapet walls, acting as balustrades, a shed, and a roof terrace.

Our client proposes to create two 2-bed flats by providing an additional flat above the existing house, thus removing the unattractive elements currently existing at roof level.

The original house is a rather simple geometric building, let down by the existing roof scape and access arrangements. The single storey dwelling was constructed in the 1980's.



Location plan

The existing floor level, and in fact the existing roof level, are significantly lower than the street level, as ground levels drop down towards Berkely Avenue. The roof level is about 2 meters below street level, and 1.5 meter below car park level, so that the house is currently not easily visible when approaching from Dover Street.

We believe the proposals present an opportunity to improve what is currently a weakness in the urban grain at the end of Dover Street, whilst only increasing the building height by approximately 2m above current parapet height.

The development would provide opportunity for a more effective use of this highly sustainable site to accommodate a limited degree of additional residential accommodation.

The additional dwelling will make a small but useful contribution to the supply of housing in Reading in accordance with National and Local planning policies.



View to the end of Dover Street looking south. The red arrow indicates location of 35 Dover Street. Picture taken above eye height at 2.3m for better visibility of the site. The existing building is largely hidden from view as it is below street level, the red arrow indicates the entrance cupola can just be seen.



Existing roof-scape currently creating a negative impact on the surrounding area. Access to the existing house is via the cupola, roof terrace and shed further fill the space on the flat roof.

The existing railings and stairs to the property could be replaced with something more attractive.



Current access to roof from the lower level garden

SITE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Constraints:

- Sloping site
- Ground floor level below street level
- 2 parking spaces
- Proximity of residential neighbours
- Locally listed buildings

Opportunities:

- Improve current unattractive roof
- Town centre
- Brownfield site
- Intensify residential use
- Surrounded by residential use and church
- Improve energy use and renewables
- Quiet secluded site

PLANNING HISTORY/CONTEXT

The existing building was constructed in 1984. The shed at flat roof level and the roof terrace have been constructed over 5 years ago.

The current application is proposed to address the only 2 outstanding concerns upheld by the planning appeal of 2019.

Planning history:

- 81/TP/361 - Formation of new access road and erection of 19 single person flats with 21 parking spaces. Demolition of 96/98 Wolseley Street. Refused. 5 June 1981.
- 83/TP/898 – Erection of detached house with parking area. Approved. 16 December 1983, resulting in the current building.
- 181846 – refused - Proposal for first floor extension to form a 2-bed flat to replace the existing balustrade/parapet wall, shed and entrance cupola, together with associated revisions to landscaping and access
- appeal (APP/E0345/W/19/3233269) -appeal dismissed on the basis of 2 issues that were upheld; Affordable Housing Contribution and Inclusive Access

Other relevant, and recent, applications are detailed below.

- 151924- 3 Castle Crescent – Refurbishment of 3 Castle Crescent to provide 5 residential dwellings including internal and external alterations. Demolition of existing outbuildings including existing coach house and garage. Development of 8 residential dwellings along eastern boundary of the site. All associated works include vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, landscaping and bin store provision. – Approved 2016 This application shows the growing demand for residential units in zone 2. The application provides an example of separating distance between habitable room windows and neighbouring properties, which shows that

14 m can be acceptable with no need of obscured glazing.

- 071378- 12 Castle Crescent - Redevelop existing 3 flats to create 5 flats – Approved 2007As per the previous reference application, this is another example of the growing demand for residential units in zone 2 where our site sits. This property would provide 34.56 sqm of private garden and approx. 175 sqm of shared amenity space to 4 flats in total, i.e. approx. 43 sqm per flat. Provided are also 4 parking spaces in total for 5 flats, while in the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a total of 5 parking spaces i.e. 1 on-site parking space for each 1-bed and 2-bed dwelling.

There is clearly an opportunity to increase the intensity of use on this underdeveloped brownfield site, and create much-needed residential units within a sustainable setting.

Considering nearby building heights the site would be suitable for development up to 2 storeys in order to not block the views of the neighbours, as was agreed by the appeal inspector.

Nearby residential applications show that typically a slight under provision (below policy) in car parking spaces is deemed acceptable, and this was not raised as an issue at 181846.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

Pre-application advice was sought previously for this property in 2016. Ref. 160951. The advice was based on the more ambitious proposal for a 2-storey extension and creation of 3x2 bed flats.

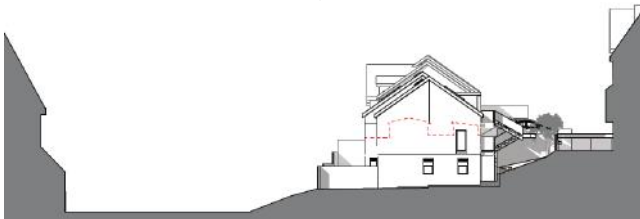
The pre-application advice raised concerns on the privacy of the neighbouring properties due to the 3-storey height of the development and the windows to the habitable rooms proposed.

The current proposal proposes 2 flats, rather than 3, and is flat roofed and a simple continuation of the existing built form.

The main pre-app advice and our responses are captured below:

1. Impact on character and appearance of the site and surroundings

The concerns raised for the 3-storey proposal were based on the views of the heritage assets from Dover Street. These were taken into account in the new proposed design. The 3D views on the next page show the existing and proposed view, giving information about the level of view obscured and impact on the setting of no.94 and 96 Wolseley Street (listed buildings) and St Saviours Church (of local architectural interest).



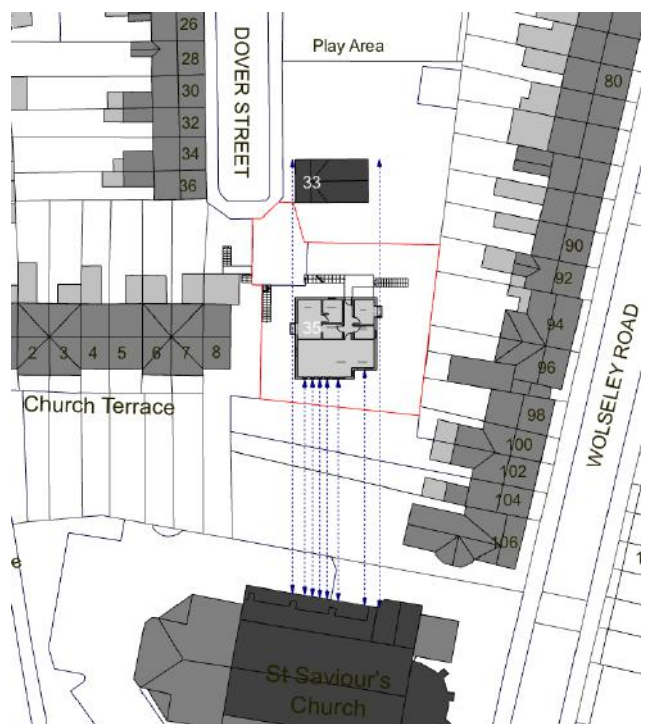
Pre-app proposed for 3 flats, with pitched roof section showing location between 33 Dover Street and St Saviours Church



Composite wide-angle photo. The listed buildings No. 94 and 96 Wolseley Street are east of our site (just behind the tree), and St Savours Church can be seen just south of the site

2. Impact on neighbours

In response to the advice, obscured glazing is proposed to reduce the impact on overlooking to properties at 33 Dover Street, 8 Church Terrace and properties at Wolseley Road. Directional windows to the St. Saviour's Church and to the front and back of 33 Dover Street, and a Juliette balcony to the St. Saviour's Church.



Windows on first floor - view direction in blue dashed line

3. Transport issues

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. The proposal includes 2 parking spaces on the site, bike storage for each flat and on-site bin storage for the new dwelling. Furthermore, the existing house has the benefit of an on street-parking permit.

4. Affordable housing

Affordable housing is proposed to be dealt with off-site, via S.106 contributions

THE PROPOSAL

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The existing building, though mostly a simple and elegant form, is let down by the complexity at roof level, where a cupola, shed and access arrangements create an unattractive roof scape.

The building, though not significantly visible unless seen from the end of Dover street, does not contribute positively to the urban setting.

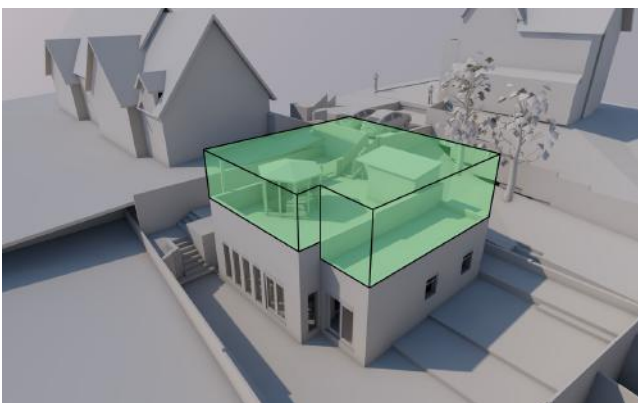
However, we feel that if a further storey was added, a more attractive view could be presented towards Dover Street, as the existing view of cupola, shed and roof form a blight on the otherwise attractive street scene.

Following 2016 pre-app for a 3-storey building, the client has paired down his ambitions to ensure that no undue loss of amenity would be suffered by nearby residential uses.

We have shown the outline of the existing building and the proposed scheme on elevations and sections for reference.

The proposal for a single storey addition, due to the height of the existing parapet walls, results in a relatively modest increase of overall building height, approximately 2.5m above existing parapet height.

Although a modest increase in height locally, this can provide much needed accommodation near the town centre.



A relatively minor increase in height can result in full storey due to existing parapet height and existing building elements at current roof level.



Existing aerial view



Pre-app proposed aerial view



Proposed aerial view

The building would provide a simple, efficient floor plan, which is effectively copied from the existing floor, which results in room types being stacked to minimize noise impact.

Lounge and kitchen would overlook the rear of the church, thus not impacting on surrounding properties, whilst other windows for the new floor would be in opaque glass, or be directional only to reduce impact on neighbouring amenity.

Access to the existing house is via current roof level, and it is proposed that access to the new flat would be similarly arranged, with new steps and lift leading from street/parking level down to the new front door.

Access to the original dwelling would be via the existing path along the east, which gently leads down into the existing garden and access via patio doors already in existence.



Existing 3D view from Dover Street



Proposed 3D view from Dover Street

LAYOUT

Please refer to the floor and block plans in conjunction with the below explanation.

The flat has been laid out so that the existing house (at lower ground floor) will be accessed through existing patio doors to the South, we envisage new, separate, stairs from the location of the parking platform will lead down to this flat. Improved steps and pavement will be provided alongside the house. Internally the layout is retained as a 2 bed flat. It will benefit from additional floor space due to the omission of the spiral stairs from the living room. The new dwelling at ground floor will be accessed from the street side, via new stairs and a platform lift adjacent to the car parking spaces, which will provide access down to a new front door at this level. The layout will mirror the layout of the existing house.

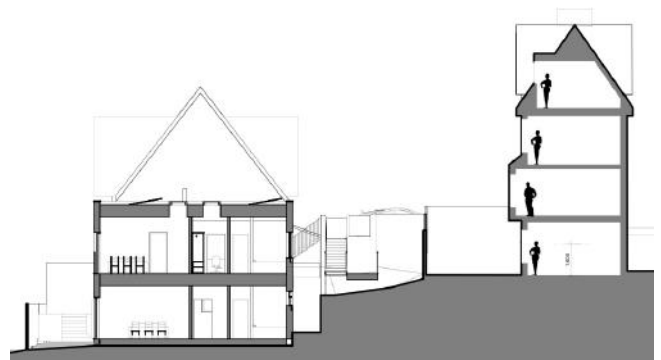
AREA

The existing dwelling has a Gross Internal area of (GIA) $86\text{m}^2 + 6.5\text{m}^2$ (cupola) = 92.5m^2

The proposed building would be a total of $86\text{m}^2 + 88\text{m}^2 = 174\text{m}^2$, an increase of 81.5m^2

HEIGHT

The height of the proposal will be roughly 1100mm above the highest existing roof (on the cupola).



Section showing height compared to number 33 Dover Street which is set significantly higher, and the adjacent Church Terrace roof, which sits above and in line with the proposal.

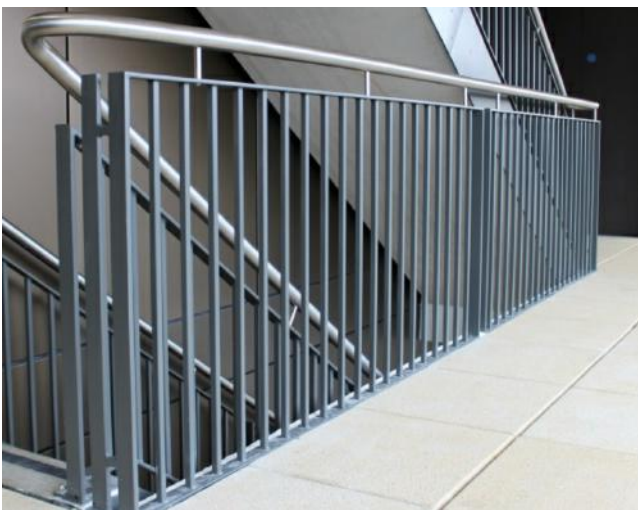
Although the property would increase in height to accommodate the additional dwelling, heights are still considerably below those of adjacent properties, and would seem to fit comfortable within the surrounding urban grain and pattern, as agreed by the planning inspector at appeal.

MATERIALS

The materials for the proposed extension would largely match the existing.

Brick would be matched carefully, windows and doors would similarly be matched with the existing, and a single ply roof in a grey colour would provide a simple and more elegant roof finish than the existing felt roof.

Proposed new stairs, platform lift, and balustrades, would be in painted steel with a dark grey finish to RAL7016.



Proposed steel stairs and elegant flat bar metalwork for new balustrades



Existing materials for the house would be continued in the extension

MASSING

The proposal is for an additional storey to be added to the existing (lower) ground floor, replacing the existing shed, cupola and roof up-stands on the existing flat roof.

The proposal is to retain the character of the house, which is of different shape and materials from the surrounding area.

Our proposal will have no impact on the character of Dover Street, as it will provide a more legible street elevation for the property, which currently sits below street level, and improve the existing roof-scape.



Proposed massing in context



Proposed massing in context

IMPACT ON CHARACTER OF THE AREA



The planning inspector agreed at appeal that impact on the area was not a reason for refusal.

Given the scale of the existing building which is largely a single storey building below street level, there is scope for the dwelling to be extended. The existing building is flat roofed and is atypical for the area.

Our proposal would improve the street elevation along the end of the street by omitting the existing roof elements currently visible: the shed, cupola and roof terrace, which are rather unattractive.

The proposed will provide a simple elegant built form.

It is felt that by simplifying the built shape a positive impact will be made to the character of the area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Please refer to the appeal decision in particular as this refers to the only 2 reasons for refusal remaining to be addressed.

The site is within the settlement boundary of Reading, where the Local Development Plan encourages new residential development to increase housing stock as required to meet the Council's delivery of new homes.

In accordance with ADPP1 of the core strategy the development is located on previously developed land. The site is in an area that benefits from a range of services and facilities, making the location a sustainable choice for new dwellings.

As the site is sufficiently large, there is the opportunity to create a more intensive use without any significant impact on neighbouring properties. The 2 flats will have separate private portion of the adjacent amenity space on site.

The surrounding properties are of various ages and styles, and there is not one particular character approach. Our proposal retains the character of the existing building.

The boundary treatment would be consolidated and re-provided where necessary. Replacement close boarded fencing will be provided along 3 boundaries as shown on the block plan.

2 Juliette balconies are proposed facing St Saviour's Church building to the rear of the house, as there are no issues of overlooking or impact on amenity at this orientation.

We consider that the development is in accordance with the development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

THE PROPOSAL CLIMATE CHANGE

The adaptability of the proposal to deal with climate change has been considered and addressed where possible.

The new dwelling will benefit from good natural light from windows and rooflights.

All units will achieve solar gains from East and South facing windows and will reduce the heating requirement of the properties.

A sustainable drainage system will be used, with permeable paving and rainwater harvesting.

High levels of insulation will be used in the walls and roof, ensuring an energy efficient property that will meet the needs of occupants for many years to come.

Air source heat pump technology will be considered in order to further reduce carbon emissions.

Our client intends to install a wood burning stove in the living room, which will supplement gas for hot water and space heating during cold periods.

Solar PV panels are proposed to be fitted on the flat roof and can be angled due south.

Electric car charging points are proposed for each of the 2 parking spaces, meaning that solar power can be used to charge these cars.

A landscaping plan has been created in accordance to policy CC3.

Our client intends to meet the requirements set out in policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; the proposal will be built to the higher water efficiency standard and achieve a minimum 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate.

The above will mean that the proposed building will be significantly more energy efficient and have a lower carbon footprint than the existing house.

THE PROPOSAL IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURS

The planning inspector confirmed that impact on neighbours is not a reason for refusal, he states; "The appeal site is in a built up area with a number of existing tall buildings in the vicinity and this additional mass of the proposal would not be out of keeping with this pattern of development. Consequently, I am satisfied that this increase in mass would not lead to an overbearing impact on neighbouring occupiers. Consequently, I find that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Accordingly, the appeal proposal would not conflict with Policy CC8 of the LP. This policy seeks, amongst other things, that development will not cause significant detriment to the living environment of existing occupiers."

The nearest neighbour at nr 8 Church Terrace is 7.95m away from the existing house. The single window in the flanking wall (above ground floor) is currently overlooked by the entrance cupola at ground floor level – the proposal will not make this situation any worse as there are no windows proposed opposite the existing window in the flank wall at this level, although a new obscured bedroom window and obscured window to the lounge are proposed. Use of directional windows for the bedroom facing Church Terrace ensures views out for residents without impact on neighbour amenity.

The Property at 33 Dover Street is understood to exist of 4 flats, set over 4 storeys of this Victorian house. The house is 11.7m away from the house at 35 Dover Street. Although many of the rooms overlook our site, it can be argued that the impact on the ground floor windows of nr 33 is minimal, as these are largely below the fence line, and are impacted by the cupola and shed, as well as the roof upstands and trees on our site.

The first floor windows at nr 33 are above the level of the proposed eaves height, the fact that the roof slopes away from the windows helps to reduce the

impact on daylight to this level, but there is a loss to views out from this level.

The Second floor windows to nr 33 will lose only views down below the window level, as the proposed upstands height is below the cill level of nr 33. As the garden to nr33 is predominantly to the north of the house, there is no impact on the amenity space for the neighbouring flats.

The rear elevations of terraced houses along Wolsley Road are about 9m away for the ground floor extensions, but there are no windows in these single storey buildings. The separating distance is generally 15m for main rear elevations with facing windows.

Due to the obscured glazing, directional windows, and the fact that the proposal is rotated in relation to the facing windows, any minor impact is deemed to be acceptable.

In terms of views out of windows, we have provided drawing 2661-018 which shows in section that views are only marginally impacted by the proposal.

ACCESS

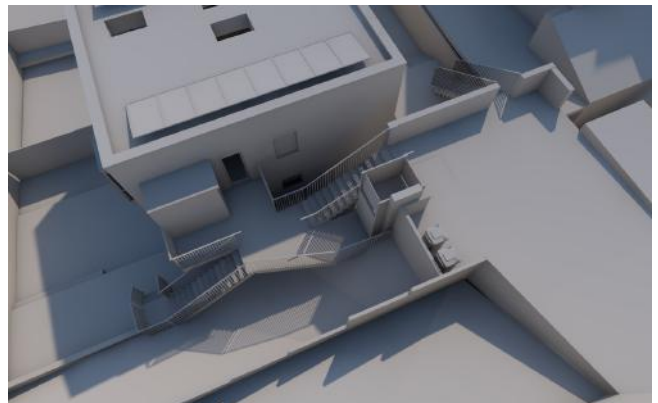
Each unit will have its own front door. Due to the severely sloping site there is no level access provided to the existing house, and this is not proposed to be changed.

Vehicular access is via a dropped kerb and 2 existing parking spaces. We propose to improve the existing access by reducing the slope of the parking area and provide a wheelchair lift and staircases to provide inclusive access to all users of the new dwelling in compliance with part M4(2).

An external wheelchair lift and staircase provide private access to the flat directly from the parking level.

Sketch showing proposed access arrangement to existing house / flat 1, via newly modelled stairs and

levels.



Proposed access arrangement to the new ground floor dwelling via new stairs and lift.

PARKING

The site is located in Zone 2 for parking provision, and is less than a 10 minute walk away from Reading Town Centre and with many bus services (1,2,18,26,28,33) available on Castle Street stop CQ which is less than a 4 min walk away.

All of which make this site a very sustainable location for residential development. The site lies within 200m from the central core area. Further Bus routes are available at Berkely Avenue, Bath Road/Castle Hill.

The site is within walking distance (15 minutes) and cycling distance (5mins) of the amenities of the town centre and the main railway station.

The existing house has 2 parking spaces, and the residents also have a further on-street parking permit to provide 3 parking spaces in total.

The proposal is to split the 2 spaces so that one will be allocated to the resulting flat, which is in line with RBC parking policy at 1 parking space per 1bed/2bed flat in zone 2 (primary core area - directly surrounding the central core area and well served by public transport).

The site is located very near to the boundary of zone 1, which only requires 0.5 spaces per 1/2-bed flat.

The 2016 pre-application advice confirmed that the 2 parking spaces would be sufficient for the flats. In the drawings issued with this planning application the parking spaces, storage bins and bike shelters are shown on the block plan

Parking is provided in line with M4(2), including 900mm adjacent to the space for wheelchair access.

REFUSE & BICYCLE STORAGE

Bins for the existing house are located on street, adjacent to nr 33 Dover Street.

Bins for the additional unit are proposed near the house, on a new platform to be created within the parking area, which is just below street level, for ease of access

Bicycle storage for the new unit will be provided in a secure store directly adjacent to the entrance to the new flat.

AMENITY SPACE

Planning Policy states that 25m² of shared amenity space should be available for each 1/2 bed flat.

Private amenity space is proposed. Flat 1 will have access to 131m² and Flat 2 from 134m² in area, with some of this sloping and planted, but including level areas for seating and play.

LANDSCAPING

Landscape drawings have been provided to show that quality provision will be made for each of the flats. These drawings show design intent and materials and planting proposed, and are not affected significantly by the changes made to the stairs/steps and lift.

New replacement timber boarded fencing is proposed along 3 of the boundaries as shown.



Location along East boundary where large trees were removed and are proposed to be replaced with new fruit trees to provide some screening to houses on Wolseley Avenue



Landscape design showing useful space for recreation and seating at each of the garden areas



Existing tree screen along nr 33;

Large willow tree would seem to have died and is proposed to be replaced

PLANNING, CONSULTATION

Planning consultation has been undertaken as a pre-app consultation in 2016.

The current scheme has been scaled back to a simpler and more elegant 2 storey building, as an extension of the existing built form.

The final changes to drawings in 2020 allow for wheelchair access to the new dwelling, whilst the applicant will engage in S106 negotiations to address fully the only remaining issues raised by the appeal inspector.

It is the intention to consult neighbours about the development as part of the planning application.

OTHER DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED WITH THE APPLICATION:

Architectural Drawings:

2661 010	Site location plan
2661 013	Existing plans
2661 014	Existing elevations
2661 015	Proposed plans/Block plan
2661 016	Proposed Elevations
2661 018	Proposed Sections

Landscape Drawings:

18.311.001	Landscape Plan
18.311.003	Landscape Section BB
18.311.004	Landscape Section