

8th January 2020

Design & Access Statement

INTRODUCTION

These proposals follow application reference 19/0357/FUL which was recommended for approval by officers but then refused at committee on the 18th of July 2019.

The Refusal Notice includes a single a reason which relates to height, scale and mass of the development as outlined below.

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The proposed development by reason of its height, mass and form would be unsympathetic and out of scale with the existing modest building, which is a non-designated heritage asset.

The proposed development would therefore fail to conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area and would conflict with the design, sustainability and heritage conservation aims of national policy at chapters 12 and 16 of the NPPF 2019, policies CS14 and SP1 of the Core Strategy 2013, policies SADM29 and SADM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) and the Council's Planning and Design Guide SPD - Part D (draft October 2016).

These proposals are designed to positively address those issues of height, massing and scale as follows:

- Reduce the mass and form of the building by removing the 'return' element of the previous proposal such that the extension is now limited to the rear, in order to make the extension more subordinate to, and in scale with, the existing building.
- The heights of the façade, eaves and ridge of the roof are designed to match the existing, and so in scale be sympathetic to the existing building.
- Materials and elevational compositions take inspiration from the existing architectural elements and so are designed to be sympathetic to the host building.

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Guiding principles:

- Retaining the main body of the existing building to the front – and replacing the extensions to the rear with new accommodation.
- Limiting extension to the rear only.
- Improving the side elevation to the retained frontage building – currently the window proportions to the side are horizontal – these proposals remove and replace these openings with vertically proportioned windows that reflect the front façade. This is a significant improvement to the non-designated heritage asset.
- Echoing the shallow pitched roof, materials and window proportions of the retained host building.

The principle changes to the scheme to address the reason for refusal are:

- Significantly reduce the extent of the development to the rear by removing the 'return element' from the previous application.
- This results in a substantial loss of area and reduction in the number of residential units from 7 to 6.
- The provision of two duplexes suitable for families. Previously there were none.
- Car Parking has been reduced from 10 to 8 spaces.
- The removal of the return results in the space to the side of the existing building being kept open, however the reduction in the requirement for car numbers results in opportunity for improved landscaping and introduction of trees to the front of the site and along the boundary with no. 46a Sparrows Herne.
- Refuse and bike stores to be positioned within the landscaping along the zone between vehicular access and the boundary with no. 46a.
- The central staircase is turned through 90° to achieve a split level section front to back that acknowledges the slope across the site from street to landscaped area.
- Roof material to extension now shown as slate to match existing – this was previously zinc.

PROPOSALS

The scheme preserves and converts the original building at the front of the site whilst replacing the rear extension to provide new sustainable residential development.

The development consists of 2 x 1 bed, 3 x 2bed and 1 x 3 bed flats (2 of the units are duplexes). 8 surface car parking spaces are provided to the rear, one of which is a disabled bay, to the side of the development a secure and covered bike hangar provides 12 secure bicycle spaces.

All units have their own private amenity area in the form of balconies, terraces or small gardens. There is also a shared landscaped garden area of 134sqm to the rear.

Design Principles

The scheme has been set out along the following design principles:

- Retain the original building to the frontage in order to maintain the street elevation and relationship with immediate neighbour No.40 Sparrows Herne.
- Respect the setting of nearby buildings, such as the listed buildings No. 38 Sparrows Herne, and the old police station opposite the site.
- Demolition the rear extension structures and replace with new extended accommodation to the rear to provide dedicated high quality new residential accommodation.
- Extension massing and detailing designed to create a subservient relationship to the retained existing building.
- Maintain sufficient overlooking distances to neighbours to the rear in order to preserve their privacy.
- Place the communal entrance and access core in the centre of the scheme – with entrance from the side within a set-back element forming a visual break between the existing and new accommodation.

Design development:

The proposals follow three earlier schemes as described with the planning statement.

The latest scheme 19/0357/FUL was submitted in March of 2019 and after lengthy and positive negotiations with officers and Design Services went to committee in July 2019 with a positive recommendation. The scheme was for 7 units across a T shaped layout that included a return of the front of the elevation, set back from the street and with an undercroft for vehicular access beneath.

These proposals now remove the return and limit the extension to the rear. The number of units reduces from 7 to 6, family housing is included along with the opportunity for improved landscaping and tree planting to the boundary.

Layout:

Retaining the main structure to the frontage allows for new development to maintain its character and scale along the streetscape. Two large 2 bed flats are contained within the original building.

Extending to the rear allows for additional accommodation with a central staircase positioned to serve both front and back.

The communal entrance and access core are located centrally and away from the street frontage. The communal entrance has been designed so as to not compromise the privacy of the ground floor units by entering at the side.

This central staircase provides split level access – reflecting a change in levels from the front of the site to the ground and lower ground floor arrangement of the rear extension.

A mix of unit sizes is proposed, ranging from 1 bed to 3 beds, all of which achieve local and national minimum space standards.

Larger family suitable duplex units to the rear are set over ground and lower ground floors and benefit from sunken sheltered garden space.

All car parking is now kept to the rear of the site, a substantial improvement on the current car parking arrangement that dominates the street-scene. The existing vehicle crossover is maintained.

AMENITY

All units have private amenity areas and also benefit from shared garden space. The two flats within the new extension at 1st floor have terraces; the top most flat within the retained structure has access to an internal light terrace; the ground floor flat within the existing building has its own front terrace area; the two duplexes accessed from ground floor have sunken light well gardens.

The total private amenity space for the 6 flats totals 83sqm.

There is a shared amenity area to the end of the site beyond the parking, set around the mature tree at the boundary with no. 40. This shared communal amenity area totals 134sqm.

The overall amenity communal plus private amenity area therefore totals 217sqm which exceeds the requirement for Hertsmere of 170m².

Scale, Height and Massing.

- These new proposals present a significant reduction in massing, with proposed new development now limited to a rear extension to the existing building.
- The existing scale of the Royal Oak building establishes the scale of the new development.
- Proposed ridge and eaves heights are maintained at the same height as the existing building, providing a balanced and symmetrical approach to the side elevation. The extension when viewed from the public realm will be seen only

in oblique views from the space between our site and no. 46a, and so the height will recede with perspective.

- The cut between the existing front and new rear blocks creates two distinct legible volumes.
- The scheme proposes the retention of the front section of the existing building and replacement of the rear extension. At present the collection of structures and extensions to the rear of the frontage building is without cohesion and the revised proposals with their continuous roof line across the frontage/ entry-link zone and returned side extension provide an opportunity for an improved and harmonious relationship to the retained structure.
- The sectional relationship between old and new blocks is optimised to make best use of the sites topography. To the rear, the split section allows a lower and upper ground floor with first floor to align with the two storeys plus roof at the front of the site.
- The split level also affords better privacy levels to the ground floor side elevation windows.
- The rear of the new-build block lines up with the rear elevation of no. 40 Sparrows Herne at lower ground and ground floors, then steps back at 1st floor.

Layout:

The accommodation to the rear benefits from long views across the rear common garden area. 6 of the 8 flats are provided with views across the landscaped amenity to the North, whilst the two remaining flats within the retained building look over the street. External balcony and terrace areas generally open out from living areas in each flat.

A vehicular and pedestrian entrance leads past the communal entrance for the residential uppers and access to bike stores and opens out into a parking courtyard to the rear, surrounded by a communal landscaped garden benefiting from existing trees.

5 of the 8 proposed flats have dual or corner aspect and allow cross ventilation. South-west facing units benefit from solar-exposed thermal mass with fenestration optimised to reduce vehicular noise.

External private amenity space is provided to all of the units with the ground floor flat in the retained building having a front garden area.

The communal entrance for the upper floor residential units has been designed so as not compromise privacy to the ground floor units by entering at the side.

A dedicated pedestrian entrance gate is provided on the front elevation.

APPEARANCE

The appearance of the proposals breaks down into three distinct elements – the front, the side and the back.

The front elevation remains as the existing – with the principal change being the re-painting of the façade as white to match the adjoining no. 40, i.e. a simple enhancement of the existing building.

The neighbouring shop shares a hipped roof with The Royal Oak which will be maintained. The rear extension extends to match that of the neighbouring no. 40. The continuous roof line across the frontage/ entry-link zone and returned side extension will provide an improved and harmonious relationship to the retained structure.

The side elevation of the existing is re-fenestrated with traditional windows to reflect the front, replacing the existing horizontal windows, with the incongruous side door being removed. The compositional arrangement of three windows reflects that of the listed 38 Sparrows Herne two doors down.

The new extension to the rear is then separated by the set-back entranceway. The elevation beyond is designed to reflect the existing building in terms of a simple and clean composition of windows – in place of the current ad-hoc arrangement of extensions. The traditional window proportions with a vertical emphasis and composition of 3 bays echo the re-fenestration of the side of the existing.

The rear elevation incorporates a break above upper ground level and first floor to enable terracing above to the top floor flats. The arrangement of windows into 5 bays reflects the 5 bay arrangement of the Old Station House opposite the site.

The openings set in the new side elevation are aligned at window cill height to provide consistency across old and new elements.

Slate tile roof and roof detailing are proposed to match that of the existing building.

Materials:

The materials for the proposed extension have been considered so as to preserve and enhance the existing building and neighbouring non-designated heritage asset, whilst at the same time incorporating contemporary detailing and complementary materials. This principle was positively agreed with officers through the previous application.

The existing building is proposed to be re-painted white to match no. 40 and be in line with other stucco/render buildings within the immediate context.

The new extension is proposed in light grey brickwork, which provides a subtle distinction from the white render of the front building. This was positively discussed with Design Officers in the previous application as a complementary and improved material to matching the render to the front – however the applicant is happy to condition in the event that officers take the view, in light of the decision notice, to seek render to match.

The roof is proposed as slate and acts as a continuation of the existing slate roof – this represents a change from the previous application where new roofs were proposed as zinc.

The set back entrance and balcony to flat 4 at 1st floor, are proposed as a glass slot to create a separation between the front and back. This allows a clear reading of the new and the old and a break where the material palette can change to reflect the historic and the new.

Balustrading to the balconies and terraces is proposed as vertically proportioned metal 'zig-zag' railing – see material sheet PA/30 which reflects the shape of a sparrows feathers in the balustrade design.

Use and Amount:

The scheme consists of 2 x 1 bed and 2 x 2bed flats plus a 3 bed duplex and a 2 bed duplex – areas are as follows:

Unit 1	GFL	2b	4p	85sqm	33sqm front garden
Unit 2	GFL/LGF	3b	5p	91sqm	15sqm garden
Unit 3	GFL/LGF	2b	4p	82sqm	16sqm garden
Unit 4	1FL	2b	4p	80sqm	5sqm balcony
Unit 5	1FL	2b	3p	52sqm	8sqm terrace
Unit 6	1FI	2b	4p	51sqm	8sqm terrace

Total amenity space amounts to 217sqm which exceeds the requirement for Hertsmere of 170m².

The Hertsmere minimum waste storage requirements per flat using large waste storage are as follows:

240L	General Waste
240L	"Green" Waste
240L	Plastic/ Cans/ Glass
38L	Paper

In developments with shared garden space, the total amount of space required for green waste should be reduced by 1 third. Therefore this development requires the following minimum capacity for shared bin storage:

1440L	General Waste
480L	"Green"
1440L	Plastic/ Cans/ Glass
228L	Paper

The bin store has been designed to accommodate one 1100L Eurobin and a 360L wheelie bin for general waste; one 1100L Eurobin and a 360L wheelie bin for plastic, cans and glass recycling; 2 x 240L bins for Green waste; and a 240L wheelie bin for paper recycling. The store is accessible without steps and located adjacent to the vehicular route.

A secure bicycle store providing 12 long term spaces is located near the communal residential entrance.

LANDSCAPING

The details below should be read in conjunction with landscape and boundary drawing PA/24.

The landscape design creates the opportunity for greater planting to the sites South-Eastern corner, providing visual screening of the new block when approached from the South.

Planters have been introduced alongside the flank elevation of the rear block to provide privacy at ground floor.

Refuse and cycle stores are integrated into the hard landscaping strategy.

A generous communal garden has been located to the rear of the site, which benefits from the retention of the mature tree.

The boundary to the rear and side site boundaries are proposed as robust vertical timber hit and miss fencing with hedging behind.

A 'zig zag' metal railing vehicular gate and pedestrian side gate provide secure parking and landscaping.

4 small trees are proposed along the boundary with no. 46a. The trees when mature will provide separation between the site and 46a Sparrows Herne. This will create a green foreground to the oblique views of the development through the gap between these two properties, acting as a visual buffer to the parking to the rear of the site when viewed from the public highway.

Access:

Where possible the scheme has been designed in line with the Lifetime Homes recommendations. Due to the sloping site and relatively small size of the development, the scheme is laid out over several floor levels and without a lift. There is therefore only access to one flat that is level. Otherwise, flats are level inside and contain circulation spaces, bathrooms and living spaces laid out in accordance with the Lifetime Homes guidance. Glazing and window handle heights and location of service controls will meet Lifetime Homes requirements.