

**78 Tilehurst Road, Proposed Extension and Conversion to Form 2 No. 2 bed & 2 No. 1 bed
Apartments**

Design & Access Statement



Introduction

This statement accompanies a full planning application, seeking permission to extend and convert a 4 bed dwelling house fronting onto Tilehurst Road into 4 apartments. An additional storey plus a roof level extension is proposed, along with a ramped wheelchair accessible access to an enclosed stairwell at the front of the property.

This planning application follows the withdrawal of application ref; 181202 in September 2018, and subsequent site meeting with the Planning Officer, Ethnie Humphreys. Amendments to the proposal include obscure glazed guarding to the rear facing Juliette balconies, brickwork detailing, and a reduction in depth of the cycle store to the rear to position the existing parking bay further into the plot.

Appearance

The existing 2 storey house is largely obscured from view from the street, with the ground floor level being approx. 3.5m below the Tilehurst Road. Adjacent, to the West, is a substantial Victorian villa, arranged over 4 storeys. To the East is a 2 storey house, similar to the host property.

The proposed building shall be approx. 1.2m lower in height in relation to the adjacent villa as well as the adjacent buildings along the Tilehurst Road heading West. The front gable addition accommodating the proposed stair access would reflect the bays and gables of the neighbouring buildings. A contrasting red clay facing brick band is proposed with facing brickwork above matching the existing dwelling, coupled with contrasting brick soldier courses above the openings. A Welsh blue slate roof finish is proposed, matching the adjacent villas.

Impact upon Neighbours' Amenity

The house is on a sloping site, sitting approximately one storey lower than the Tilehurst Road, and 4 metres higher than those along Gloucester Court, backing onto the site. There is a separation distance of over 25 metres to 20-26 Gloucester Court. The rear facing windows and elevated garden affords direct views of these neighbours. The addition of two storeys and associated window openings would continue this arrangement, albeit with views of the ground at a more oblique angle. Indirect

overlooking of neighbouring gardens to properties along Tilehurst Road would also be as existing, and typical of urban environments.

It is proposed to raise the eaves to the East facing elevation adjacent to No. 76, by 2.3 metres. This section has been reduced in height from 2.8 metres in comparison with the original proposal, in order to provide a transition between the two properties and reduce any sense of overbearing. In comparison, the eaves of the adjacent property No. 80, are currently 5.2 metres higher than the existing dwelling on the application site

Access / Parking

Pedestrian access from Tilehurst Road is currently via steps down leading to the entrance door, with vehicle access from the parking bay to the garage forecourt at the rear via steps up to the rear garden and side passageways.

The Councils' Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD adjusts vehicle parking levels according to zones and their relative accessibility via alternative means of travel, with the overall aim of limiting parking availability within the Borough. This is sought particularly in recognition of traffic congestion issues within the Borough. A requirement of 1 space / 2 bed flat is typically sought to developments within zone 2. A single unallocated space would be retained towards the rear of the property, and two parking bays provided to a lay-by across the frontage, including a dedicated disabled bay, thus representing a short fall of two parking spaces. However, a premier bus route operates along the Tilehurst Road, and Reading West rail station is within walking distance, along with the shops and services of the Oxford Road. The SPD recognises that lower provision may be appropriate depending upon the accessibility of the development, The proposed parking provision reflects the accessibility of the site, on foot, and via public transport.

A single parking bay and dis-used garage exists to the rear of the site, accessed via Gloucester Road. In response to highways concerns in relation to the position of the existing parking bay, this shall be set further back from the shared access drive by reducing the depth of the garage and converting this into a bicycle store providing accessible, secure, covered storage for 8 bikes.

It is proposed to retain the existing parking bay along with the garage utilised as a bicycle store, accommodating at least 8 bikes. The disabled access parking bay proposed to a highway layby across the frontage affords pedestrian and wheelchair access to the entrance of the building via a ramp leading directly to the 1st floor level, with this apartment arranged to accommodate wheelchair use.

On-street parking is not available along this busy arterial road, however, there is a 4-5m wide verge and footpath between the road and property frontage. Provision of two lay-by parking spaces shall be funded by the applicant and carried out under a street works license and subject to agreement with the highway authority.

Landscaping

The existing shrub planted verge sloping down towards a retaining wall across the frontage of the property shall be altered by replacing the stepped access with a ramp leading to the upper ground floor level, with black metal guard railings. Two ornamental trees shall be planted to the frontage including a rowan and silver birch. The rear garden area serving the lower ground floor apartment shall be retained as existing.

Ecology

Bat activity has been recorded within the vicinity. The building has been surveyed for potential bat entry points into the roof structure, along with the loft space, and a survey report compiled by AE Ecology accompanies this application. Generally, the building fabric is in good order, and well sealed, being devoid of potential entry points.

Drainage

Foul Water shall be drained via the existing connection to the mains sewer. Surface water shall be drained to the existing soakaway to the rear of the property.

Affordable Housing Contribution and CIL

Two independent estate agent valuations accompany this application in relation to the 1 and 2 bed flats formed by extending the building. A financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing equating to 5% of the GDV is to be secured by way of a S.106 agreement.

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