



Design & Planning statement

1923: Proposed 2-storey side extension, removal of original rear wing, and garage conversion; 83 St Fagan's Rd, Cardiff, CF5 3AE

January 2021

In 2020 a pre-application submission was made for this proposal, reference PA/20/00050/DCH. A written response from officer Owen Rees was received dated 18.7.20. It indicated that the design as proposed would not be looked upon favourably due mostly to its contemporary design. There was no feedback on highways matters in the response

Following this a planning application was made. The clients did not want to change the design, which they loved and which was cost-effective. The planning reference was 20/01570/DCH dated 18.11.20; consent was refused. In summary, the contemporary design was felt to be unsuitable but other reasons related to the car parking arrangement which enabled a forward in forward out access, and space for three cars, seen to be excessive, and questions about sustainability – although these were not explained.

Accordingly our clients instructed us to prepare an entirely new design and we have worked to seek clarification on the car parking and sustainability issues. This application is significantly changed in form and massing, in a more traditional style, in line with the Cardiff SPG for such, and we have sought to address the other reasons for refusal. However we have had no feedback on the highways issues, despite numerous requests via the planning department as well as directly to the highways officer, nor on the definition of the sustainability criticisms. So we have sought to address these as best we can from the general LDP policy documentation available to us

We are therefore submitting two alternative site layouts for car parking as explained below. This will enable us to withdraw the one that is felt to be least acceptable by Cardiff's highways department.



1. Introduction

- 1.01 Mr Hywel Price (and his partner Lois Robinson), the new owners of the property, appointed us as their architects to explore design proposals to meet the aspirational needs of their family.
- 1.02 This application seeks to obtain planning consent that enables their plans to develop and adapt the house that they have inherited from their deceased grandmother to meet the evolving needs of their young family. They already have a young child and a second child due in January 2021.
- 1.03 The key elements of the proposals are a 2-storey side extension (because that is where the available room is on site), removal of the original rear wing to open up the garden and rear aspect to light, the conversion of the garage into useable family space, and proposals to greatly improve car-parking and car access to the house from the busy road. This is set firmly in the context that they will be converting the roof to attic accommodation by un-hipping the roof under PDRs in the near future. The planning consent therefore shows this this un-hipping of the main roof.
- 1.04 The planning process to date shows that the key policy issues are the design of the side extension to meet Cardiff's approach to side extensions in their local context and car-parking and vehicle access. There is a request that the SUDS strategy be indicated in some way on the plans and for there to be some greater indication of 'sustainability criteria' being met in the proposals.

2. Description of existing property and site

- 2.1. The 3-bedroomed house has an existing gross internal floor area of 85.3m² of which 7m² (the rear wing) is proposed to be removed. It is the end of a terrace of near identical properties running east west along St Fagan's Rd. This part of St. Fagan's Road contains a limited range of house styles, which reflect the



Glamorganshire OS map, 1940



development of this suburb of Cardiff which occurred between widely distanced older dwellings. This area was developed in a fairly short space of time hence the limited range of styles.

- 2.2. It can be seen from historical maps that this area was developed between the two wars, appearing on OS maps by 1940 but after 1920.
- 2.3. The roof is hipped at its west end, and each house originally had a narrow, single-storey rear wing. The relationship to the Presbyterian Church to their immediate west (which their mother attended, and they also regularly attend) is angular and the garage for the house lies closer to the church than the house with a single access from the very busy St Fagan's Rd, which makes reversing out treacherous.
- 2.4. The house is typical of the period with a slate roof, brick walls and painted render/stone dressings around principal windows with a gable bay feature and front door on the frontage. The side and rear walls are simple and have been rendered.
- 2.5. The single garage is inelegant, typical of detached garages nationwide.
- 2.6. The site area is 438m² (0.11A). Owing to the angular relationship with the church adjacent the garden starts with an unusually long frontage and tapers to a point at the southern end. There are no windows to the side elevation of the church, and a narrow strip of land exists between the very seriously damaged fence and the church building. Their neighbour to the east has built a large garden living/shed space at the extreme rear facing back up their garden to the house.
- 2.7. The proposal is to extend into the significant gap between the house and the garage.
- 2.8. In this way the rear garden remains private, whilst the extended house enables a greater benefit of the light and aspect to the north as well as the more positive sun-trap, space and safe play possibilities to the south.
- 2.9. A key requirement of our Brief was to find ways of making access and egress of the site by car safer. Currently, with only one car space provided, drivers have to back out almost blindly into a very busy road, especially so at rush hours. The new owners find this frightening and perilous, with two babies on the back seats raising anxieties. In line with best practice, we sought to find a way of enabling forward in



and forward out access and for two cars rather than one. We have also introduced covered secure bicycle spaces.

3. Proposals

3.1. The major elements of our client's Brief were as follows:

- to create a more generous third bedroom at first floor level, whilst leaving open the option for a loft conversion under PDRs for a fourth bedroom at a further date
- to convert the garage to provide suitable independent accommodation for their parents (and others) when visiting the family over the coming years; they live at some considerable distance away
- to provide safe forwards in and forwards out car access
- to create a large, open-plan-living kitchen and dining space in which any children can be supervised whilst cooking takes place
- to provide both a utility/laundry space as well as further 'pantry' storage for food and cooking equipment
- to improve the existing family bathroom
- to provide a master-bedroom and en-suite, with generous wardrobe space
- to use the proposed new development to create greater privacy and noise reduction to the garden area to the south
- to provide some sort of 'Wow!' factor to the new spaces internally, whilst at the same time respecting the scale of the front elevation; t
- they want an exciting, contemporary extension and not a bland and uninspiring design.

3.2. The existing single-storey rear wing causes shadow to fall across the living room façade in the afternoon and breaks up the garden and its enjoyment. The majority of afternoon light to the interior is therefore lost. At an early stage it was decided to remove this and make the extension more linear to the west. There is therefore some loss of the original footprint before the addition of the extension.

3.3. It was important to ensure that the side extension would work visually both with the existing house as well as when/if the roof was changed under PDRs and un-hipped and converted into liveable attic space. This is a significant design challenge. We have thus indicated the gable end to the roof being un-hipped in proposals so the relationship can be clearly seen.



- 3.4. Architects are familiar with the UK-wide requirements within planning guidance that any extension is clearly seen by the onlooker as such, and subservient in some way to the original house. Step-backs and dropped roofs are the typical devices suggested to enable this and we have adopted these measures in this application, as well as creating a glazed and timber boarded 'flash-gap' between the existing house and new extension.
- 3.5. The vertical timber-boarding treatment breaks up the volume and scale of proposals into clear geometric shapes. To the rear the extensive use of timber boarding on the old SW corner effectively manages the transition from the main house into the proposed rear elevation of the extension and uses the same palette of materials to maintain simplicity and unity of design.
- 3.6. The walls are otherwise proposed to be plain white smooth render, with a good quality mock slate roof, with a riven edge and face. White uPVC windows are proposed. The transition element at the rear has a flat roof to simplify the roof transitions and to express this timber-boarded element as a key element of the design.
- 3.7. We have introduced a 'jettied' bathroom to the rear to expand the cramped bathroom arrangements and work with the existing drainage and roofscape of the house.
- 3.8. At the internal heart of the extension, against the old gable wall, is a full height void or lightwell, which enables greater connectivity between the upper floor, the staircase and the newly created extension.
- 3.9. The proposed new extension has a gross internal area of 53.8m². The rear wing that is proposed to be removed has an area of 7m², giving a net increase of floor space of 46.8m². The garage is not to be enlarged and has a g.i.a. of 17.8m².

Car parking and access/egress

- 3.10. The design creates the space for a drive in, through, and out access and parking arrangement for two cars. This can all be managed within the client's landholding. As noted we have not had any feedback from Cardiff's highways officer on why this arrangement was seen to be more dangerous than the existing one of reversing out onto the road. Accordingly we have submitted to alternative arrangements and formally request that the one seem to be least satisfactory is identified, at which



stage we will withdraw it. Either option will of course require a further crossover to be constructed.

Garage accommodation facility

- 3.11. We have carefully advised our client that the creation of what could be seen as an independent unit in the old garage needs to be handled forthrightly with the Cardiff Planning Department. They are therefore interested in ways in which conditions can be added if necessary, to ensure that this change is permitted on the basis that it cannot be sold off or used as an independent living unit. This is not their intention and they would be happy to accept whatever proposals Cardiff Planning Department feels appropriate to protect this; this is a major part of this pre-application enquiry process.

SUDS design

- 3.12. Since January 2019 all schemes with a development area of greater than 100 m² have to dispose of surface water within the site and not rely on the connection to a sewer. A typical solution to this is to provide permeable surfaces to hardstanding areas, water butts to RWPs with an overflow into a 'water garden', which then leads via perforated or French drains to a soak-away area. This has to satisfy a design showing that the soakage rate is adequate for peak predicted rainfall conditions following a soakage test within the land. A 'water garden' is an area of ground that is enclosed within a non-permeable membrane from which the drain emerges. This all slows down the speed and volume of water entering the system giving greater time for natural soakage and avoiding surges.
- 3.13. We anticipate a similar solution here and have shown outline proposals on our new site plan drawing. All new hard surfaces are permeable allowing soakage into the sub soil

Sustainability

- 3.14. The site is extremely sustainable at a fundamental level since it enables the house to flex and grow to meet the needs of a modern family without impacting any other land.
- 3.15. There is the opportunity for a photovoltaic array (PV) to be mounted on the roof at any time in the future. From 2025 new properties will not be allowed to have gas or oil-based heating appliances, and the likely alternative except for those with large



budgets is an air-source heat pump or electric boiler. The decision as to how to heat the extension, and whether to replace the entire heating system is not a planning matter and that decision has not yet made.

- 3.16. The new extension will be built to current building regulation standards, that's greatly reducing heat losses to the existing part of the house. This is because the long gable end will now be an internal wall to a highly insulated newbuild structure. Underfloor heating will be used in the extension, and this is a far more efficient and sustainable heating system, reducing costs and energy.
- 3.17. The use of timber cladding is highly energy-efficient, since there is little or no energy expended in the production of the material apart from machining and transport. The launch will be from a local source. Timber is a natural product embodying a high level of carbon as part of the sequestration process of tree growth.
- 3.18. The provision of covered and secure bicycle parking spaces and the limiting of parking to two cars further reduces dependence on car usage in line with Cardiff's policies.
- 3.19. The proposal includes a significant level of new planting of shrubs and trees to make a contribution towards reducing ozone depletion and to absorb carbon dioxide emissions.

Local consultation

- 3.20. Our clients have formally presented their proposal to the church. The leadership team have agreed not to oppose anything that they have seen, since it appears to have no impact upon what they do on their site, and they wish to be generally supportive.
- 3.21. We believe that the neighbours to the east are unaffected by the proposals.

4. Planning policy & pre-application enquiry

- 4.1. The pre-application process meant that the relevant Cardiff and Welsh Assembly planning legislation has been set out within that response. We do not feel it necessary to repeat it here.



- 4.2. However, the pre-app and first planning refusal notice response was unusual, compared to other S. Wales local authority pre-apps that we have handled, in this respect: the Highway's department were not consulted and thus what we saw as a key issue was unresolved. We have been unable to obtain any clarity on the highway's issues regarding site access and parking since, despite many emails and phone calls over the ensuing period.
- 4.3. In our client's view, which we endorse, access currently is very dangerous, involving reversing out into the road. It was important to enable forward-in and forward-out access to the very busy St Fagan's Rd, which we have achieved. The planning refusal feedback that has been given is that a double width crossover could be installed to allow two cars to park at 90° to the road, but this just doubles the risk in our clients opinion.
- 4.4. We totally accept the need to keep the converted garage as subsidiary accommodation to the house.
- 4.5. In the case of this planning application, the proportions and scale are carefully considered and linked not only to the existing house but the planned formation of a pine-end by a loft conversion, and the need to end this terrace in a way that feels sensitive to the changing scale and 'book-end' situation that inevitably occurs in the overall street context with a side extension of two storeys.
- 4.6. The elements we have used to achieve this solution are I believe well-understood in design terms. They include using a vertical 'flash-gap' detail to separate the new from the old. We have now change the design to incorporate a double pitched roof to match that of the main house, but at a lower level, and stepped back from the front elevation. The transition at the rear cannot be seen by the public, but is still sensitively handled with the main transitional element being an entirely timber clad with a flat roof. This simplifies the junction of the pitched roof of the existing house and the main part of the extension.
- 4.7. The choice of smooth render is part of making the statement that "this is the end". It is not the same; it is new and contemporary. Timber cladding is not apparent anywhere in the vicinity but today it is one of the most desirable finishes for cladding as it is a sustainable material which has captured CO² and has used almost no energy in its production – unlike brick or concrete.

5. As existing site photographs



front elevation



view to SE across frontage



view towards chapel across frontage to west



view along street from site, to east



House with 2-storey extension facing site, to north



view from garden to street showing site of proposed extension



similar view slightly to east



similar view further again to east, showing rear wing to be removed



View from proposed side extension location – to SW – showing adjacent chapel and rear of garage



view of site looking SE



view of garden from proposed extension location



rear garden looking south, with neighbour's rear garden shed



view of western frontage (garage) plus chapel beyond

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