

Proposed Works to 34 Benslow Lane, Hitchin SG4 9RE



Planning Design and Access Statement

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Contents

1.0 Site Analysis and Evaluation

- 1.1 Site Location
- 1.2 Relevant Planning History
- 1.3 Site and Neighbourhood Photographs

2.0 Design and Planning

- 2.1 The Proposals
- 2.2 Designs Principles
- 2.3 Relevant Planning Policies

3.0 Access

- 3.1 Statement

4.0 Conclusion

1.0 Site Analysis and Evaluation

1.1 Site Location



Existing OS map with site marked

- The site is formed by the curtilage of no.34 Benslow Lane, Hitchin.
- Benslow Lane is an established street running from the end of Highbury Road due east. It is a non through road, but serves several other cul-de-sacs and closes.
- Benslow Lane is predominately residential, with a mix of late Victorian and Edwardian terraced, semi-detached and detached houses, but also accommodates a primary school, music school, care home.
- The site is an end of terrace dwelling with a small front garden, 1.5m wide open side path and long rear garden with a garage store and off-street parking for 2no. cars
- The dwelling is late Victorian with a front ground floor feature bay window and gable roof over the first floor front window. The rear of the house has been extended from its original form and ground floor side windows introduced. These windows are Upvc, together with the rear ground floor kitchen door, window and side first floor bathroom window. Other windows are the original timber sash.
- There is a unadopted lane that runs along the east side boundary that links to The Avenue and provides vehicle access to the rear parking area, as well as other properties. A low half height timber fence and grass verge runs along the side of the house. This fence rises to full height when it forms the boundary to the rear garden.
- This side drive rises gently towards The Avenue and mature vegetation partly screens the garden.
- The site is well served by local amenities with local shops along Walsworth Road. The centre of Hitchin is only ½ km away, where an array of shops and facilities are available.
- The site is well served by public transport with local bus routes running along Walsworth Road and Hitchin mainline train station only a 5minute walk away
- Local schools are close by with St.Andrews CofE Primary School a few doors away on Benslow Lane and Hitchin Girls School and Hitchin Boys School both within easy walking distance.
- All the above make the site's location extremely sustainable, with many facilities and amenities in walking distance or a short bicycle ride away, reducing the reliance on car travel.
- The dwelling is within Hitchin's Conservation Zone 6, but, the property is not listed or on the Register of Buildings of Local Interest.

1.2 Planning History

- There is no recent planning history available on North Herts Planning Website

1.4 Site and Neighbourhood Photographs



Front elevation from Benslow Lane



Close-up photograph of the front bay window



View along the side driveway showing, the front and side elevations



Rear elevation from private garage



Close view of the ground floor rear Upvc external door and window



View along the side driveway showing the rear of the side elevation and side boundary fence to the garden



Closer view of the rear of the side elevation showing the Upvc windows to the kitchen and bathroom



Closer view of the front of the side elevation showing the Upvc window to the dining room and timber sash to the bedroom above



View along the side driveway showing the rear section of the garden fence and the garage store



View of the garage store and parking area



View of the off-street parking area and garage store



View along the side driveway from the off-street parking back to Benslow Lane

2.0 Design Statement

2.1 The Proposals

Planning permission is sought for alteration works to the existing house that include a new rear ground floor patio door, with side lights, new ground floor side window to a new ground floor shower room and replacement windows. Two narrow side ground floor side windows will be removed and the openings infilled with brickwork. Additionally, it is proposed to remove the rear garage store and replace it with a combined store and garden room.

2.2 Design Principles

- The general aim is to improve the living conditions of the existing property but making better use of the space available within the existing footprint.
- The existing layout of the house is dated and by opening up internal spaces the proposals aim to reorder the house to make it more fit for modern life.
- This is to be done with modest external works and changes to the external appearance of the house.
- The existing steep stair is to be removed and replaced with one with a shallower pitch.
- The kitchen and dining areas are to be opened up to one space and the rear bathroom removed.
- The rear door and two windows are to be removed and a traditional French style patio door with sidelights installed, to open up the back of the house to the long garden.
- The small front room is to be opened up and a new combined toilet and utility space added with a new side window.
- The front timber sash windows are to be replaced with matching heritage style Upvc sash unit with double glazing to reduce their heat lose
- The existing ground floor side windows are Upvc and it is proposed to also use Upvc for the new side ground floor toilet window. A similar casement style will be used.
- The rear ground floor door and windows are Upvc and it is proposed to also Upvc for the new French door and sidelights.
- The first floor sash window to the rear bedroom is to be replaced and it is proposed to use a heritage style Upvc double glazed sash window for this unit.
- The rear garage concrete store is dated and in poor condition, and it is proposed to remove it and extend the original concrete base to allow for a longer timber panelled combined store and garden room. This will provide external storage and an art studio for the applicant.
- The two off street parking spaces will remain.



Front Street Elevation

2.3 Compliance with Local Planning Policies

- The works to the existing house are very modest and respects the character of the Victorian terrace.
- No extensions or additions to the existing footprint of the house are proposed.
- No additional bedrooms are being created and works to the ground floor will improve the living standards of the dwelling.
- The front of the dwelling is preserved, with only replacement windows proposed. These windows will be a matching sash style, with the same vertical beading, but in Upvc. The opportunity will be taken to improve the heat loss from these windows by using double glazed units instead of the existing single glazed.
- The side open elevation will introduce a new side ground floor window to serve the new toilet/ shower room. The existing ground floor windows are Upvc casement units and therefore it is proposed to use Upvc for this window, in a matching style to unify the side ground floor appearance.
- The small side windows will be removed and infilled with matching brickwork. The right-hand window serves the kitchen but has been blocked up and the smaller left hand window serving the current utility room is so small as to not provide any decent level of natural light. The arch brick lintels will be retained
- To the rear elevation, the dated arrangement of an external door and large and small window will be removed. These units are Upvc and therefore it is proposed to use Upvc for this unit. The style of the French door will be traditional with opening sidelights. The opening will be formed between the left side of the left window and the right side of the external door, so only the brickwork between these two existing opening will be removed, preserving brickwork either side. This new arrangement will not affect the privacy of nearby neighbours and will improve the design of the rear elevation.
- The rear first floor sash window will be replaced. As it is to the rear and the existing ground floor windows are Upvc it is proposed to use a matching traditional sash style in Upvc with double glazing.



Photograph of the side ground floor kitchen window. This casement unit is in Upvc. To the left are the two narrow windows proposed to be bricked up

- The dilapidated garage store will be removed. The internal width is only 2.3metres and therefore too narrow to accommodate a car and is only used as a store. The replacement structure will reused the existing concrete slab and extend in depth by 1.8metres. The new structure will be timber frame and well insulated. The cladding will be a vertical timber composite board that will greatly improve the aesthetics of the structure. A shallow sloping single ply roof will ensure the height is kept low. A patio door to the rear of the unit will face the house, but given it is still 15metres from the rear elevation of the nearest house, and the fact the existing 1.8m high boundary fence will be retained, there will be no loss of privacy to near neighbours.
- There are plenty of precedents for outbuildings in the area, with nos. 32,30,28 and 26 Benslow Lane all having rear structures of various sizes within their rear gardens. No. 28 has a particularly large outbuilding as the below aerial images and photographs show.



Photograph taken from the side access road looking towards the new outbuilding built at no.28. Benslow Lane



Aerial photograph of the rear gardens showing the existing storage and neighbour's outbuildings

3.0 Access Statement

3.1 Access Statement

- The proposed works comply to the Building Regulations Part M for an existing property, by not making the current access worse than the existing situation.
- The proposed works removed the rear shower room, but, introduces a new toilet, shower room to the front of the property, so preserving the existing ground floor sanitary facilities.
- A new shallower stair will improve access to the first floor.

4.0 Conclusion

We believe the proposed works will be in keeping with the neighbouring properties in terms of design, and scale. The proposes does not involve the loss of public amenity space and will enhance the local area by using good design, to provide improved accommodation for this existing family home. The scheme layout will:

- Not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding build form.
- Maintain the continuity of design, density, general appearance of housing in the locality.
- Ensure there is no detrimental impact of the residential amenity of existing neighbouring properties.

The external works will remove an ugly and dated concrete garden store and replace it with a well designed structure, built from natural materials that will enhance the side view of the garden from the access drive.