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ARCHITECTS

257 Icknield Way, Letchworth
Planning Statement
December 2024

Introduction

The following document, and associated drawings, have been prepared by Hunter Devine Architects to seek planning consent for alterations to the detached garage at 257 Icknield Way, and its conversion into annexe accommodation.

The Site

The existing property at 257 Icknield Way is a detached single-family dwelling with a large garage located to the rear of the site accessible off of a gated driveway. The property is located within the Letchworth Conservation Area. The building is not listed or locally listed.

The existing garage is constructed with an insulated external cavity wall finished in painted render with a tiles roof. There are several uPVC windows and a side access door that are finished to look like 'wood'. The external finishes of the garage match those of the main detached house. The garage also has an existing upper floor providing space within the eaves of the roof.

The site only has one residential neighbour to the west. To the rear of the site is a commercial car park, to the east open land and opposite North Common. The detached garage is located close to the neighbouring residential boundary, but as it is an existing building there will be no change in impact on the neighbour's amenities.



Fig 1: Aerial view; site boundary shown in red.

Photos



Existing Drawings

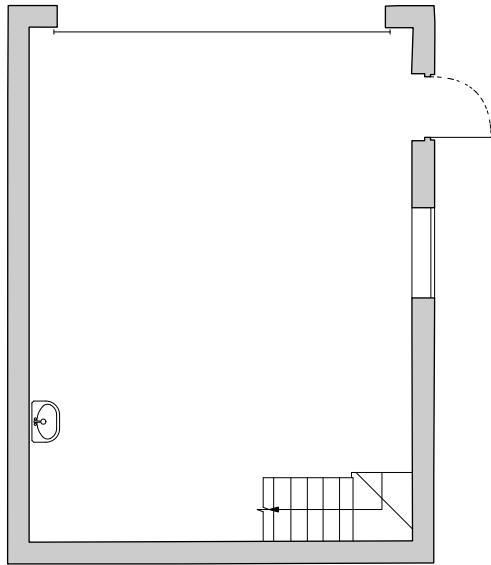


Fig 2: Existing Ground Floor

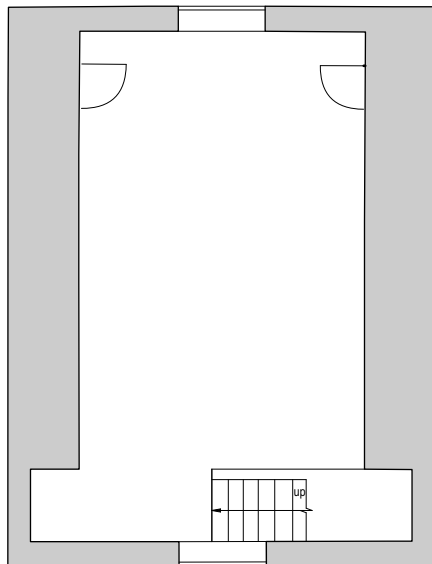
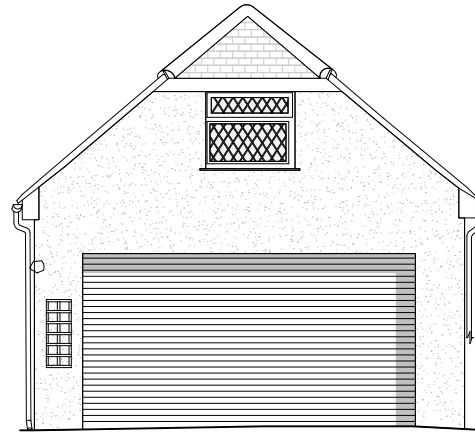
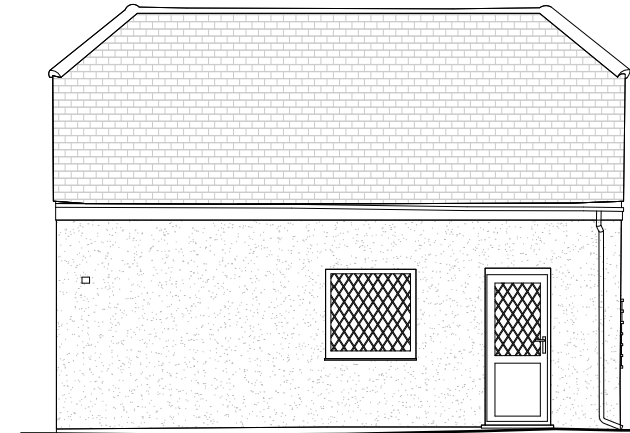


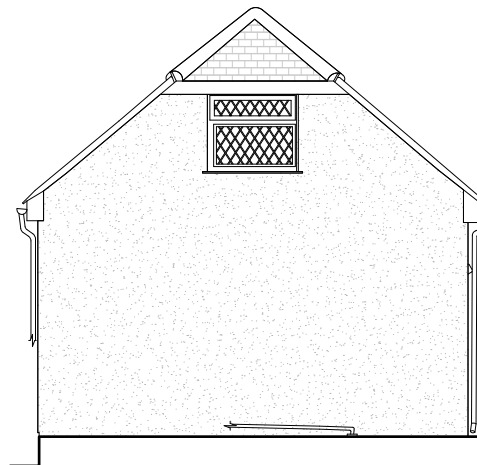
Fig 3: Existing First Floor



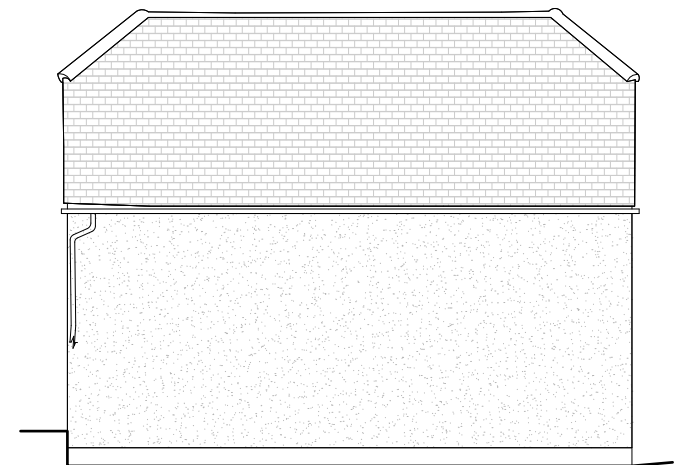
Front Elevation
1:50



Side Elevation
1:50



Rear Elevation
1:50



Side Elevation
1:50

proposal

Proposed Plans

The proposal seeks modest changes to the garage and only requires the replacement of the garage door with a new window and rendered external wall to match the existing external finish. 2no. velux skylights are also proposed for the roof, however these will sit below the ridge line.

The proposal does not seek to alter the existing detached garage in terms of orientation, scale or materiality except for the replacement of the garage door.

The garage has an existing upper floor in the eaves of the roof space and is only looking to convert the existing building into accommodation for occupation by the applicant. Inter-generational living is an important consideration in this instance.

In regard to any impact upon the living conditions of nearby occupiers, there would be no adverse impact. No alterations to the site access or parking are proposed, with several spaces provided on site to accommodate occupants.

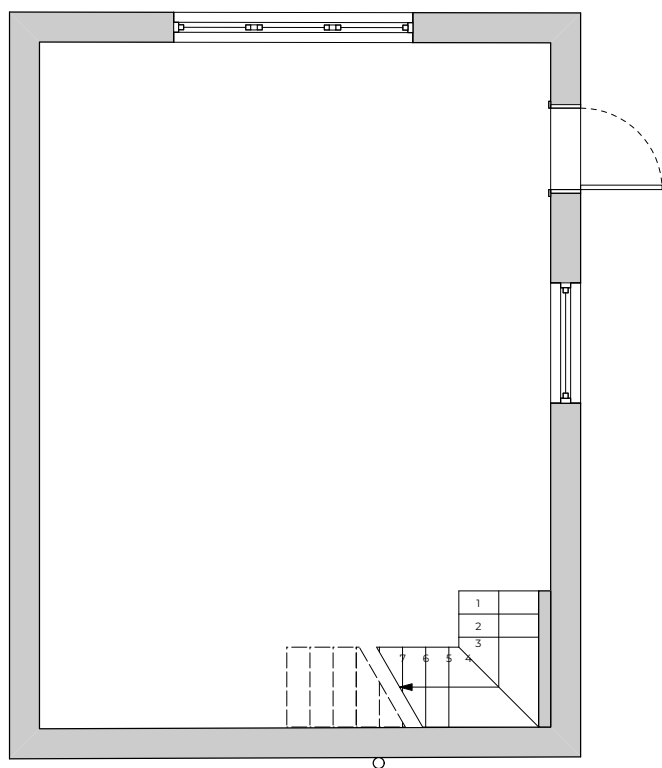


Fig 4: Proposed Ground Floor

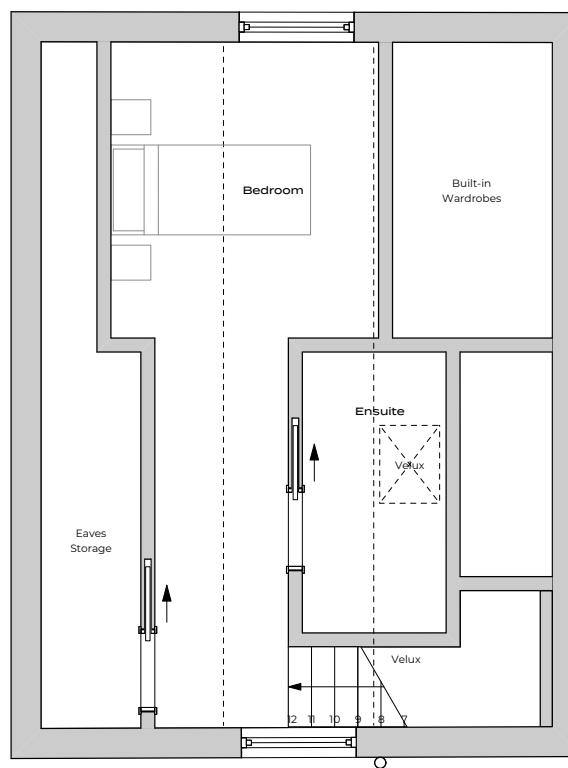


Fig 5: Proposed First Floor

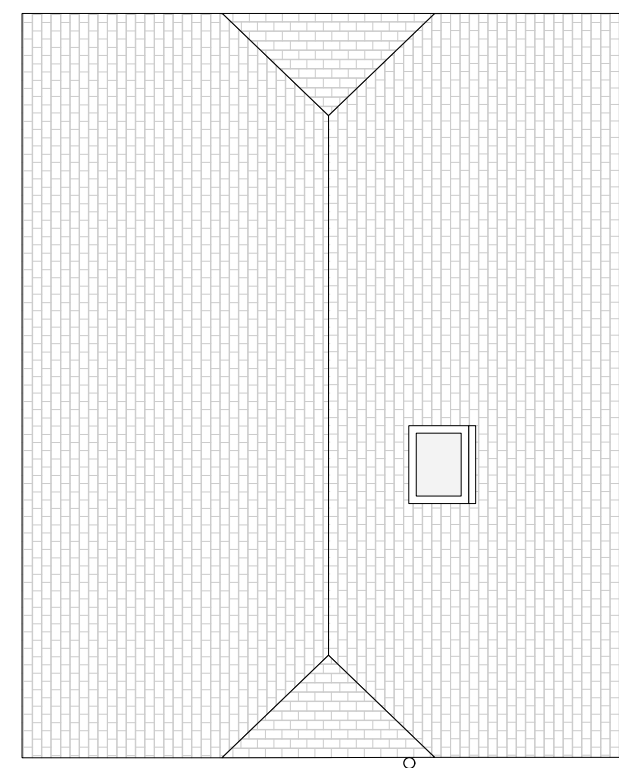


Fig 6: Proposed Roof

Proposed Alterations

The proposal intends to alter and refurbish the detached garage to provide ancillary accommodation for an elderly relative, as one inter-generational family planning unit.

The alterations will not change the scale, height, footprint or materiality of the garage and will remain in keeping with the main dwelling and surrounding area. The standard annexe planning condition is welcome in this regard. This is in line with other annexe buildings in the local area and district.

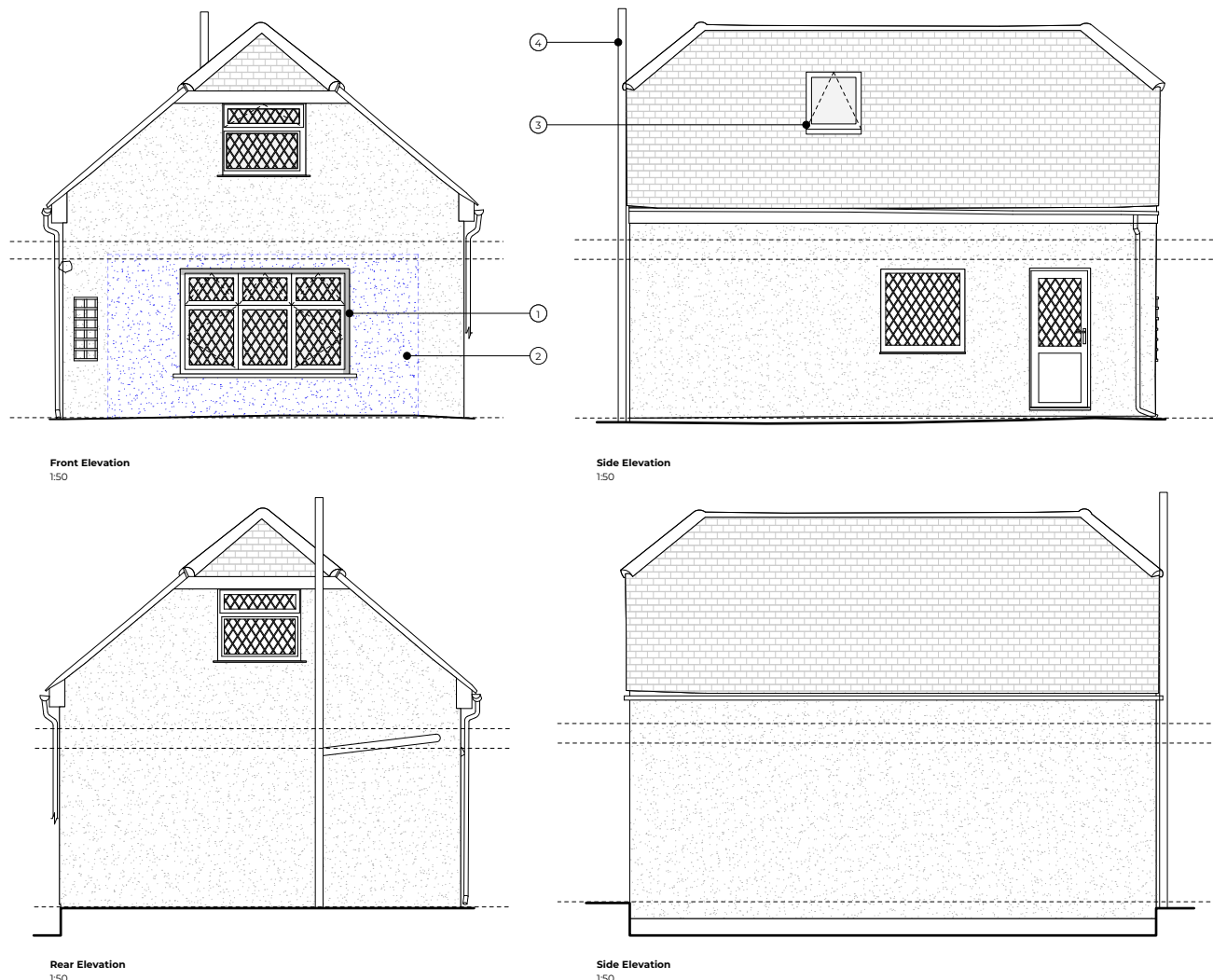
Considering the existing context, and the nature of the proposed alterations, it should be considered that the detached garage lacks any significant original historic importance or architectural merit and will not be adversely affected by the changes.

Recently approved applications also show North that Herts council are supportive of the conversion/alteration of garages to provide inter-generational living accommodation for families.

As such, the works should be considered to have no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area, from the high-quality design and materials, with no harm to Conservation Area.

Key

1. New uPVC timber style window with leaded style glass in diamond shaped pattern to match existing windows on the property.
2. Existing garage door opening in filled with rendered external wall to match existing build up, finish and colour.
3. New Velux conservation skylight in roof slope. Will be installed in line with PD Rights requirements to minimise impact on the existing building.
4. SVP designed in line with building regulations requirements to terminated 900mm above highest opening on building within 3m. Located to the rear elevation so it will not be visible at ground level from the front of the property.



Planning Policy

Policy HS6

Policy HS6 of the Local Plan sets out requirements for the conversion of a garage into a self contained residential annexe. The policy describes that residential annexes will be permitted provided that:

- A genuine need for the accommodation is demonstrated
- The annex is subordinate to the main dwelling and designed in such a way that it can be easily (re-)incorporated into the main house if use as an annex ceases
- Any development would not exceed the size of extensions that would otherwise normally be acceptable
- The occupation of the accommodation is restricted by condition

The proposal fits within each of these terms and does not seek to alter the existing detached garage in terms of orientation, scale or materiality except for the replacement of the garage door and the introduction of an external SVP to comply with building regulations requirements. This SVP will be located on the rear elevation and not visible at ground level from the front of the property.

The garage already has an existing upper floor installed in the eaves of the roof space and is only looking to convert the existing building into accommodation for occupation by the applicant. Inter-generational living is an important consideration in this instance, which the policy actively encourages to strengthen family ties.

The applicant is also happy for the accommodation to be restricted by the usual planning condition in these cases.

Policy D1

Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design positively responds to the site's local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development.

The proposal seeks modest changes to the garage and only requires the replacement of the garage door with a new window and rendered block to match the existing external wall finish. 1no. conservation velux skylight is also proposed for the roof, however these will sit below the ridge line.

The existing detached garage is not being altered in terms of orientation, scale or materiality, and the reuse of this to provide annexe accommodation is a sustainable reuse of this space and does not detract from the character of the property and surrounding area.

Conclusion

Summary

In conclusion, 257 Icknield Way is a detached residential property with a large detached garage located to the rear of the site, accessible off of the gated driveway.

The garage itself is ideal for conversion into annexe accommodation as the building already has insulated external cavity walls and an upper floor located in the eaves of the roof space. This means that only minor alterations would be required to convert it into habitable space - the replacement of the garage door with a new window and rendered block to match the existing external wall finish, and 1no. velux conservation skylight for the roof, however this will sit below the ridge line.

The site only has one residential neighbour - however their amenities will not be affected as the existing conditions of the garage are not being altered in a way that will impact their amenities. The garage is also set back from the main road, to the rear of the site meaning it is naturally obscured.

The applicant is also happy for the accommodation to be restricted by the usual planning condition in these cases.

The scheme is being developed in line with the North Herts Local Plan (HS6 and D1) and the Sections 12 and 13 of the NPPF.

As such, we believe the proposal should be considered acceptable for the granting of planning permission.

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