

NOVEMBER 2023

# PLANNING STATEMENT

**36 DIBDEN ROAD, DOWNEND, BRISTOL. BS16 6UE**

ON BEHALF OF: **MR DANIEL MELKSHAM**

**stokesmorgan**  
planning

Stokes Morgan Planning Ltd  
41a High Street  
Nailsea  
BS48 1AS

[www.stokesmorgan.co.uk](http://www.stokesmorgan.co.uk)  
01275 858256

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Stokes Morgan Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr Daniel Melksham. It accompanies a full planning application for the conversion of the property into 2no. self-contained dwellinghouse, with associated parking and amenity space.

1.2 The purpose of this statement is to explain the background to the scheme and provide an assessment of the key planning issues set against the context of national and local planning policy and guidance, and any relevant material considerations.

1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting information:

- Completed Application Form;
- CIL Question Form;
- Existing site, elevations, and floor plans;
- Proposed site, elevations, and floor plans; and
- Design and Access Statement.

1.4 This document is structured as follows:

- Application Site and Surroundings;
- Authorised Use and Planning History;
- Proposed Development;
- Planning Policy Analysis/Balance; and
- Conclusions.

## 2. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site lies within the Emersons Green ward and parish, under the jurisdiction of South Gloucestershire Council, and lies well within the East Bristol Urban Area (defined settlement boundary).
- 2.2 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is not subject to any policy designations. It is not within a Conservation Area, and there are no Listed Buildings or TPOs on site or within the vicinity.
- 2.3 The 0.03ha application site comprises an extended end-of-terrace dwellinghouse, close to the corner of Dibden Road and Beaufort Road. The property benefits from rear and side gardens, with vehicle parking located at the front. There is a short masonry wall to the front, which increases in height to the side, where it separates the property from a public footpath.



Above - Application site viewed from Dibden Road

- 2.4 The application property forms the northern end to a terrace of four houses, on the eastern side of Dibden Road. Directly to the north is an area of amenity (highway) grass with trees, and then the junction of Dibden Road and Beaufort Road. To the east, is the flank wall of No.35 Beaufort Road (a house), and the property's rear garden.
- 2.5 To the west of the site, across Dibden Road, is a block of commercial ground floor uses with residential above. The rank includes a children's nursery/pre-school, convenience store, and hairdresser/salon. At the end of the rank there is a post box.
- 2.6 Aswell as these, the site is well placed for local facilities, with the Huntsman Taverners public house 200m to the south. Stanbridge Primary School lies to the southwest on Westerleigh Road and St Augustine's Primary School is located to the west – both are 800-850m from the site. Downend school and sixth form (ages 11-18) is similarly 600m to the southwest, on Westerleigh Road. The Bristol and Bath Science Park commences 900m to the northeast of the site and Emersons Green Retail Park, which includes a supermarket, is 1.3km to the east.
- 2.7 Locally, the pattern of development is largely latter-twentieth century suburban development, predominantly two-storeys in scale, arranged broadly in traditional perimeter blocks and interspersed with grassland amenity spaces, parks, and playing fields.
- 2.8 To the north, the A432 Badminton Road is a designated Active Travel Route. Closer to the site there are bus stops on Beaufort Road (100m) for the 48 half-hourly service between Emersons Green and Bristol City Centre. Additional services are available on the A432 Badminton Road (800m).

### **3. AUTHORISED USE AND PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 There is some planning history from the 1980s for the site, relating to consent for the double garage/workshop (ref. K3596), and the subsequent permission (ref. K3596/1)

to build atop the garage/workshop to form the existing two-storey side extension (see image, above). The lawful use is as a C3 residential dwellinghouse.

## 4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposed development seeks to effectively subdivide the property, vertically, to create two separate two-bedroom houses.
- 4.2 The conversion works would also include the removal of the rear lean-to conservatory, the removal of the side canopy, the installation of pitched roofs to the existing dormer windows, and alterations to the existing extension's fenestration to facilitate self-containment.
- 4.3 Forecourt parking for up to 2no. vehicles per dwelling would be provided, along with private amenity space, cycle parking, and dedicated refuse/recycling storage. Both proposed dwellings would have two bedrooms and three bedspaces, with 72-73sq.m of internal floorspace.
- 4.4 See the Design and Access Statement and submitted plans for full details.

## 5. PLANNING ANALYSIS/BALANCE

- 5.1 The key policy tests and material considerations to be assessed in the determination of this proposal, are:
  - Is the principle of development acceptable?
  - Would the scheme make an efficient use of the land and provide a suitable housing mix?
  - Would the proposed conversion works be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area?
  - Would the development ensure the residential amenity of neighbours and future occupants?

- Is the proposed development acceptable in highway safety and parking terms?
- Are there any other considerations that would warrant refusal?

5.2 These considerations are addressed separately below.

**Is the principle of development acceptable?**

5.3 The site falls within the Bristol eastern urban area settlement boundary. Further to this, Policies CS17 and PSP39 support new dwellings within existing residential curtilages, subject to appropriate design, preserving the amenity of existing neighbours and future occupants, and highways considerations, all of which are addressed below.

5.4 For these reasons, it is considered that the principle of development would be acceptable.

**Would the scheme make an efficient use of the land and provide a suitable housing mix?**

5.5 Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy requires housing development to make efficient use of land and to maximise the amount of housing supplied, particularly where there are good transport links. The policy goes on to state that the development should be informed by the character of the surrounding area and contribute to high quality design and provide adequate levels of open space.

5.6 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes, whilst paragraph 120 promotes the development of under-utilised land.

5.7 The Council does not have a minimum density for housing. The 0.03ha site currently provides a single dwelling in a relatively sustainable urban location. The two dwellings proposed would amount to 67dph, which is still considered appropriate for a location within the urban confines of Bristol and close to main transport routes and facilities.

- 5.8 Policy CS17 requires proposals to contribute towards providing a choice of tenure and type, having regard to the existing local mix and the character and accessibility of the location.
- 5.9 The 2021 Census shows that two-bedroom dwellings account for 24% of dwellings in the Emersons Green ward, three-bedroom dwellings 40%, and four-or-more-bedroom houses 30%. For the district, the figures are 21%, 44% and 27% respectively. Whilst the figure for two-bedroom dwellings is marginally higher than the average across the district, this is indicative of the urban location and type and style of housing in the area.
- 5.10 Given the small-scale nature of the site, it is not considered that the provision of 2no. two-bedroom dwellinghouses (and the loss of a 3/4-bed house) would adversely affect the existing local mix, and would potentially deliver smaller houses in the local area for downsizers and first-time buyers.

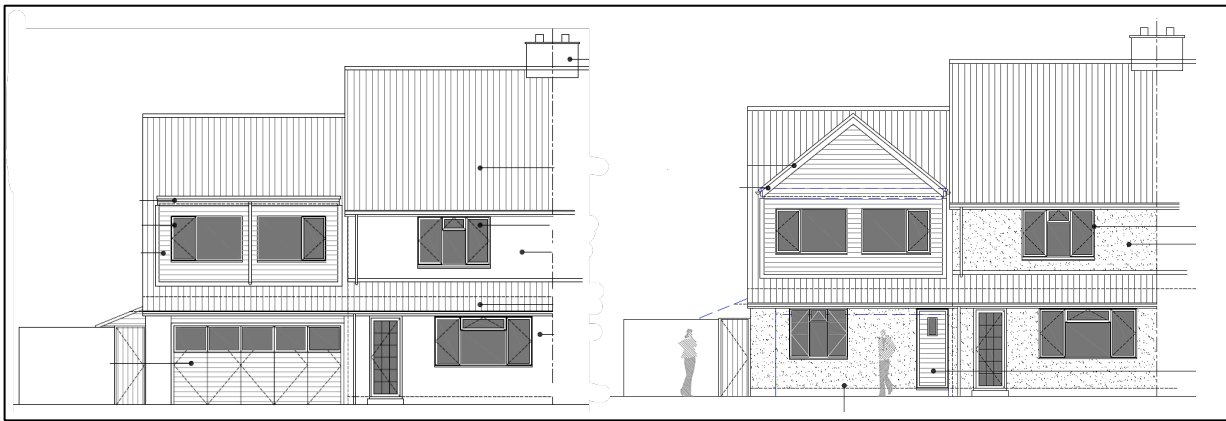
**Would the proposed conversion works be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area?**

- 5.11 Central government is committed to high-quality design, which is integral to sustainable development. The government, through the NPPF, recognises the need for proposals to reinforce local distinctiveness but advise that this does not necessitate conformance to certain development forms or styles. The NPPF encourages innovative designs, originality, and initiative, and recognises that high quality and inclusive design should address the connections between people and places, and the integration with the natural, built and historic environment.
- 5.12 Core Strategy policy CS1 states that development will only be permitted where the highest possible standards of design and site planning are achieved.
- 5.13 The application looks to subdivide the property vertically, to create two self-contained dwellinghouses from the extended building envelope of No.36 Dibden Road. It is pertinent that the existing two-storey side extension to No.36 is broadly the same width of the main house – and crucially – other houses within the terrace.



Despite the extension's subservience to the main house, at roof level, the overall layout and scale is commensurate with the terrace.

5.14 The proposals would result in the separation of the two, and pitched roofs (gables) being added to the existing front and rear dormer windows, along with changes to the ground floor front fenestration of the extension to provide a main entrance and windows (see image, below). The alternative roof to the existing extension is different to that of the host, but it is an existing situation and, as a new end-of-terrace, this would not be seen as any more incongruous within the streetscene as the current situation.



**Above: Existing (left) and proposed (right) front elevations, showing the new pitched roof dormer and fenestration changes**

5.15 The development would look to upgrade the external appearances of both the original house and the new house within the converted extension. Overall, the proposal is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area, and would provide two visually acceptable dwellings.

**Would the development ensure the residential amenity of neighbours and future occupants?**

5.16 Policy CS1 requires (*inter alia*) proposals to respect and enhance the amenity of the site and its context. Policies PSP8 and PSP38 states that development should not create unacceptable living standards for occupiers or nearby properties, through (but not limited to) loss of privacy, overbearing or loss of light. PSP43 sets minimum external amenity space standards, as a guide, which equate to 50sqm for a two-

bedroom house, Paragraph 8.67 of the supporting text states that, *“The space standards are a guide and include the totality of balconies, front and back gardens and communal spaces etc., but not access paths”* and that they should also be applied as an average across the site. At paragraph 8.69 the Council recognises that higher densities may be appropriate in certain locations, and in such circumstances, standards can be relaxed if developers can demonstrate access to fresh air and daylight.

- 5.17 The two dwellings would each provide two bedrooms and three bedspaces over two storeys with 72-73sq.m of internal floorspace, in excess of the 70sq.m requirement of the Nationally Described Space Standards.
- 5.18 Both properties would be provided with a minimum of 50sq.m of private amenity space, to the rear (excluding front parking areas/circulation space), in compliance with policy PSP43.
- 5.19 The dwellings are aligned east-to-west, with east-facing gardens, and the new end-of-terrace would also be triple aspect with ground floor windows within the northern flank elevation. The ground floors are proposed with full-width kitchen/dining rooms to the rear, and west-facing living rooms at the front. The master bedrooms are both west facing, with the smaller, single, bedrooms and bathrooms located to the rear of the houses. As such, both dwellings would have good outlooks, natural lighting and appropriate internal layouts to provide appropriate levels of residential amenity.
- 5.20 In terms of overlooking and loss of privacy, there is little change from the existing situation, given this is a conversion of a large 3-4 bedroom/6-8 person house to 2no. two-bedroom/three-person houses. The potential occupancy levels and location (and type) of windows are largely the same existing and proposed. As such, there would be no greater overlooking of neighbours.
- 5.21 The proposed gable roofs to the dormer windows would have no impact on neighbours in terms of overbearance and/or over-shadowing. The application proposes the removal of the existing canopy and lean-to rear conservatory, so there

is an overall reduction in building footprint. In conclusion, the proposal would raise no concerns with regards to existing or future residential amenity.

**Is the proposed development acceptable in highway safety and parking terms?**

- 5.22 NPPF paragraph 110 requires proposals to provide appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable travel, provide safe and appropriate access, whilst paragraph 111 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 5.23 Policy CS8 seeks to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle, and supports development located near existing and proposed transport infrastructure, and existing facilities and services.
- 5.24 Policy PSP11 supports proposals which would generate a greater demand for travel where safe access be provided, it is located on safe walking and/or cycling routes and would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Policy PSP16 requires a minimum of 1.5no. spaces for a two-bedroom dwelling and 2no. cycle parking spaces per dwelling.
- 5.25 As detailed at paragraphs 2.5-2.8 above, the application site is located in an accessible location, and with a bus stop close the site and additional services within easy walking distance. The proposal would comply with all of the acceptable maximum walking distances are to services and facilities.
- 5.26 Up to 4no. parking spaces are proposed across the site, located on the existing forecourt area of the property. Each dwelling will be provided with a cycle store for at least 2no. bicycles and refuse and recycling storage areas are proposed within the curtilage of each house.
- 5.27 In summary, there would be no adverse impact on the local highway network as a result of the proposed development. Consequently, the proposal is acceptable in transport, accessibility, and safety terms.

**Are there any other considerations that would warrant refusal?**

*BNG*

5.28 The Council's Biodiversity and Planning SPD remains in draft form currently, and does not detail the process for Small Sites. BNG for small sites is expected to be applicable from April 2024.

5.29 The existing site largely comprises the building, the hard-surfaced front parking area, and the rear garden (mainly lawn, paving, and a pond – to be retained). There is scope within the site to be able to provide additional habitat units in the form of shrub and tree planting, and these can be secured as part of any condition, along with the Small Sites Matrix, should the requirement be adopted by the time of the decision.

*Sustainable energy*

5.30 The east and west-facing roof slopes could accommodate solar panels to provide electricity for users of the buildings. Final details of carbon emission reduction could be secured by condition as part of the Council's response to the climate emergency. However, it should be noted that Part L Building Regulation standards have now been superseded by the 2021 edition including 2023 amendments, and for existing buildings, Part L now requires improvements to the building's energy performance, such as upgrading insulation, installing more efficient heating systems, and reducing air leakage. As a result, the development would be required to bring about energy performance improvements by other mechanisms separate to the planning process.

*Drainage*

5.31 The Environment Agency maps show that the site is at very low risk of flood and surface water flooding. The proposed parking area is existing, and where new paths, within the divided rear garden, are proposed; permeable solutions would be utilised.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The current single dwelling equates to around 33dph, and within this urban context, a higher (double) level of density is warranted, where development would not prejudice the character and appearance of the local area or the amenity of neighbours.
- 6.2 The existing dwelling is extended, to broadly double its original width, thereby allowing a vertical subdivision that results in two dwellinghouses with a form and layout appropriate for the context.
- 6.3 The new dwelling would contribute a modest windfall addition the District's housing supply, and provides a housing type that accounts for less than a quarter of the housing stock within the ward, thereby adding to the mix of local housing.
- 6.4 Both dwellings would have suitable access, a good standard of residential amenity, and would not impact on neighbouring dwellings.
- 6.5 For these reasons, it is hoped that the Council can support this proposal.