

INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement is submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council in support of an application seeking Planning Consent for alterations to the existing dwellinghouse at Mansard, Newlands Close West, Hitchin.

BUILDING LOCATION

The property is not Listed and does not fall within any Conservation Area. It is a two storey private residence dating from 1939, with generous gardens to the front and rear.

PLANNING HISTORY

From the information available on the North Hertfordshire District Council website, the property has previously been subject to the following planning applications:

Ref: 79/00214/1 Erection of single storey front and side extension to existing dwellinghouse. GRANTED

Ref: 86/01070/1 Erection of first floor side extension. GRANTED

Ref: 93/01396/1HH Front entrance porch. GRANTED

Ref: 01/00151/1HH Rear conservatory. GRANTED

SITE CONTEXT & EXISTING BUILDING

Newlands Close West and the immediate surrounding roads were laid out in the 1930's and the area is predominantly residential in character. Newlands Close West is a quiet cul-de-sac with houses set back from the pavement line behind front gardens and private driveways. In common with the application site, typically the neighbouring dwellings present themselves to the street as two-storey detached properties built in brick with clay tile pitched roofs, although each is individual in style, form & material. All of the properties have been extended to the side or rear and have lost their original windows, with uPVC fittings now dominating. The dwelling subject to this application has been variously adapted and extended over the years with modest extensions to the sides, front & rear alongside internal alterations.

The design now presented has been developed in collaboration with the applicant to ensure the proposals respect the existing building and the immediate context, and reinstate some of the original features of the external appearance. It does not seek to cause harm or detract from the character of the area.

USE, LAYOUT & AMOUNT

The existing property is a 4/5-bedroom, two storey dwellinghouse. The ground floor has a complex layout and currently consists of a living room, dining room, conservatory, study, kitchen, utility, shower room, sauna and garages. To the first floor there are 4 bedrooms, one en-suite & a bathroom with separate WC.

These proposals seek to rationalise & simplify the internal layout of the property by removing partitions and reducing interconnecting rooms to create a legible plan to both floors with useable spaces suited to modern family life. The ground floor will retain the existing front entrance door, hallway and separate living room. Reconfiguring the remaining internal layout allows for a generous family kitchen linked to a defined dining room and family room. A new side entrance door will provide access to the house through a boot room, and the pan is completed by a utility and a study/ guest bedroom with en-suite. The first floor plan reinstates original room forms and adds a further bedroom to the side in a new extension. The existing property has an internal area of 312m² and by removing the conservatory this will reduce to 303m².

SCALE

As the proposed side extension is relatively modest in scale, we have replicated the form of the original building, following the principle of earlier additions and helping to present a cohesive appearance of the property to the street.

APPEARANCE & MATERIALS

The side extension will have a brick flank wall and clay tiled roof to harmonise with the host dwelling. As the current roof tiles are at the end of their lifespan, the entire roof will be recovered using clay tiles to match the existing. All windows will be replaced with new double glazed aluminium framed units in a Crittall style to replicate the originals in a dark grey powdercoated finish. A decorative brick infill panel will replace the old front garage door.

OVERLOOKING & PRIVACY

The property is surrounded by generous mature gardens which form a natural screen to overlooking and create distance to the neighbouring houses. There are no side facing windows to the proposed first floor extension, and the proposals will actually remove the only side facing window at first floor to the west elevation. We do not foresee any concerns around overlooking and privacy resulting from these alterations.

LANDSCAPING

To the front of the property, the existing short driveway to the old garage will be retained as additional hardstanding for car parking. With the removal of the existing rear conservatory, the lawn will be extended across its footprint and a new planted border introduced adjacent to the rear terrace. The new side extension will sit to the roof of the existing property and therefore requires no alterations to site layout. No trees need to be felled to allow for these proposals.

APPROACHES TO AND AROUND THE SITE

Newlands Close West is a small residential close with just eight houses, each with their own off-street parking. Existing pedestrian access is to the front of the house is via the front driveway, and there will be no alterations to this. Access to the rear garden is via pathways to each side of the house, and these are retained in these proposals.

INCLUSIVE ACCESS

Our design approach to the alterations will, where possible, enable all potential users, regardless of disability or age to enter and manoeuvre within the building with level thresholds and compliant staircases. Within the dwelling the layout has been designed to be compliant with the requirements of Approved Document M where possible.



The house viewed from the rear garden soon after construction and prior to any extensions. We propose to replace all the uPVC windows with new fittings to replicate the original designs

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