

Design and Access Statement

Loft conversion; installation of pV panels and replacement render to
Garden House, 7 Alpine Close
Hitchin

Introduction

This application is for insertion of windows and roof lights to facilitate a loft conversion to the building.

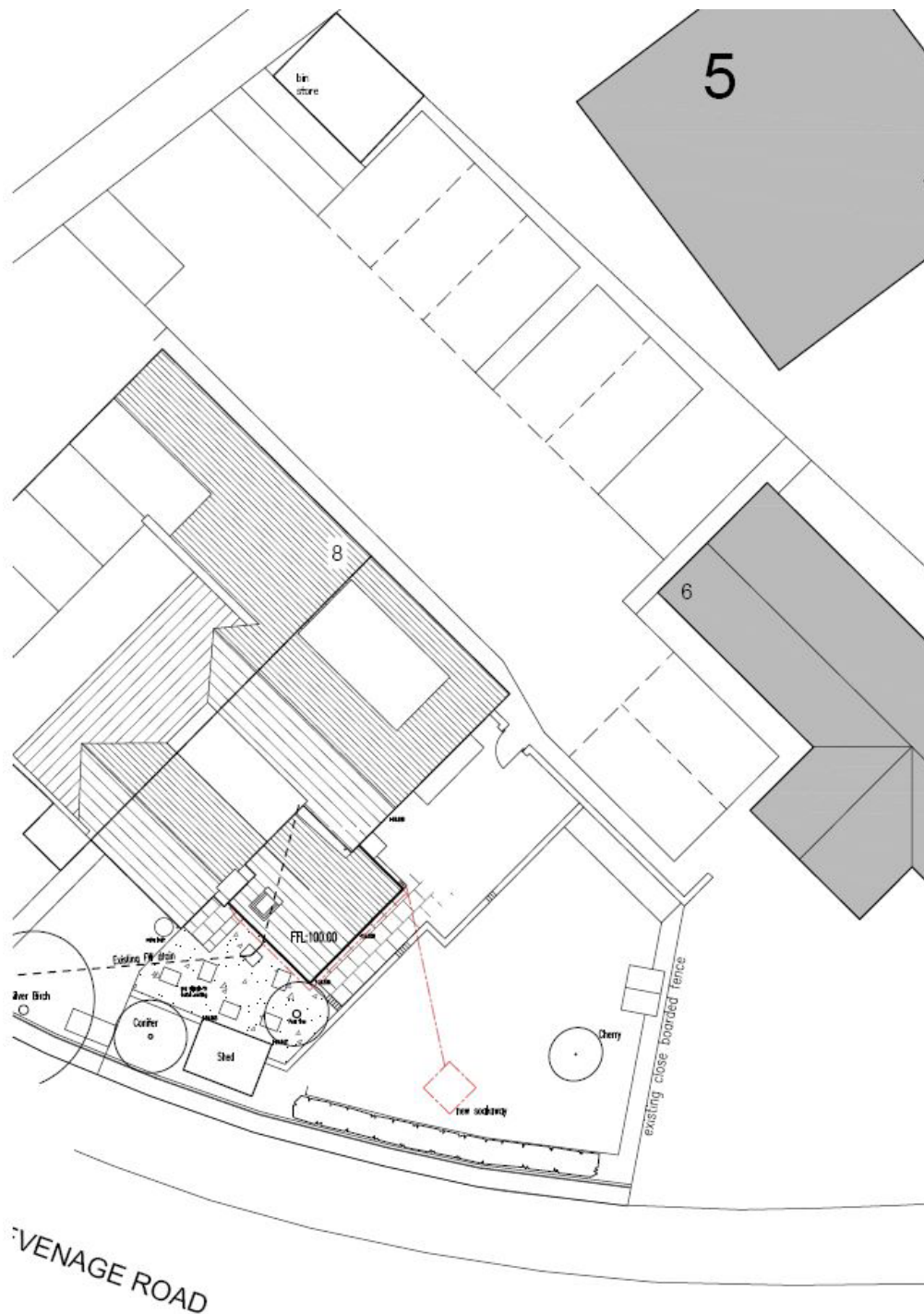
The original main building – now comprising no. 8 Alpine Close - was built in the 1700's. There have been various extensions and alterations over the years. The building is Grade 2 Listed due to the main part of the building (no.8 Alpine Close) being believed to be the first domestic brick built building in Hitchin. The building was converted into two dwellings in 2011.

The parts of the building that have become the application site – Number 7 - were built in the Edwardian period and the 1970's.

A two storey extension was added to the building in 2014 (application ref: 14/01374/1HH)



Left: Painting of original building dated 1892.
Right: Current photo of the building



Site plan as existing

Use, Amount & Layout

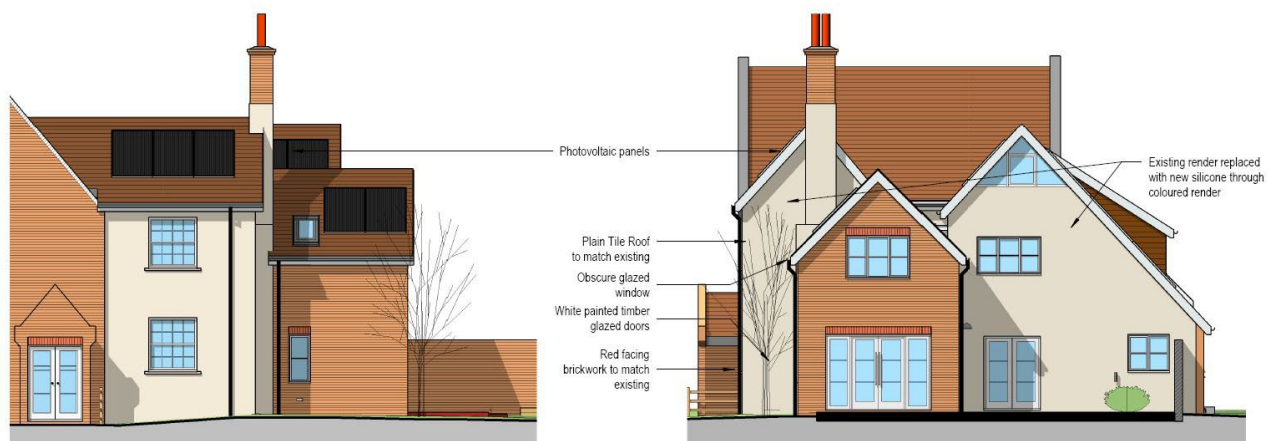
The extension is proposed to a residential dwelling to create an additional bedroom. A new staircase will be formed above the existing. A new second floor will be inserted at a lower level than the existing ceiling, creating additional space in the roof.

Scale & Appearance

The proposal make no change to the scale of the building.

A new window will be formed in the gable, creating an interesting feature in the new room. Two roof lights are proposed to provide light to the existing stairwell and for the new room. These will not be visible from most vantage points as this roof slope is screened by the adjacent roof and previous extension.

Photovoltaic panels are proposed on the south facing roof slopes and on one north easterly roof slope. Some were previously granted under the 2014 application. These have been kept modest in proportion so as not to overwhelm the roof. On the roadside elevation (South West), the panels will be positioned carefully, and centred on the windows below.



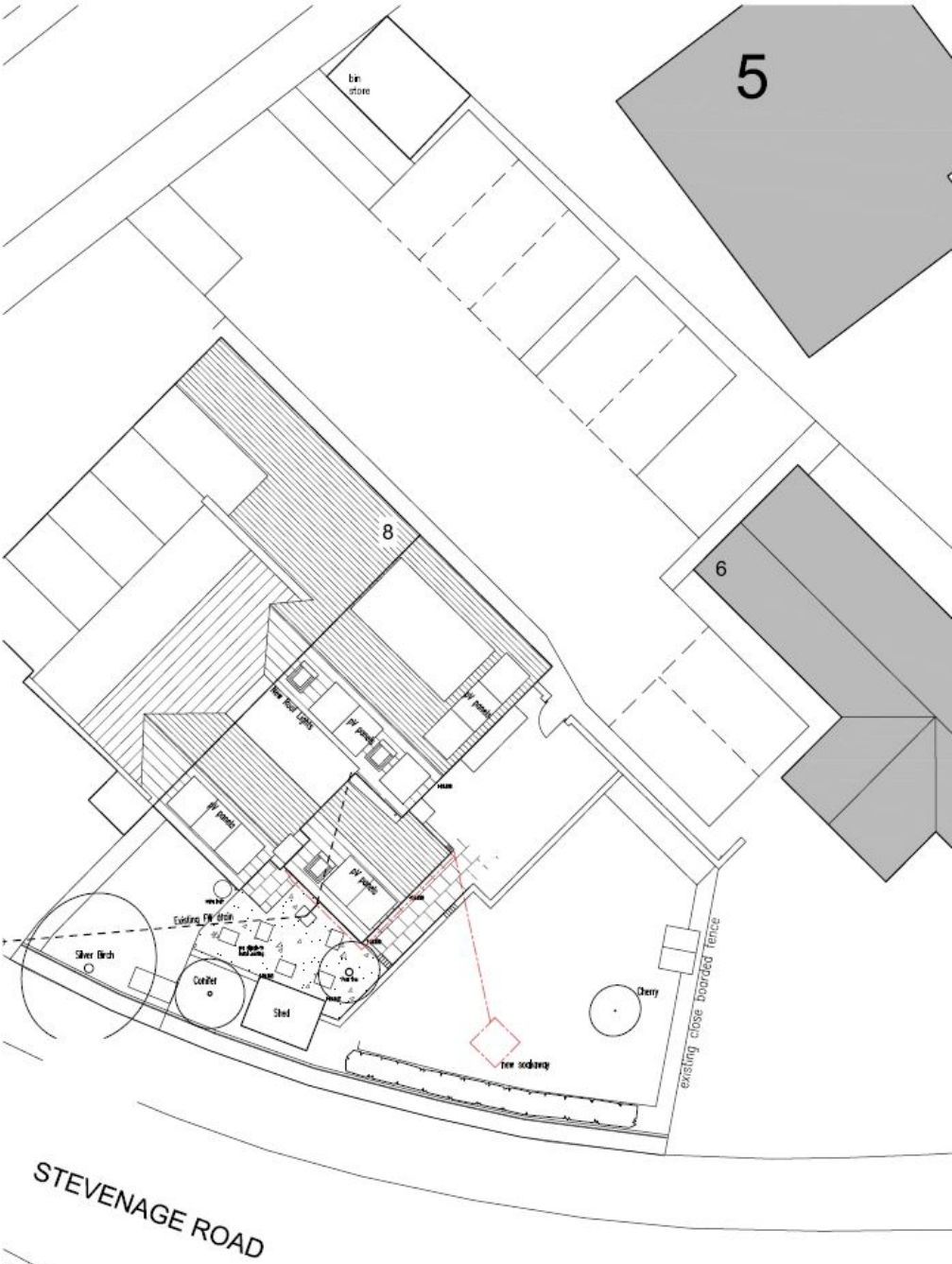
Proposed South West Elevation

Proposed Elevations

Proposed South East Elevation

Landscaping

The proposals do not have any impact on the existing landscaping for the site.



Proposed site plan

Impact on the Listed building.

As the diagram below indicates, the part of the building that now forms no.7 Alpine Close was built in the Edwardian period and the 1970's with further alterations being carried out more recently in the conversion of the building to residential use and the subsequent extension in 2014 (not shown on diagram below).

The proposed loft conversion would be within the part of the house constructed in 1979 in which there is no historic fabric. Externally, a new gable window will be formed in the south east elevation. This is proposed to be triangular in shape and is considered to be a positive addition to the appearance and character of the house and listed building.

The sand cement render applied when the building was converted to residential use has deteriorated quickly and has numerous horizontal cracks. It is believed that these have been caused due to incorrect fitting of the metal lath fixed to the original brick walls. Differential movement of the lath resulting in the cracks. It is proposed to replace this with a flexible silicone render.

Permission was previously granted for pV panels fitted on the roof. This application seeks permission for additional panels, which are no longer as unusual as they were in 2013 when permission was originally sought. The most effective panels are location on the south facing roof slopes onto the road. It is proposed the panels are installed in an 'in roof' installation so that their installation is as tidy and discrete as possible. The pV array will contribute to the energy use of the house and significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the house. This is achieved without any impact on historic fabric.

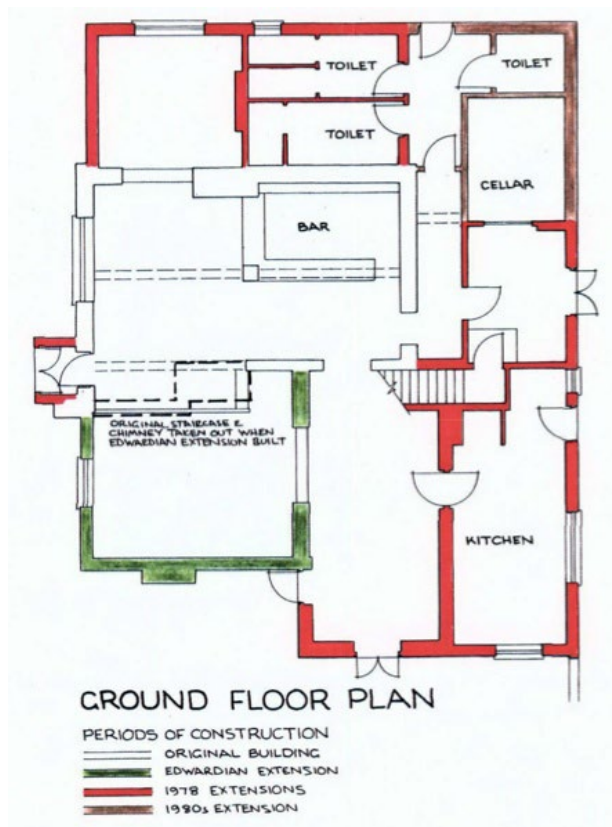


Diagram showing phases of previous extensions to the building (c/o Brent Smith)

Conclusions

The proposals consist a carefully designed alterations that respects the design and character of this listed building and has a positive impact on its setting. It is necessary to replace previously applied render with a more flexible material due to the cracking that has occurred. Photovoltaic panels reflect the move towards low carbon technologies that are necessary to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels as a society. We consider if the introduction of these will not adversely impact on the character of the listed building.