

Fig Tree House – Planning Statement

The Project –

The aim is to separate the expansive rear garden of Fig Tree House, 108, High Street, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey, Kent ME11 5AG.

We are proposing to apply for planning permission for 3x 2 bedroom houses with a drive to rear parking and amenities.

The houses will front North Street, Queenborough.

HERITAGE -

Fig Tree House –

Fig Tree House is situated some what in the middle of the historic Queenborough High Street and extends out to a rear drive way on North Road, Queenborough.

Fig Tree House is a rambling 4/5 bedroom house and was designated a Grade II listed building in 1978, listing No 1258502.

The Listing details include internal and external details of importance to the house. There are no listed details for the rear out buildings (the garage and work shop in the rear garden to be demolished are C20th) –

“II GV 2. C18 refaced in C19. 2 storeys plastered having C19 mouldings and ornamented architraves and modillions to windows. Half-hipped tiled roof. 5 sashes with original sash bars removed. Central doorway. 2 stone lions couchant before the front door and cast iron railings.”

The rear garden is some 58m long from the rear of the house and was an off put to many of the potential purchasers due to the cost and time of up keeping and maintenance. At the rear of the garden, the North Road side, there is a garage and 2 brick built work shops and a large stock brick work wall running width ways across the property which has collapsed. These are modern construction in the 1980s and using local old bricks to house a boat and workshop.

The rear wall was also erected and gated fitted in the 198s . None of these elements are on the listing as they were not deemed worthy of inclusion.

These walls and brick buildings would be demolished saving the bricks to build the new devising boundary wall and possible to use in the architectural details on the houses !

The rear wall is a mixture of a garden wall with red stock soldier course then that leads into a normal top which its self was extended on top of to form the side of an out building in the 1980s so not an attractive or indeed period wall

The rear area we are proposing for development was not actually part of Fig Tree House or its gardens until the mid 1960s when it was given or bought from the local authority by the then owner. Our proposal is to simply reinstate the original rear boundary for Fig Tree House to as it was when built.

The house itself has had various additions, alterations and extensions so while the front faced, facing the high street has maintained its listing credentials the rear has been subject to alterations and changes as the owners have seen fit to develop in their use of the house. No boundary walls or out buildings are listed and as such the boundary is formed by brickwork walls some 18th C some 20th C and areas of old and modern fencing so a mixed set of finishes and boundary treatments.

The proposed area is disused and unmanageable in terms of garden size for a modern way of life. The whole area has been subject to sympathetic changes and the public house is in close proximity and other buildings have undergone changes.

As the house and plot currently stands it's too large and unmanageable for modern life and its very close physical nature to the high street road, the awkward off road drive and parking limits the potential buyers of this property and the garden is an added off put meaning this house is not in the best repair.

The heritage asset will not be adversely affected by the proposed houses. The large garden remaining with the house and the limited glazing means the new houses will not be encroaching on the existing Fig Tree House. The proposed houses are set forward with the parking at the rear again making the distance between old and new dwellings maximised.

The proposed houses fall in line in both terms of the buildings and the plot with the close terraced housing which has not detracted or imposed on Fig Tree House so nor with the proposed new houses.

The existing trees in the remaining Garden as well as new native tree planting will further screen and break the view of the new house from the existing. There are no TPO trees on the current site.

We are proposing a 2m high boundary wall to separate the plot from the garden. This is very much in style and keeping of the existing house and we plan to ensure that the period correct bricks saved on site currently and from the outbuildings are reused to build the new wall so the history stays on site! This wall will shield any noise and negative impact on Fig Tree House such as cars and ground floor French doors etc so the first floor and roof will be visible meaning a view that's would be typical for such a house of that period and again not negatively impacting on the heritage asset.

The view (not taking trees into account) would be of a period correct high rear boundary wall and then further back the stock brick rear wall punctured with period correct sash windows and a slate tiled effect roof so not only are the proposed houses period they are of a high standard of terraced house from the period!

The materials in this proposal means the walls, roof and windows etc are in keeping with the conservation area and Fig Tree House as a listed building. With corbeled feature brickwork added and painted stone lintels above windows (which match the local houses) this will add a high quality element to this period design and be a positive feature on Fig Tree House, these are not a cheap build set of houses they are to be high quality to enhance the area in general!

Plot Division & The Proposed Plot –

We are proposing to split the plot leaving a substantial garden area with Fig Tree House, approx. 300m² of garden plus large garage and side access, forming a separate plot at the rear of approx. 610m² for development.

The rear already has a substantial drop kerb and so relocation to the side as proposed makes a safer and better use of the space. It also provides a larger gap to the vicarage. This is important as on the left as viewed the proposed houses blend in as an almost continuation of existing terraced homes and then a clear gap to define the step from terrace to the detached and set back vicarage property

The surrounding area in North Road has a mixture of buildings from terrace and semi-detached houses as well as a commonwealth grave yard and community hall opposite the propose new houses location and a detached vicarage to one side. The area has multiple new houses and the design we are submitting is in keeping with the existing and the new houses.

North Road is a wide road and provides ideal access while not having a negative effect on the existing houses or road use.

We have stepped the proposed units back I from the road allowing a small front area and a deep wide entrance for clear visibility exceeding standard site lines.

Pre Application Advice –

Prior to this planning application we sought Pre Application Advice for 4 houses on this site and have reduced to a set of 3 on the results of that advice.

We have moved the proposed houses to one side to create a better gap between the proposed houses and the vicarage and also it provides more open sky and less impact on Fig Tree House as well.

The advice highlighted boundaries to Fig Tree House but as discussed above these are varied in both materials and dates of erecting. The rear wall facing North Road is a feature of the area how ever its not an attractive or of architectural merit it is a badly constructed wall of mixed heights. It also is formed of the side of one of the outbuildings and a large pair of modern wooden gates and posts. The wall is there but as to whether it's a nice feature is very subjective indeed and is not in keeping with the immediate area at all. Which is principally houses and opposite a very low wall. That being said we have altered the design to include a walled front court yard to the houses and would ideally like bricks retained from the existing wall to be reused in the new boundary wall which will be on the same line as the existing so a nod to the garden wall currently there. Again this wall want listed nor noted as of architectural interest. The majority of local walls such as the longest one around the Church are no more than 1m in hight and uniform not a mixed height wall such as this.

There was concern that the parking are could be detrimental to Fig Tree House as a listed building however that will not be visible in any way due to the proposed rear brick work boundary wall.

We also formed a revised entrance to the parking and formed 2 pavement type walk ways form the rear of the development o the public foot path as recommended.

Overall there was acceptance that this type of infill development is welcomed and we have , through the revised plans addressed the other issues raised with in the Pre Application Advice and would therefore expect support for this proposal.

New Houses-

We are proposing 3 new houses, each 2 bedroom units with the road access to the rear parking and amenities. We are proposing a high quality design starter family home yet affordable. The house incs ground floor cloak room, good size lounge and kitchen area and private garden and meets or exceeds minimum size standards for a 3 person, 2 bedroom house (1 double bedroom and 1 single bedroom). Each house has approx. 73m2 habitable space and a 25m2 garden.

The loft has a small front dormer window so the loft area will provide excellent storage or even hobby room (as accessed form a loft hatch and drop down ladder not a dedicated stair case) and is in keeping with both historic house next to the garden plot and the more modern houses on the former Whiteway's Garage site further on along North Street.

Architecturally we want the houses to blend into the older properties in the area but internally a modern and family environment so the best of both worlds !

The landscaping will be of native planting inc the rear car park including hedges and trees and wildlife friendly features such as a raised area in each garden fence for wildlife to move freely inc holes in proposed wall between Fig Tree House garden and the plot. We will include bird/bat nesting boxes in the landscaping as well as built into the houses themselves. We want natural grass gardens not artificial.

Ideally solar panels fitted at construction stage and a detailed investigation to other eco-friendly build methods and materials.

The scale of these house fitsi not the area and the existing houses surrounding them.

There is public transport links access able easily by foot inc various bus stops and Queenborough Train Station all under 5mins walk away.

Queenborough has numerous shops including convenience type and a small supermarket in a form of COOP as well as take aways and other business and a good mixture of public houses doubling as eateries.

There is a strong community in Queenborough is a lovely environment to live for a young family with its own primary school and local secondary schools all under 3 miles away in Sheerness and Minster on Sea.

Conclusion –

Taking into account the need for good quality affordable housing in nice areas we believe the proposal is an ideal use of the ground, it blends into and enhances the conservation area and compliments the listed building while making Fig Tree House more attractive as a family home with a manageable garden. The design of the properties uses architectural details such as the detailed courses of contrasting red stocks brick work to the yellow stock main walls, the painted stone lintels and roof front small dormer all tie in to both the period of the area and the details of houses the immediate area.

The new houses would provide starter family homes in area of good amenities and access via roads, bus stops and train station as wells as local shops and amenities. The scale and design are in line and in keeping with the area and existing architecture and we believe this will enhance the area and the street scene.

This proposal does not negatively affect the heritage asset of Fig Tree House it enhances it and provides an unused garden are to become houses desperately needed in this area and house that blend into the existing street scene taking into account the conservation status of the area. Modern insulation and energy saving techniques and materials mean that while looking period correct they are at the forefront of environmental design in a cost effect manor to the family buying these !

This space is ideal for such a development and will add to the community and the area.

There is a great need for good quality housing than this rear unused garden area.

Photographic Representations –



Front Of Fig Tree House, High Street Queenborough.



Rear Existing Entrance To Fig Tree House Garden



Existing Victorian Houses Adjacent To The Garden Plot



Left Side of Garden Wall & Vicarage Driveway



Church Hall Opposite Rear Garden Of FTH



Commonwealth Grave Yard Opposite Rear Garden Of FTH



1950s Properties Adj To Grave Yard