

Westwood Glen, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5NW

Proposed New Dwelling on Land to the Side of 30 Westwood Glen

[DESIGN, ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT]

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Executive Summary

This Design, Access & Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application to Reading Borough Council for the erection of a new detached dwelling on land to the side of 30 Westwood Glen, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5NW

The application site currently forms part of the side garden of No. 30 Westwood Glen, a bungalow, and is presently used in part for informal garden purposes and in part for vehicular access and parking serving No. 30. The site is considered large and, in its current form, out of character with the pattern of plot widths found elsewhere along Westwood Glen.

The proposal is for a single new three-bedroom dwelling, designed to National Described Space Standards (NDSS), with an integral garage. The application also includes associated works to reconfigure the access and parking arrangements serving No. 30, together with new boundary treatments, highway works to the kerb line, and a new independent vehicular access serving the proposed dwelling.

This statement demonstrates that the proposed development:

- New 3bed family house, in sustainable location, much needed housing provision for the borough
- Responds positively to the site's context, levels and constraints
- Complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Reading Borough Local Plan
- Preserves generous and appropriate separation distances to neighbouring properties
- Delivers a high-quality, sustainable, contemporary dwelling appropriate to its edge-of-context setting
- Addresses drainage and Thames Water asset considerations arising from the site's position over/adjacent to the public sewer network

This Statement

Colony Architects use a Design, Access and Heritage Statement as an illustration tool to explain the planning application design proposal, the rationale behind its creation and how it is appropriate for the context. The Statement also serves to meet statutory requirements, local planning policy and national guidance documents.

Statutory requirements of a Design & Access Statement.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013 requires a Design, Access and Heritage Statement to be made in the following application situations:

Major Developments

Within a designated area (Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites)

- The provision of one or more dwellinghouses; or the Provision a building, or increase in building area greater than 100m2

The statement should cover:

- The design principles and concepts that been applied to the development
- How access relating to the development has been dealt with, adopting local planning policy requirements
- Explain the steps taken to appraise the context and how the design of the development takes the context into account
- State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development, and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation

Design Guidance Documents

There are many design policy documents that inform the process of design at the pre-construction stage, these include the National Model Design Code, Building for a Healthy Life and reports such as Better Building Beautiful Commission. In addition to the statutory requirements of a Design, Access and Heritage Statement, there is further guidance on the document structure and overall design process within the National Design Guide – Planning practices guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places, prepared by The Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government. This guide identifies three over arching priorities: - Climate, Character & Community. These themes re are then broken into the 10 essential characteristics that a well-designed place or building should embody. Our Design, Access and Heritage Statements references these 10 chapters to present the design proposal and illustrate the suitability and well-designed nature of the proposal.

Design Process

During the design process, the design team observe not only statutory requirements and guidance documents, but also local planning policy requirements, examples of these documents include:

- Design Quality (Supplementary Planning Documents / Guidance)
- Character & Conservation Area assessments
- Lifetime Homes & Wheelchair User housing requirements
- Housing Design Standards
- Sustainability Checklists
- Parking & Highways Standards

Components for good design

A statement must demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development. It is that an applicant should understand the context in which their proposal will fit and use this understanding to design the scheme. To gain a good understanding of context and to use it appropriately, applicants should follow a design process which includes assessment, involvement, and evaluation, as well as proposing a final design. The following are important components for good design that this statement discusses:

Use

How the use or mix of uses proposed for the land and buildings have been derived from an understanding of the site’s context.

Amount

How much development is proposed. For residential development, this means the number of units proposed for residential use. The statement should explain and justify the amount of development proposed for each use, its distribution across the site, how it relates to the site’s surroundings and how accessibility to and between all parts of the development have been maximised.

Layout

The way in which buildings, routes and open spaces (both public and private) are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other, and to buildings and spaces surrounding the site.

Scale

The size of the buildings (including their height), in relation to their surroundings. The statement should also explain and justify the size of individual building parts and how these relate to each other.

Appearance

The visual impression made by the building should be explained and justified, including its built form, architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture.

Detailing

Consider how the building is crafted and materials relate, the detailing should reinforce the macro level design concept at a micro level off detail. The touch and feel of a building is just as important as the aesthetics.

Landscaping

The treatment of private and public spaces to enhance or protect the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated, through hard and soft landscaping measures, and how these will be maintained.

The Access Component

Design and access statements should explain how access arrangements will ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the wider transport network. It should include an explanation of the applicant’s policy and approach to access, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people, a description of any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues and how the outcome of consultations and advice received on accessibility issues has been followed. Access for emergency services should be explained where relevant.







Regional location

The application site is located on the north side of Westwood Glen, a residential road, near its junction with Lower Elmstone Drive, within the Tilehurst area of Reading.

The site lies approximately 750m from Tilehurst district centre and approximately 1.7km from Tilehurst railway station. The area is predominantly residential, characterised by a mix of detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows, generally dating from the mid-to-late 20th century.



Aerial view

The application site comprises land to the side of 30 Westwood Glen, currently forming part of the residential curtilage of that property.

The plot is approximately 13m wide and 55m deep, and slopes upward away from the road by approximately 5m across its full depth. At the location of the proposed dwelling, the cross-fall of the site is more modest, at approximately 500mm.



Site location plan

The proposed dwelling is set slightly into the rising slope, with an existing retaining wall – currently serving the existing garden and patio of No. 30 – to be retained/adapted as part of the proposal.

The total application site area is 1,414m², reflecting the inclusion of works to the access and parking arrangements for No. 30. The plot area attributable to the proposed new dwelling is 1,150m².



Existing Site

[CONTEXT ANALYSIS]

The site is bound by No. 28 Westwood Glen (a taller, two-storey dwelling) and No. 30 Westwood Glen (a bungalow), with the existing streetscene along Westwood Glen displaying a mix of plot widths, gaps and building heights. Notably, the gap between No. 28 and No. 26 Westwood Glen is only 1.4m, considerably tighter than the separation distances proposed as part of this application.

The predominant local materials are brick, render, pebble-dash, cladding, tile-hanging and roof tiles. As a post-war suburb, the majority of dwellings along Westwood Glen and the surrounding area are relatively modern in age, but traditional in form, generally presenting as simple, pitched-roof detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows. Dwellings typically face and address Westwood Glen directly, with generous parking provision to the front and private gardens extending to the rear.

The area is a moderately dense suburb, with plot widths typically ranging from 10m to 15m and plot depths of approximately 40m to 60m. This established pattern of plot sizes is consistent with, and commensurate to, the proposed plot at this site, reinforcing that the scale of the proposed subdivision is not at odds with the prevailing grain of development along Westwood Glen.

Sustainable Location

The site benefits from a sustainable location within Tilehurst, within convenient reach of local services, amenities, and facilities.

- Bus routes
- Local shops, convenience stores and services within Tilehurst district centre
- Primary and secondary schools within the local catchment
- Healthcare facilities (GP surgeries) within the local area
- Employment opportunities within Reading town centre and the wider Thames Valley, accessible via public transport and the strategic road network (A4, M4)
- Green/open space and recreational facilities within walking distance

This sustainable location reduces reliance on the private car and aligns with Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development) and the NPPF's core objective of promoting sustainable transport choices.



PLANNING POLICY

[REGULATORY CONTEXT]

Planning Policy Context

The application has been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the statutory development plan for Reading, principally the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019, as amended). The following policies are considered most relevant:

National Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – presumption in favour of sustainable development; achieving well-designed places; effective use of land
- National Design Guide – ten characteristics of well-designed places
- National Described Space Standards (NDSS)

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 – Adaptation to Climate Change

CC5 – Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6 – Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

EN12 – Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14 – Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN16 – Pollution and Water Resources (relevant to drainage / Thames Water matters)

H1 – Provision of Housing

H5 – Standards for New Housing (NDSS compliance)

H11 – Development of Private Residential Gardens

TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Reference is also made to the Council’s Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, the Sustainable Design & Construction SPD, and the Tree Strategy for Reading. Note that Reading Borough Council is progressing a Partial Update to the Local Plan; the adopted November 2019 Local Plan nonetheless remains the statutory development plan against which this application falls to be determined, and this statement will be updated to reflect emerging policy weight as appropriate.

Response to Policy H11

Development of Private Residential Gardens

Policy H11 seeks to ensure that development of private residential gardens does not cause harm to the character of the local area, assessed against criteria including plot size, spacing between buildings, garden size, and the relationship to the prevailing pattern of development.

The application site represents an unusually large and, in this context, oversized side garden serving No. 30 Westwood Glen, disproportionate to the plot sizes generally found along Westwood Glen. The proposal makes efficient use of this underutilised land, delivering a single additional dwelling without resulting in a cramped or overdeveloped form of development.

As demonstrated in Section 7, the separation distances proposed (4.8m to No. 28 and 5.7m to No. 30) are considerably more generous than comparable existing gaps in the street (such as the 1.4m gap between No. 28 and No. 26), meaning the proposal does not result in a pattern of development that appears cramped or at odds with the character of the area. No. 30 retains an appropriately sized garden and off-street parking following the works proposed.

On this basis, the proposal is considered consistent with Policy H11 and does not result in harm to the character of the area.



Proposed Development

[AMOUNT]

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of one new three-bedroom detached dwelling with integral garage on land to the side of 30 Westwood Glen, together with:

A new, independent vehicular access and driveway serving the proposed dwelling

Reconfiguration of the access and parking arrangement currently serving No. 30, providing that property with its own dedicated access and parking area

New boundary treatments, including a new wall, fence and gate arrangement to the frontage

A new 1.8m high close-boarded fence running the full length of the garden, separating the existing and proposed dwellings

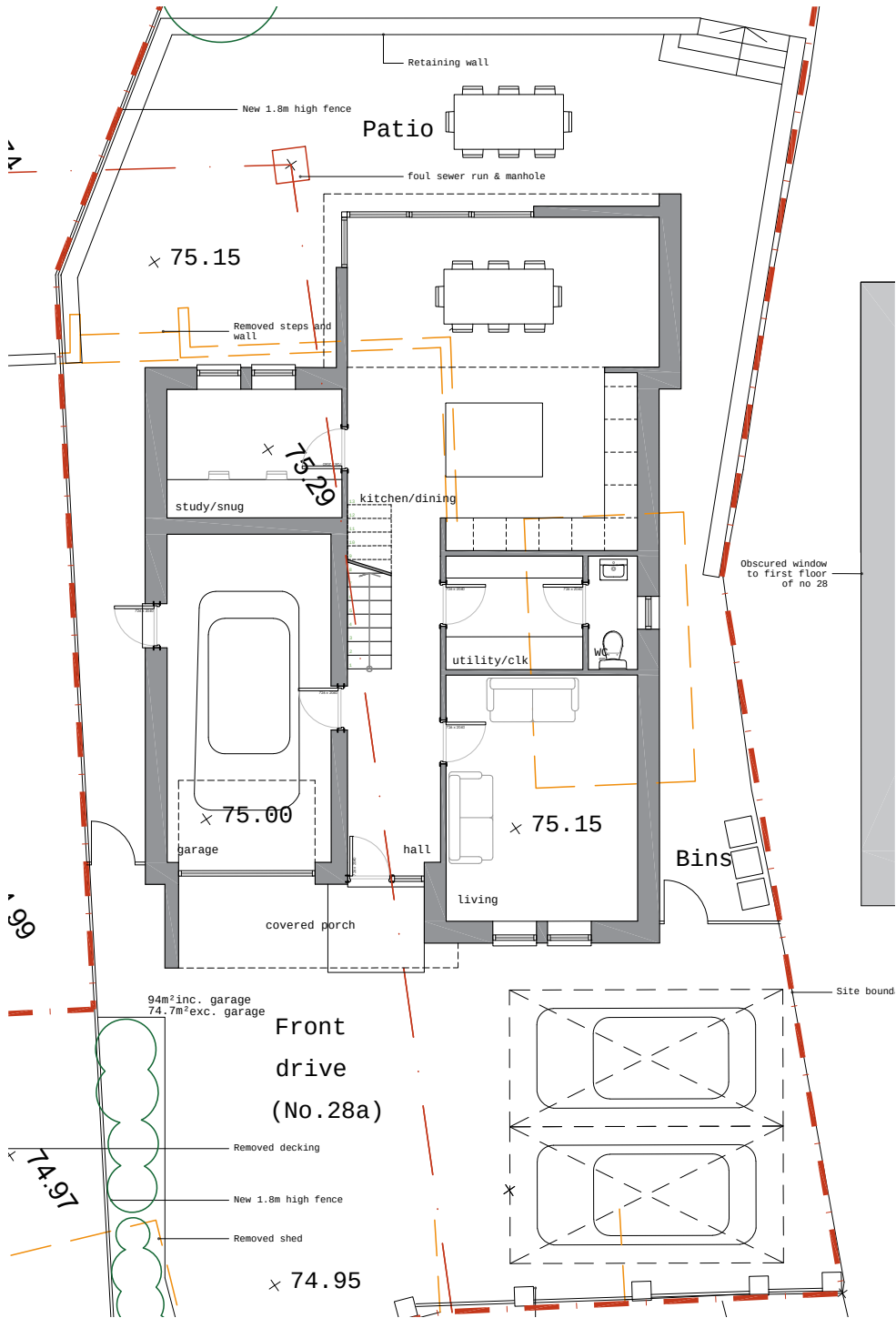
Highway works to the kerb line to form the new vehicle crossovers

Associated hard and soft landscaping

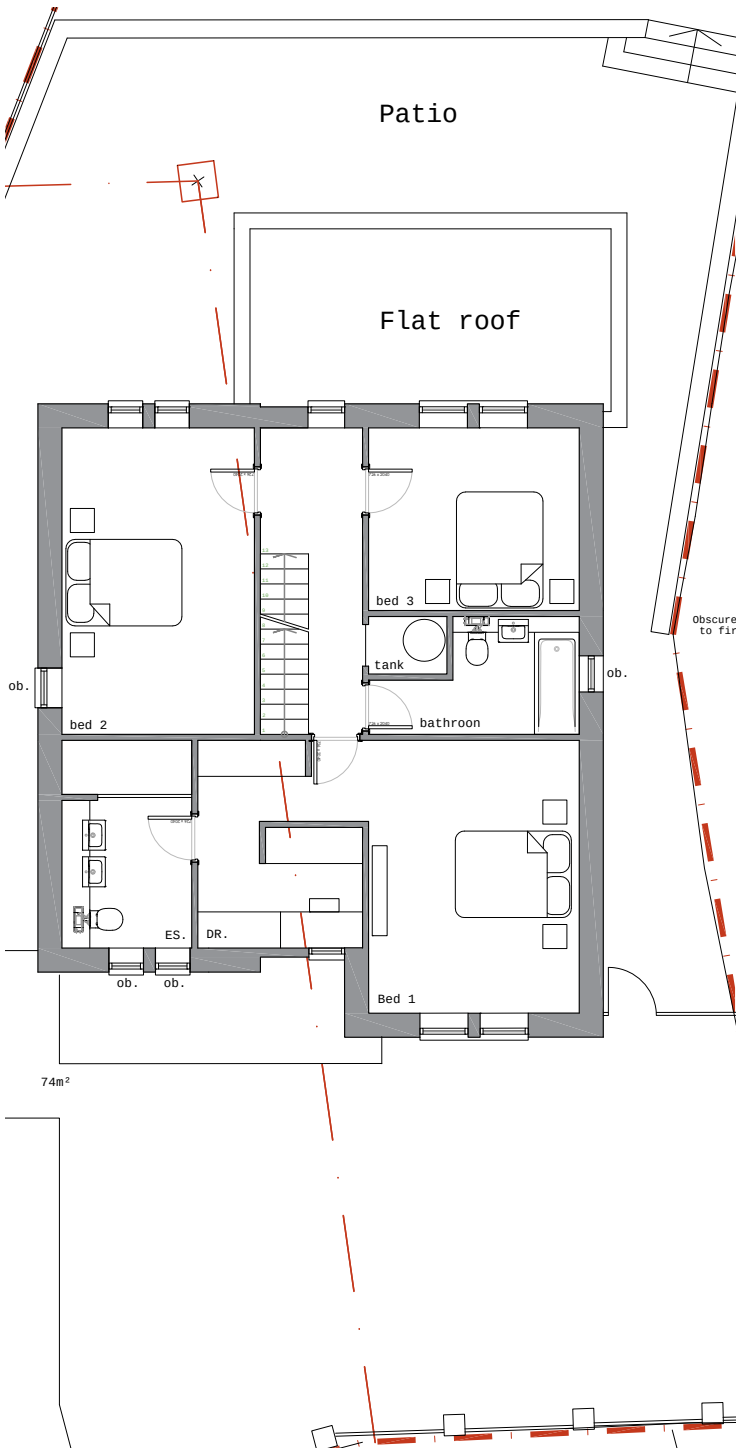
New 3 bed dwelling areas

Ground Floor (including integral garage)	94.0m ²
Ground Floor (excluding integral garage)	74.7m ²
First Floor	74.0m ²

Total GIA (including garage) 168m²



Ground floor plan (NTS)



First floor plan (NTS)

Access & Parking Reconfiguration

[ACCESS]

The application site is presently part of the residential curtilage of No. 30 Westwood Glen and is currently used, in part, to provide vehicular access and parking for that property. This arrangement is inefficient in land-use terms and results in an oversized, under-utilised garden plot that is considered out of keeping with the general pattern of plot sizes along Westwood Glen.

As part of this application, a new, dedicated access and parking area is proposed for No. 30, ensuring that dwelling retains suitable off-street parking provision and safe, convenient vehicular access. A separate new vehicular access is proposed to serve the new dwelling, avoiding any shared use of accesses between the two properties. Alterations to the pavement and existing dropped kerb will be required, and this can be secured by agreement with the Council under a Section 184 permit/licence following the grant of planning permission.

New highway works are proposed to the kerb line of Westwood Glen to form the new vehicle crossovers, together with a new wall, fence and gate arrangement to both frontages, designed to be sympathetic to the existing streetscene.

The proposals have been developed with regard to Policy TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging), ensuring safe access and manoeuvring for both properties and appropriate cycle and EV charging provision.

Refuse & Recycling Storage

Bin storage for general waste and recycling is provided within a dedicated store to the side (eastern) alley of the dwelling. Bins will be brought to the Westwood Glen frontage on collection days, in line with the Council's standard collection arrangements, and will otherwise be screened from public view within the store.

Cycle Storage

A garden shed is provided to accommodate secure, covered cycle storage, encouraging sustainable modes of transport in accordance with Policy TR5.



Site Plan (NTS)

Layout, Siting & Residential Amenity

[LAYOUT]

The layout of the proposed dwelling has been carefully considered in relation to the site's levels, the existing retaining wall, and the amenity of neighbouring occupiers at Nos. 28 and 30 Westwood Glen.

Separation Distances

Generous separation distances are maintained between the proposed dwelling and its neighbours, both of which comfortably exceed comparable existing gaps found elsewhere along Westwood Glen:

- Proposed dwelling to No. 28 Westwood Glen 4.8m
- Proposed dwelling to No. 30 Westwood Glen 5.7m
- Existing gap: No. 28 to No. 26 Westwood Glen (for comparison) 1.4m

These distances are considered generous when compared with the existing 1.4m gap between No. 28 and No. 26 Westwood Glen, and are considered more than sufficient to avoid unacceptable overlooking, loss of light or an overbearing effect on either neighbour.

Levels & Retaining Structures

The site slopes upward away from Westwood Glen by approximately 5m over its full depth, though the cross-fall at the location of the proposed dwelling is more modest, at approximately 500mm. The proposed dwelling is set slightly into the rising ground, with the existing retaining wall – currently supporting the patio area of No. 30 – retained and, where necessary, extended or adapted to suit the proposed layout.

Boundary Treatment & Privacy

A new 1.8m high close-boarded timber fence is proposed along the full length of the shared boundary, separating the existing garden of No. 30 from the new plot. Window positions at first floor have been carefully considered to avoid direct overlooking of neighbouring habitable rooms and private amenity areas.

The proposal is considered to comply with Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), ensuring no unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

Amenity Space

The proposed dwelling is provided with a rear garden of 304m², a generous amenity space commensurate with, and comparable to, the private garden areas typically enjoyed by surrounding houses along Westwood Glen. This is considered a good-sized private amenity space for a three-bedroom family dwelling and accords with Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space).



Block Plan (NTS)



Scale, Height & Massing

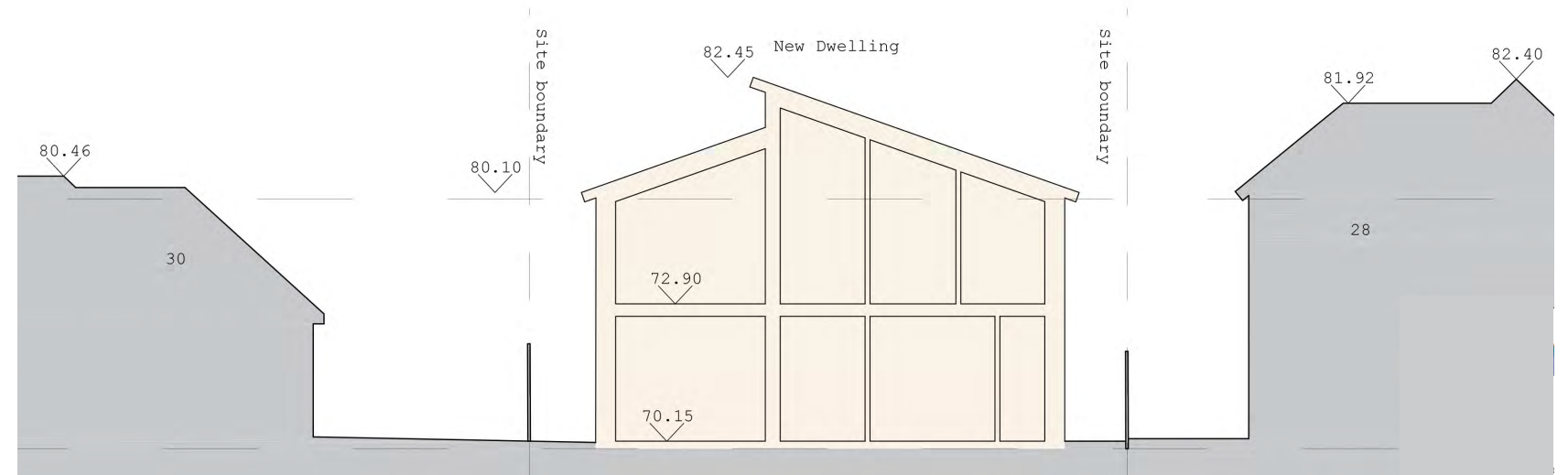
[SCALE]

The scale and massing of the proposed dwelling responds directly to its context, sitting between the taller two-storey form of No. 28 and the single-storey bungalow at No. 30. The design incorporates a dual-pitch roof form that steps down towards each boundary, with lower eaves adjacent to both neighbouring properties, providing a considered transition in height and mass along the street.

Heights of proposal & adjoining houses

Proposed dwelling Ridge - 82.45 Eaves - 80.10m
No. 28 Westwood Glen (2-storey, taller neighbour) 82.40 - Ridge (closely matches)
No. 30 Westwood Glen (bungalow) 80.46 - Ridge (Similar to eaves of 80.10)

The proposed ridge height of 82.45m AOD sits almost exactly level with the ridge of No. 28 (82.40m AOD), while the roof form steps down toward No. 30, whose ridge sits at 80.46m AOD. This demonstrates that the proposed scale and height sit comfortably within the range already established by the immediate neighbours, providing a legible transition between the two contrasting existing forms rather than an abrupt change in scale.



Section (NTS)



Proposed street scene (NTS)

Appearance, Materials & Design Rationale

[APPEARANCE]

The proposed dwelling is contemporary in style, reflecting the client's aspiration for a distinctive, well-crafted family home, whilst remaining sensitive to its context through its scale, massing, and choice of materials.

Materials

- Brickwork to match the local context, providing a visual link to the traditional palette of Westwood Glen and the wider Tilehurst area
- Timber cladding used as a contemporary statement element, expressing the client's aspiration for a distinctive, high-quality design
- Slimline double-glazed windows and contemporary rainwater goods

Roof Form & Elevational Design

The dwelling employs a dual-pitch, gable-facing roof form addressing Westwood Glen, with the roof sloping down towards each side boundary. This is a deliberate design response intended to lower the perceived eaves height adjacent to neighbouring properties and to provide a visually legible step down in scale from the two-storey form of No. 28 towards the bungalow at No. 30. Whilst contemporary in expression, this interlocking, gable-fronted dual-pitch form is not considered out of character for the Tilehurst area, where similar contemporary infill dwellings can be found.



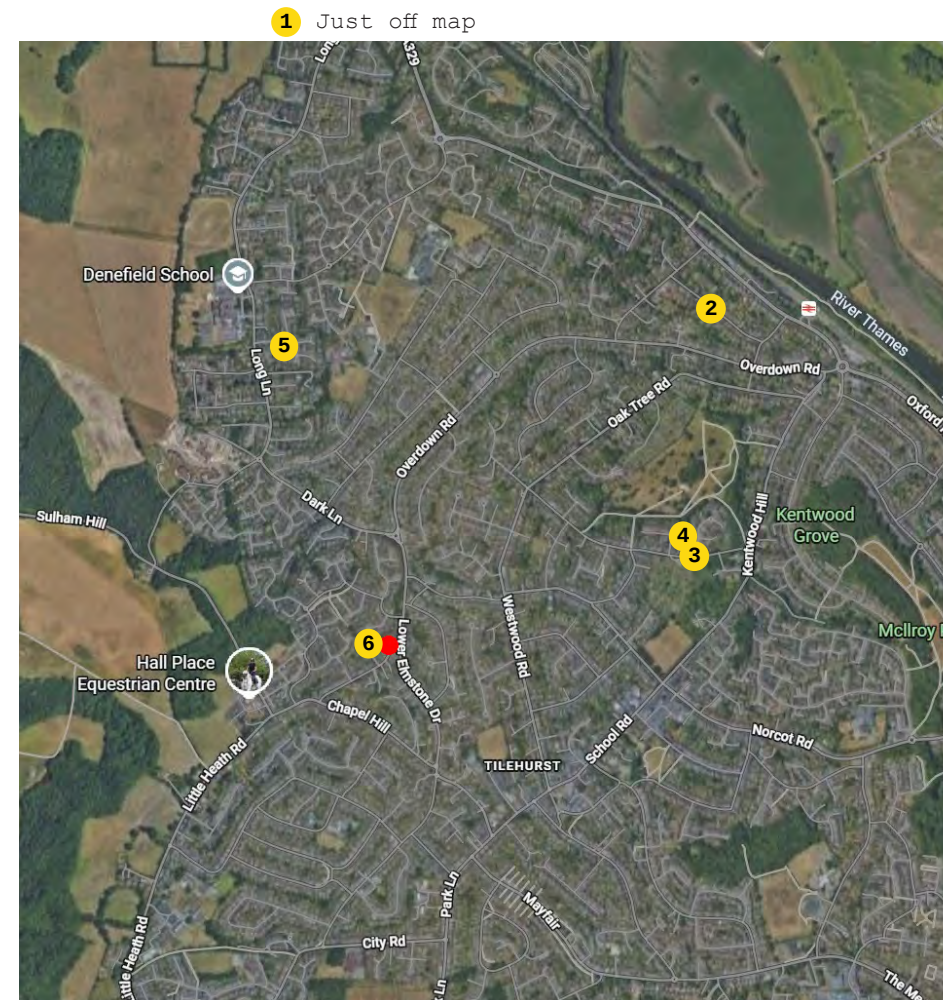
Front elevation (NTS)

Local Precedent – Contemporary Design in Context

[APPEARANCE]

Although the proposed dwelling is modern by comparison with the immediate context of Westwood Glen, this design approach – a gable-fronted form with an interlocking dual-pitch roof, contrasting brick and timber cladding materials – is well established within the wider Tilehurst area. The following examples illustrate comparable contemporary infill development within the vicinity, demonstrating that the proposed approach is consistent with an emerging local character of high-quality contemporary design sitting alongside more traditional housing stock.

This precedent, combined with the height and massing analysis set out in Section 8, demonstrates that the proposed contemporary design responds appropriately to its context and is compliant with Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), which requires new development to be well-designed and to positively contribute to local character without being required to mimic it.



Welland Close



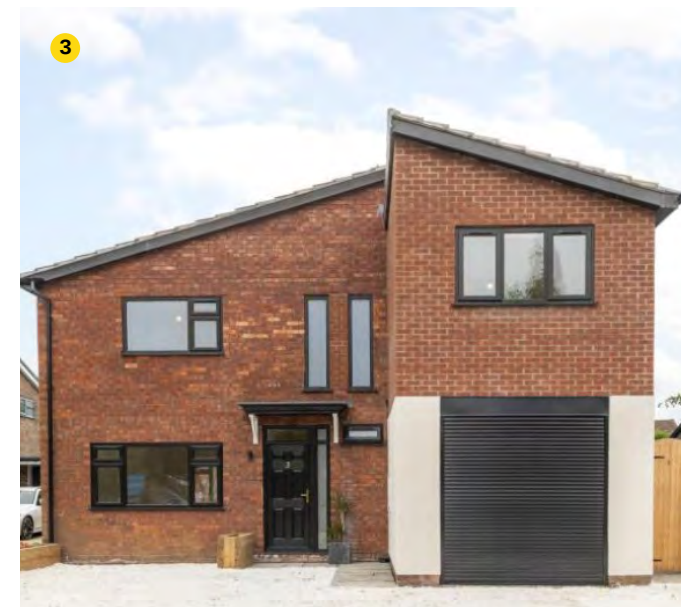
Longleat Drive



Beech Road



Clevedon Road



Larissa Close



Larissa Close

TREES, ECOLOGY & ENERGY

[LANDSCAPE]

Trees, Landscaping & Ecology

The existing site is a residential garden containing residential trees typical of a domestic setting. However, the proposed development is located mainly on existing hardstanding, and replaces existing sheds and hardstanding areas; the wider garden itself remains unchanged. There are no trees in proximity to the development that would be affected by the proposed works, and on this basis no tree survey has been submitted with this application.

The proposed layout seeks to retain existing landscape features where feasible, supplemented by new soft landscaping to the retained garden areas and boundary treatments, which can be secured by condition should the scheme be considered acceptable.

Subject to the above, the proposal is expected to accord with Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) and EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland), retaining the character and ecological value of the site whilst delivering a well-landscaped setting for the new dwelling.

The proposed dwelling is a self-build project and is de minimis in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), with the increase in hardstanding not exceeding 25m². On this basis, the development falls below the threshold at which a BNG survey and metric calculation is required, and no such survey has therefore been provided as part of this application.

An ecologist was consulted regarding the existing sheds on site, and confirmed that there was no likelihood of bats being present. On this basis, no further bat survey was considered necessary.

Drainage, Foul Water & Thames Water Consent

The application site is understood to be located over, or in close proximity to, a public sewer, and the layout has been developed having regard to this constraint.

Given the presence of the public sewer, formal consent from Thames Water will be required prior to construction, in the form of either a Build-Over/Build-Near Agreement (Section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991) or, where the proposed works are set back from the asset, written confirmation from Thames Water that no such agreement is required.

The applicant/design team will submit a formal asset location search and, where required, a Build-Over Agreement application to Thames Water Developer Services prior to commencement of works, to ensure the proposed foundations, drainage and any structures in proximity to the sewer are designed and constructed in accordance with Thames Water's requirements.

Surface water and foul drainage strategies will be designed in accordance with the hierarchy set out in Part H of the Building Regulations and Policy EN16

(Pollution and Water Resources), with surface water disposal prioritising sustainable drainage (SuDS) methods where ground conditions and the presence of the sewer allow.

Energy & Fabric Strategy

The dwelling has been designed with sustainability at its core, incorporating a fabric-first approach to minimise energy demand, supplemented by low-carbon building services:

- A highly insulated building envelope, with fabric performance exceeding current Building Regulations minimum standards to reduce space heating demand
- Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) providing space heating and domestic hot water, removing reliance on fossil fuels
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR), providing high indoor air quality whilst recovering heat that would otherwise be lost through ventilation
- Roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, generating on-site renewable electricity
- High-performance, low-U-value glazing and airtight construction detailing to minimise uncontrolled heat loss
- Sustainable material specification, including responsibly sourced timber cladding

This strategy is consistent with Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change), and reflects the Council's declared Climate Emergency and ambition for a carbon-neutral Reading.



CONCLUSION

[SUMMARY]

This Design, Access & Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed new dwelling on land to the side of 30 Westwood Glen:

- Makes efficient use of an oversized and underutilised residential garden plot, consistent with Policy H11 and the NPPF's objective of the effective use of land
- Provides a well-designed, contemporary dwelling that responds sensitively to its context, stepping down in scale between the two-storey No. 28 and the bungalow at No. 30
- Maintains generous separation distances to neighbouring properties, well in excess of comparable existing gaps along Westwood Glen
- Delivers safe and appropriate access arrangements for both the proposed dwelling and No. 30, with associated highway works
- Incorporates a robust sustainability strategy including a highly insulated fabric, ASHP, MVHR and solar PV, in a sustainable, well-connected location
- Appropriately addresses drainage and Thames Water asset protection matters arising from the site's relationship to the public sewer network

On this basis, it is respectfully submitted that the proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Reading Borough Local Plan, and that planning permission should be granted.

