

Design & Access Statement

VERSION: 1.0

DATE: 12 September 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

This statement supports the planning application for a ground floor side and rear extension and a rear loft conversion to 27 Priory Avenue.

27 Priory Avenue is a Victorian semi-detached villa in Caversham, Berkshire. The building is bay-fronted with white-painted stone window heads. The front elevation is of blue-grey stock bricks typical of local buildings of the age with cream coloured quoins. The roof is slate with red ornamental tile hanging above the bay. The side and rear walls (including the rearward chimneys) are of an orangey-red stock brick.

The house has not been extended, and therefore retains its Permitted Development rights. However, the main roof space has been converted and internally several rooms have been knocked through.

The existing building has a lean-to store to the northern elevation that sits between the building and the retaining wall. This store is visible from the front elevation.

The condition of the retaining walls to the northern boundary is variable with some sections in very poor repair. The walls themselves are within the curtilage of the site.

2. THE LOCALITY

Priory Avenue is a residential street that consists predominantly of Victorian semi-detached and terraced houses. It is not situated within a conservation area.

3. THE BRIEF

The brief focuses on the ground floor of the house that needs to be re-organised to meet the requirements of a modern family home. The current entrance is stepped and cramped and is too narrow to accommodate pushchairs and the like. The snug and kitchen / dining room are overshadowed by a large retaining wall on the northern boundary.

The brief is to provide a fully accessible entrance, large enough for wheelchairs and pushchairs, and to re-organise the circulation of the ground floor with bigger, less formal spaces with much more glass, not just for the views and the light, but also for solar gain given the west orientation of the garden. There is also a desire to convert the remaining part of the roof space to habitable accommodation.

4. LOCAL PRECEDENTS

A number of nearby houses have been extended to the side and or rear to provide additional accommodation, notably numbers 19, 21, 23, 32 and 34.

5. APPEARANCE

The new entrance will take the place of the existing lean-to store, and will be set back slightly from the main elevation. It will be generously wide and tall and have level access. The new flank wall will incorporate a new reinforced concrete retaining wall and will be mostly below ground from the perspective of the neighbouring properties. The rear elevation will be mostly glazed to take advantage of the western elevation. The flat roof will also incorporate a generous degree of glazing to naturally light the heart of the house.

The rearward chimney is not required and it is proposed that it be removed and the brickwork carefully repaired with the existing bricks.

The rear roof conversion allows the opportunity to rectify some of the problems stemming from the original roof conversion, which were caused by a lack of headroom over the stairs. In order to maximise headroom without raising the apex of the rear section of roof, it is proposed the slate roof be replaced with a curved zinc roof. This simple device allows for a more comfortable staircase and a new bedroom and shower room. The dormer will be removed and the gable rebuilt in its place with a slot window to take advantage of the western orientation.

Altogether, it will complement and improve the existing building and enhance the property in spatial and visual terms.

6. MATERIALS

The front elevation of the side extension will be built from matching blue-grey and cream bricks. The original front door will be closed up and finished with cream-coloured glazed bricks to reference the decorative tiling to the entrance porch. The new brickwork to the side and rear elevations will be built from a matching orangey-red stock brick. The rear flank of the roof conversion will be faced in zinc cladding, which will quickly weather to a matt grey colour.

7. ACCESS

The property will remain a single-family dwelling and the vehicular and transport links, usage, road layout and access to public transport will not be changed by this proposal.

Access to the house itself will be improved by allowing wheelchair access for the first time. Additionally there will be a ground-floor WC. The remaining facilities within the house will all be designed to be useable by persons on equal terms irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping, so far as the existing fabric of the building allows. All works will comply with the requisite regulations with respect to disabled access.

8. CONCLUSION

While the building is going to be extended significantly at ground floor level, there will be little evidence of this from the street. The proposal for the rear roof aims to make this space usable without being overbearing or contrived. It is also no higher than the section of roof it replaces.

These works will not just upgrade the interior and hugely improve the experience of the house for the occupants, they will also go a long way to creating a Lifetime Home that can be easily adapted to suit the on-going needs of its inhabitants. The proposals also enhance the exterior of the building and make a positive contribution to the local realm.