

Unit 20 Pipers Industrial Estate
Pipers Lane
Thatcham
Berkshire
RG19 4NA

Phone:
0118 9884477

E-mail:
mail@bdssurveyors.co.uk

Web:
www.bdssurveyors.co.uk

REDEVELOPMENT OF

**5 ST PETER'S AVENUE, CAVERSHAM,
READING, BERKSHIRE, RG4 7DD**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



Date: 12th November 2018
Ref: TCG 6716- design statement

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement accompanies an application for detailed planning consent to demolish the existing dwelling and construct a new dwelling in its place at 5 St Peter's Avenue, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7DD. The document sets out a summary of existing site and surrounding context, as well as the design approach and principles that have formed the proposed replacement dwelling.

This document forms part of the formal planning submission to Reading Borough Council to be read in conjunction with completed application forms, application proposal drawings and other supporting information.

THE LOCALITY AND EXISTING BUILT ENVIRONMENT

St Peter's Avenue is within the Caversham Heights area of Reading, with No 5 being located at the eastern end, a comparatively short portion of no-through road accessed via The Warren. The character in the vicinity of the site consists of a streetscene of mature trees set within grass verges. The appearance of the road is slightly informal in as much as there are no kerbs to either side, albeit there is a tarmacked surfaced footway beyond the grass verge on the southern side. The pattern of development in the area is characterised by substantial detached houses with a variety of designs, typically set within comfortably sized plots. The dwelling frontages are also set back a reasonable distance from the plot frontage, allowing on-site parking and turning to most plots.

SITE CONTEXT

The application site is on the south side of St Peter's Avenue, measuring approximately 20m in width and 50m in depth. The site has a notable slope, both from right to left when looking from the property frontage, and from front to rear.

Adjacent properties at No's 3 and 7 St Peter's Avenue are both two storey detached family dwellings, following a similar theme of vehicular access and driveway to the frontage, dwellings that pretty much fill the plot width save for a pedestrian access to either side positioned on the second quarter of the plot depth, with a garden area to the rear. As expected with the slope of St Peter's Avenue, No 7 sits in an elevated position compared to the application site, whereas No 3 sits below.

THE EXISTING DWELLING

No 5 St Peter's Avenue is a detached bungalow which appears to date back to the 1930's approximately consisting of traditional masonry construction beneath a relatively shallow pitched roof. The existing building provides an attached garage in the frontage, habitable accommodation consisting of a 3-bedroom bungalow, and a raised terraced area with undercroft storage to the rear.

The property benefits from vehicular access at the south eastern end of the property frontage linking to a downward sloping drive to provide on-site parking but not turning. The site benefits from shrub growth to the perimeter of both the drive and rear garden, although many years of comparatively little maintenance has lead to them becoming overgrown.

With regard to the status afforded to the site in planning terms, the application site is not within the St Peter's Conservation Area, nor is the existing dwelling a Listed building. Visually the bungalow has no architectural merit in relation to the local context to warrant its retention.

PLANNING HISTORY

A review of the Council's website indicates that there is no planning history for the site.

SITE ANALYSIS

Having considered the site location, the existing dwelling on the site and the immediate neighbours, the principle of demolishing the existing dwelling and constructing a new two storey dwelling is considered to be appropriate. As an overview, design proposals for any replacement dwelling must satisfy the following objectives:

- To be positioned on the site similar to the existing dwelling in order to be respectful of the existing building line.
- It is considered that there is ample scope for the proposals to be two storey, in keeping with neighbouring property. However, in terms of overall heights the proposals must be respectful of the existing theme and slope of the ground, whereby the ridge and eaves height sits somewhere in between No 7, the elevated property to the north west, and No 3, the lower property to the south east.

ORIENTATION

Seeing as the plot sits within an established streetscene, any proposals must observe the established pattern of development, namely accommodation designed with habitable room aspects to the front and rear only, avoiding overlooking to the sides.

TREES

The existing trees in the vicinity are integral to the landscape and character of the area albeit there are no significant trees within the site. However Tree Preservation Order 146/05 is noted, a group TPO specific to No's 1 and 3 St Peter's Avenue. This includes the lime and plane trees in close proximity to the boundary with the application site, and it is therefore important to ensure the wellbeing of these trees is maintained both during the works and thereafter.

ECOLOGY

The proposal has a responsibility to ensure ecological matters are respected, relating firstly to the demolition of the existing building, and secondly to the construction phase and future life span of the new dwelling. In consideration of the proposal to demolish the existing building, the potential for bats to be present within the roof void has been considered. However, upon close inspection, the existing roof covering has been found to be complete and close fitting, indicating that the potential for bat activity is low.

Consequently, a bat survey is not considered necessary, although the status as a protected species is duly noted and appropriate guidelines will be followed in the unexpected event that bats are encountered. Thereafter, the remaining curtilage consists of standard domestic shrub planting with no particular ecological merit to prevent site clearance.

PLANNING POLICY APPRAISAL

With the proposal consisting of a one-for-one development within an established settlement boundary, the principle of the proposals is considered appropriate. However the scheme design must be respectful of and compatible with the existing built surroundings, whilst also making a positive contribution to improving the streetscene. The proposals must maintain sufficient parking and garden area, and also be suitably designed to ensure amenity is maintained to neighbours.

Whilst the site is outside the St Peter's Conservation Area, its proximity is noted and the design proposals with strive to ensure the scheme has a positive effect of the streetscene, and with an appearance and proportions that fit in with the existing built environment.

THE PROPOSALS

The proposed house is a 4 bedroom, two storey dwelling with integral garage. The positioning of the dwelling on the site is similar to the existing, with the front wall of the proposed dining room aligning with the front wall of the existing garage. The property has a traditional layout with daytime accommodation on the ground floor and bedrooms/bathrooms on the first floor. In terms of site levels, the proposed ground floor level of the new house is the same as the existing which, working in conjunction with the slope of the site, provides a raised terraced area to the rear, and a modest amount of lower ground floor accommodation to provide a study.

The proposals also feature an increase in ridge height compared to the existing, to be expected given the inclusion of first floor accommodation. The proposed house design has a ridge height of 8m, typical of a detached family house and not dis-similar to the existing neighbouring houses. As a result, the design fulfils the requirement to produce a ridge height that sits lower than No 7 but higher than No 3, in keeping with the wider topography and streetscene.

The existing vehicular access position is proposed to be retained but widened, offering the tandem benefit of improved vehicle manoeuvring space, and also allowing the existing poorly surfaced verge to be addressed. Within the site, the scheme proposals include the removal of overgrown shrub planting and enlargement of the drive to create a turning area, featuring the provision of a new retaining wall to the northern corner of the site. As well as improved parking capacity, it also achieves a welcome improvement in safety allowing vehicles to enter and exit in forward gear.

The proposals retain a rear garden length of 20+m, far exceeding Planning Policy requirements but in character with the theme of the area. At present the garden is terraced consisting of a central lawn area with perimeter slopes down to lower area to the south eastern and south western rear garden boundaries. The scheme proposals include modest works to level the garden to make it more useable consisting of reducing levels adjacent to the rear of the house by approximately 0.5m, and infilling lower levels to create a more useable garden area.

DESIGNING WITH REGARD TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

Being respectful of neighbouring property is particularly appropriate to the proposals in the context of the site topography, No 7 is less relevant as it sits in an elevated position compared to the application site, but the effect on No 3 is relevant given that they sit lower than the application site.

In terms of the dwelling position, the width of the proposed footprint is less than the footprint of the existing bungalow. Positioning in relation to No 7 remains similar, meaning the proposals result in increased separation between the proposed house footprint and the side boundary with No 3. With regard to the house design, a transition in levels is achieved by incorporating a lower eaves height to the roof on the left hand side. The side elevation en suite windows are acknowledged but they're set within a comparatively modest dormer set well back from the frontage. They're also detailed with obscured glass, and a condition to this effect will be duly welcomed.

With regard to the terrace at the rear, whilst a raised terrace is a feature of the existing bungalow arrangement, the potential for overlooking is recognised but suitably controlled by way of the provision of an acid etched glass privacy screen to the side of the terrace. Again a condition requiring this to be a permanent fixture will be duly observed.

In terms of dwelling depth, the increase in depth is acknowledged. However the rear projection does not encroach beyond a 45° line taken from first floor windows of adjoining properties in accordance with householder supplementary guidance, and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

SOFT LANDSCAPING

The proposed clearance of some of the existing shrub growth is acknowledged, although considered appropriate and necessary given that the plot is currently very overgrown. The proposals feature the retention of established boundary planting, particularly at the rear where it provides effective screening between rear gardens. The importance of soft landscaping is noted, and the proposals include new planting to the entire drive perimeter to ensure the house integrates with the surroundings. A pre-commencement condition requiring details of planting proposals will be welcomed and duly actioned.

ARBORICULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

The presence of the existing lime tree afforded Tree Preservation Order Protection in the front corner of number 3 St Peter's Avenue is noted, and tree protection fencing directly adjacent to the access will be provided throughout the construction phase. In terms of the proposals, the proposed extent of drive surfacing follows the existing and it is therefore concluded that proposals do not represent a detrimental effect on the tree.

For the construction phase, tree protection fencing will be provided for the duration of the works. For construction traffic, the position of the vehicular access within the RPZ is an existing site feature, however a cellular confinement system overlay will be provided to minimise compaction, and a porous drive surfacing laid to ensure future hydration. A pre-commencement condition requiring an Arboricultural Method Statement will be welcomed and actioned.

TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

Given that the proposal does not result in the net gain of dwellings, there are no traffic implications to consider in terms of increased vehicle movement. With regard to the existing vehicular access, the proposals to maintain it in its current position but with revisions to improve the width is considered to make it more useable and also contribute to highway safety by way of eliminating the requirement for vehicles to reverse out onto the highway. It is also proposed to add automated entrance gates and replacement front wall which is designed to improve pedestrian visibility for vehicles exiting the site. Also, this portion of St Peter's Avenue is comparatively straight, and therefore good visibility exists to enable the existing access to be used safely.

With the proposed house design incorporating an integral garage, provision for secure cycle storage within the site is made, encouraging occupants to make use of transport methods other than the private car where possible.

DISABLED ACCESS

The development will accord with all the requirements of Parts M of the Building Regulations, offering a level approach to a suitable width entrance door, and thereafter access to the principal living room and WC provision on the ground floor.

CIL CONTRIBUTIONS

Whilst the development does not result in the net gain of dwellings, the increase in floor area is duly noted and a completed CIL form is submitted with the application. For information, the applicant will be the occupant of the dwelling, and therefore the CIL forms are completed to indicate the intention to claim Self-Build Relief in accordance with CIL Regulations.

CONCLUSION

The attached proposals are considered to be an appropriate redevelopment of an existing residential plot in a manner that is in keeping and respectful of the surroundings and also offering a positive contribution to the built environment. I therefore respectfully request the application be considered favourably.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Grover'.

Tony Grover
DipSurv MRICS MCABE
BDS Surveyors Limited