

Demolition of existing garage and construction of two storey side extension and single storey side porch (Planning Portal Ref: PP-12698720)

Design Statement - 17 November 2023 (Doc Ref: 44CWD-FUL1-DES)

Introduction

44 Carpenters Wood Drive is a three-bedroom detached house from the late 1930s built in the Arts & Crafts style. The current layout of the house remains as originally built.

After living in the house for more than a decade, we are submitting a planning application to extend the house to gain more living space for our growing family. With approximately 1,100 square feet of living accommodation currently, number 44 is arguably one of the smaller detached houses in the local vicinity.

The project brief has been to extend the house being faithful to both the original design and to the Arts & Crafts movement in general. The target was that the proposed elevations could plausibly have been the original design for the house back in the 1930s.

This statement aims to help explain the submitted proposal, the reasoning behind each architectural design feature and its compliance with the Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) Local Plan.

Side Extension

Number 44 sits on the northern side of Carpenters Wood Drive where the houses and their plots are skewed relative to the road rather than perpendicular to it leading to a staggered effect.

Consequently, number 44 as originally built already sits substantially within the 45 degree visibility splay of the neighbours at number 42 using the methodology in the TRDC Local Plan.

To gain additional space whilst remaining within the guidelines this proposal therefore adds a side extension rather than trying to extend to the rear.

Key Elements of the Proposal

The proposal involves demolishing the existing garage which is attached to the western side elevation of the house and building a side extension in its place. The existing garage is in an extremely poor state of repair, and it is in need of complete replacement. It is also too small for modern vehicles and so is of little use in its current form.

At the ground floor level, the new side extension will cover the same footprint as the existing garage plus a small additional area behind. At the first floor level, the extension steps in by 1.2m from the boundary as required by the Local Plan. On the eastern flank elevation, a porch is proposed over the external door to the kitchen.

Structurally the house remains as initially built with many original features such as fireplaces, chimneys, and stained-glass windows still present; all of which the owners intend to keep.

About Carpenters Wood Drive

Carpenters Wood Drive is a long street which solely comprises detached houses but which encompasses a wide variety of individual designs and styles.

The street was originally laid out in the late 1930s by the Metropolitan Railway Country Estates Company, as part of The Chenies Estate development. Believed to be one of the last estates laid out along the Metropolitan Line by the railway company themselves, the original sales brochure for this estate contained at least nine separate

house designs for purchasers to choose from. Individual purchasers were also allowed to design and build their own houses and purchase additional land to increase the width of their plot.

The northern (even numbers) side of the street was completed in late 1930s. With the outbreak of the Second World War the southern side of the street remained as farmland until the 1950s when it too started to be developed. By this time architectural styles were substantially different.

Consequently, Carpenters Wood Drive lacks the consistency of design which is seen in many other locations along the Metropolitan Line, and further individuality has been introduced over time by many of the houses having now been extended or completely replaced.

Our house sits roughly in the middle of Carpenters Wood Drive, between the turning with Beechwood Avenue and the sharp corner at the "top of the road", comprising numbers 20-64 evens and 13-43 odds. Any observations further below relate to this section of the street only. Here there is little homogeneity between houses and no discernible repeating pattern. Houses on the northern side tend to have white pebble dashed elevations, whereas faced brick is more common on the southern side.

Each house has off-street parking and (originally) garaging. There are parking permits in operation though the street does not have any issue with commuter parking. Some residents park on the street for convenience and there are no issues with overcrowding either. The road is wide enough for two cars to pass, and there are pavements and grass verges on both sides. This, coupled with each house being set back from the pavement by approximately 30 feet on average means that neighbours on opposite sides of the street are a substantial distance away from each other which gives the street a feeling of spaciousness.

Plots along the northern side of Carpenters Wood Drive all have upward sloping gardens which extend to the boundary of Carpenters Wood, now owned by TRDC and none of them have rear neighbours or issues with overlooking.

All of the houses and their plots on the northern side of the street are skewed relative to the road and not perpendicular to it which results in a staggered layout. A side effect of this is that many of the houses, as originally built, already sit within their neighbour's 45 degree visibility splay as currently applied by TRDC. This is particularly true of number 44 and their neighbour to the east at number 42 and this is marked on the current floor plan for reference.

About Number 44

Number 44 was built by Guillet and Sons Ltd, a renowned local builder whose houses are prevalent in Chorleywood and surrounding villages. Original discarded newspaper clippings found under the floor and in the attic of number 44 date its build to autumn and winter of 1939.

It is one of four houses in Carpenters Wood Drive built to the same design and they are arranged as two pairs, but substantially apart (nos 14 & 16 and 44 & 46). Two of the matching houses (nos 14 & 16) have already been extended and the owners of the third (neighbours of ours, living at number 46) have approval for a substantial extension and remodelling of their house under application 23/0353/FUL.

Local history suggests that at least some of these four houses were built for and inhabited by the Gullett family themselves upon completion. We believe ourselves to be just the third owner of number 44 since it was built some 84 years ago.

Most Gullett and Sons Ltd houses are of a similar style and room arrangement, including:

- A front elevation with faced brick to the ground storey and pebble dash render to the upper storey and to other elevations.
- Front porches with an arched opening. Including brick or tile quoins as detailing on the porch and front elevation in general.
- Bay windows to the front, sometimes with jetty overhang, and glass verandas to the rear.
- The main living room sited at the rear of the house overlooking the garden.
- The bathroom over the porch to the front elevation, and a separate toilet upstairs to the flank elevation.
- Separate kitchen and dining room, and one main living room.

At approximately 1,100 sq ft of living accommodation, we are of the opinion that number 44 is smaller than most other houses in Carpenters Wood Drive, and indeed neighbouring streets in this area of Chorleywood.

Planning Application Requirements

As per the validation checklist provided by TRDC and the National requirements, the following detail has been provided in this application:

- We confirm that work has not commenced on this proposal.
- A location plan has been submitted including the naming of two streets and other features as per National requirements, and as extended by the TRDC requirements.
- An existing block plan has been submitted.
- A proposed block plan has been submitted, produced using the online drawing tools of the recommended map provider. The proposed development can be seen as the hatched area as per the TRDC guidance.
- A biodiversity checklist has been included.
- The relevant CIL form has been included, confirming that there is less than 100sqm of floor area gain.
- Current elevations and floor plans have been included.
- Proposed elevations and floor plans have been included.

One location plan has been produced automatically by the online Planning Portal tools. An alternative location plan, current block plan and proposed block plan have also been submitted in PDF format. These were produced and purchased via TerraQuest (RequestAPlan.co.uk) which is the recommended map supplier to the Planning Portal.

Key Elements of the Proposal Explained – Ground Floor

In this section we explain the key elements of the proposal, starting from the ground floor and going upwards.

- **Garage.** In a very poor state of repair, and in need of complete replacement. At present it is only accessible from outside and is too small for a modern car. We intend to replace this with a habitable room that is accessible from the rear reception room. The footprint of the side extension will match that of the garage with a small additional area behind. A bay window has been proposed to the front elevation to broadly match the existing bay window to the other front reception room. Our view is that this softens the front elevation, and we believe it looks much nicer than the flat window proposed in our other permitted development application 23/2082/CLPD. We intend to match the existing external finishing of the ground floor front elevation, including imperial sized handmade faced bricks.
- **Downstairs W/C.** To the rear of the garage a downstairs W/C is proposed. Number 44 at present does not have a downstairs W/C so we are adding one for accessibility reasons and convenience. We think it is an efficient usage of the wasted space behind the garage and inglenook fireplace which gets little direct sunlight and is always damp. Skylights are proposed to provide some natural daylight; these are positioned facing the flank of number 46 which has no windows.
- **Lobby.** We propose the downstairs W/C is accessed from the reception room via a lobby to outside. This separates the W/C from the reception room, makes the W/C conveniently accessible from the garden, and gives us somewhere to store boots and coats. Again, skylights are proposed to provide some natural daylight and these also look at the flank of number 46 which has no windows. Note that on the rear elevation, for the external door to the lobby, a brick arch infilled with architectural glass is proposed. This brick arch is a replica of the front porch of our house with matching detailing.
- **Old Rear Glass Veranda / New Side Porch.** The current rear glass veranda is in an extremely poor state of repair and needs to be removed. We have proposed a replica porch is erected on the eastern side elevation (towards number 42) so that we can open the kitchen side door without the rain coming in. The low height of this porch means it should be almost invisible to the neighbours who have a very tall hedge and bamboo screen in addition to our boundary fence, which will remain in place. It is proposed that the walls of the porch are glazed, with architectural glass doors to the front and rear.

- **Rear Original Gardener's Toilet.** This is in an extremely poor state of repair and needs to be removed too. It is replaced by the internal W/C accessed off the rear lobby and should open up that corner of the house substantially.

Key Elements of the Proposal Explained – First Floor

- **First Floor Side Extension.** As per the Local Plan, we have to step in 1.2m from the boundary at the first floor level, but in a fortunate co-incidence, this makes the first floor side extension almost exactly the same width as the bathroom above the porch on the opposite side of the house. This leads to a symmetrical design to the front elevation, particularly as the new front bedroom window has been sized to match the bathroom window on the other side. The flank window will be obscured stained glass and conform to the opening restrictions required. It faces the flank of number 46 which has no windows, but will provide useful natural daylight to what would otherwise be a dark corridor across the width of the house, and will also be a nice focal point internally as you come up the stairs from the ground floor.
- **First Floor Windows on East Elevation.** The upstairs W/C and landing windows have been resized to be at the same level as each other for consistency. With the addition of the side porch we believe this makes the eastern elevation of the house much more attractive as it removes the current "hotchpotch" mix of window sizes and elevations.
- **Eastern Elevation Chimney.** The eastern elevation chimney was removed in 2019 for safety reasons, leaving just the stack below soffit level. The proposal rebuilds this chimney to a slightly different design below soffit level, but to the same design, size and location above it.
- **Western Elevation Chimneys.** The current western elevation of number 44 has two chimneys. This proposal moves the rear-most chimney stack out to the new exterior wall but keeps them otherwise in the same position and to the same size and design.
- **External Finishing.** To match the existing house and be in keeping with the Arts & Crafts style, the first floor walls will be in white pebbledash and the chimney stacks at first floor level will be in faced brick to match the current front elevation. We believe having the chimney stacks in faced brick will be more attractive than render and helps to provide some visual interest to the side elevations.

Key Elements of the Proposal Explained – Roof Level

- **Gulley.** The roof has been extended to the western side, retaining the existing ridge level. We note the preference in the Local Plan to avoid crown roofs and consequently we have introduced two hipped roof elements with a gulley in between them.
- **Chimneys.** The house retains the three chimneys it originally had in this proposal. Whilst one chimney has moved out to the new side elevation, by comparing the current and proposed elevations the style, sizes and relative heights of the chimneys can be seen to remain the same as previously.

Further Notes – Chimneys

It seems to be increasingly common in planning applications for chimneys to be removed from houses when they are extended. In our view a period house without chimneys is missing something and certainly we feel our house is visually "out of balance" since the chimney over the kitchen was temporarily removed for safety reasons in 2019. We also like the focal point of having fireplaces in our reception rooms, even though we never have an open fire.

Keeping the chimneys on our house will serve a useful purpose for us though and future proof our house from an environmental perspective. We intend to line them with ducting allowing us to employ forced air ventilation throughout the house with air-to-air heat recovery. This is where a heat exchanger is used to pre-heat colder

fresh air coming in from outside with the warmer stale air being ejected from inside the house. Typically, fresh air is pumped into reception rooms and drawn out from kitchens and bathrooms to reduce humidity.

In our view, keeping our chimneys and fireplaces is a ready-made solution for either pumping or withdrawing air from most rooms without having unsightly vents. Having fresh air helps keep the occupants healthy and forced ventilation with heat recovery will be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly than opening and closing windows. It is frequently argued that drier air is more comfortable at lower temperatures, allowing households to reduce their heating bill.

Further Notes – Exterior Finishing

It has been explained above that wherever possible we will match the existing exterior finishing of the house if this proposal is permitted. Indicative examples are provided here based on our current research for illustration purposes:

- **Faced brick.** The original brickwork is by Bovingdon Bricks who are unfortunately no longer in business. Where possible original bricks will be taken from elsewhere in the house to use in the front elevation where new brick needs to be blended into the old. Multiple candidates for the faced brick in the chimneys have been identified where substantial volumes are needed, including from Imperial, Ibstock and Hastings handmade which are a close match for colour and in the correct imperial sizes.
- **Windows.** The original windows were white painted metal with Georgian lead patterns (see References below for evidence). We intend to keep to this pattern and colour with similarly slim profile windows.
- **Pebbledash.** Our pebbledash is relatively small grain and we have been advised it is Derbyshire Spar. We will be matching this as the original is cemented on so hard it is almost impossible to remove without causing damage and consequently needs to be blended in.
- **Soffits, Fascias and Bargeboards.** The intention is that these will be done in gloss white painted wood, rather than in plastic, even though this will be more expensive.
- **Gutters, Soil Stacks and Pipework.** The intention is that these will be done in black cast iron to match the existing. Saint-Gobain PAM UK produces half round and circular cross section cast iron products that closely match our original ironwork.
- **Roof Tiles.** We have been advised that the current roof tiles are a common brand and reclaimed tiles can be sourced to match in significant quantities.

Summary

We have lived in our house for over a decade and would very much like to stay here for years to come. We are very fond of the Arts & Crafts style and the existing appearance of Number 44, but now find ourselves wishing it was bigger due to our growing family.

It has taken us years of living here and thinking about different permutations of extensions and our changing living habits before we have felt able to submit this design proposal.

There is now additional time pressure to make progress because we have to acknowledge that unfortunately certain exterior parts of the house have fallen into a poor state of repair and need to be fixed in the very near future.

We hope this design statement has managed to convey the research we have done and thought that has gone into how we can amend the house whilst being sympathetic to its history and remaining compliant with the Local Plan.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Notes and References

- A history of the original building firm Gullet and Sons Ltd can be found on their website at the following link: <https://www.gulletandsons.co.uk/about-us/our-history>
- Evidence of numbers 14 & 16 Carpenters Wood Drive (the other pair matching number 44) having white windows with Georgian lead patterns when built can be found in page 182 of "Exploring Chorleywood: A Pictorial History" (ISBN: 978-1-5272-3037-8).

Appendix – Comparison with TRDC Local Plan Appendix 2 (Design Criteria)

This appendix to the design statement compares the submitted plans versus the design criteria in the TRDC Local Plan. We have used this as a checklist before submitting this application:

Section 1: Privacy	
Design Criteria	Notes
A. Distances between buildings should be sufficient so as to prevent overlooking, particularly from upper floors. As an indicative figure, 28 metres should be achieved between the faces of single or two storey buildings backing onto each other.	There are no rear neighbours to any property on the northern side of Carpenters Wood Drive, each of which adjoin onto council-owned woodland.
B. A proportion of each garden should be a private zone abutting or close to the dwelling that is not visible from the gardens or ground floor habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This should be of a minimum distance of 3 metres from a wall of the dwelling and be permanently screened by walls or fences.	We believe the house to currently be complaint for this criterion and to remain so with the proposed development. There are fences and hedges of at least 6 foot in place along both boundaries in the vicinity of the house.
Development should not incorporate balconies, or first floor conservatories which overlook neighbouring properties to any degree.	There are no balconies or first floor conservatories in the submitted proposal.
C. Trees and hedges (either existing or planted as part of the development) can provide an effective screen but should not be solely relied upon due to the loss of leaves in winter or the possibility of storm damage, disease etc.	Existing hedges between us and our neighbours are mature and supplement traditional fencing. Further planting is envisaged along both boundaries.
D. Windows of habitable rooms at first floor level should not generally be located in flank elevations. Flank windows of other rooms should be non-opening, below 1.7m (from internal floor level) and obscure glazed. High level windows with a sill height of 1.7 metres or more may be acceptable where a secondary light source is necessary.	All of the flank windows in the proposal have obscure glazing and, in line with the Arts & Crafts style, where possible they will feature stained glass to be sympathetic to the original house.
E. Ground floor windows should be located away from flank boundaries. Where flank windows to ground floor habitable rooms have to be incorporated, the boundary must be satisfactorily screened by a fence, wall or evergreen hedge.	There are no additional flank windows to the house at ground floor level.
Section 2: Prospect	
A. Developments which rely on outlook over garage courts, extensive parking areas, railway lines etc will be discouraged. All residential units should have an outlook over a public or private highway, garden or other open space.	The proposal has an outlook over its own private garden and the public highway.

<p>B. Rear to flank distances. Where the rear of a building looks onto the side of another (for instance at a corner in a housing layout) the distance between them must be sufficient to avoid the flank wall having an overbearing effect.</p>	<p>Not applicable in this case as this section of Carpenters Wood Drive is straight.</p>
<p>Section 3: Amenity Space/Garden Space</p>	
<p>For brevity, the criteria text is not repeated in full</p>	<p>All residents on the northern side of Carpenters Wood Drive benefit from comparatively large rear gardens.</p>
<p>Section 4: Extensions to Properties</p>	
<p>a. (i) Not be excessively prominent in relation to adjacent properties or to the general street scene.</p>	<p>We believe that our extension is compliant given the size of the neighbouring houses, the space in between them and the staggered positioning. We believe that our neighbour's imminent extension at number 46 under 23/0353/FUL will block much of this proposed extension from the west.</p>
<p>a. (ii) Have the appropriate number of car parking spaces and/or garages in accordance with the Council's parking standards.</p>	<p>We have off-street parking for three large or four small modern cars and the proposed development does not reduce this amount. The current garage is too small for modern cars.</p>
<p>a. (iii) Respect the character of the property/street scene particularly with regard to the roof form, positioning and style of windows and doors, and materials.</p>	<p>Respecting the existing character of the property has been the primary driver in the proposed design. We have incorporated a bay window to the new reception room, retained the chimneys and by extending over the garage we have made the house and roof more symmetrical from the front elevation. Original materials will be used wherever possible.</p>
<p>a. (iv) Not result in loss of light to the windows of neighbouring properties nor allow overlooking.</p>	<p>The rear elevations of the houses on the north side of Carpenters Wood Drive are almost always in shadow, with only the late afternoon sun falling on them. The proposal does not include a rear extension because our house was originally built within the 45 degree splay of the neighbouring house at number 42, and hence there should not be a loss of light impact.</p>

b. Single Storey Extensions Paragraph 1: Side extensions	The application involves a two-storey side extension to the western flank boundary, replacing the current garage. We believe that the ground floor element of this extension in isolation would be covered by permitted development, and confirmation of this has been requested under a similar proposal with reference 23/2082/CLPD. The application also involves a glass porch to the side kitchen door on the eastern flank wall. We believe this too in isolation would be covered by permitted development.
b. Single Storey Extensions Paragraph 2: Rear extensions	Not applicable in this application.
b. Single Storey Extensions Paragraph 3: Front extensions	Not applicable in this application.
Section 6: Dormers	
Paragraph 1: Dormer windows should always be subordinate to the main roof. They should be set below the existing ridge level, set in from either end of the roof and set back from the plane of the front or rear wall.	Not applicable in this application.
Paragraph 1: The roof form should respect the character of the house if possible.	In this application the roof of the house remains hipped on all four sides as it is currently, and from the front elevation the house is now more symmetrical. We believe the design to be sympathetic to the existing character of the house, and a crown roof has been avoided.
Paragraph 2: Front dormers may not always be appropriate in the street scene.	Not applicable in this application.
Paragraph 3: Multiple dormers should be proportionate in scale and number to the host roof.	Not applicable in this application.
Section 7: Roofs	
A) Crown roofs. Crown roofs can exacerbate the depth of properties and often result in an inappropriate bulk and massing. As such, they are generally discouraged and more traditional pitched roofs are generally favoured.	We have included a pitched roof with a gully to the western elevation to try and meet this preference.
B) Increasing Ridge Height. Increases to ridge height will be assessed on their own merits at the time of a planning application.	Not applicable in this application.
Where roof forms are of a uniform style/height and appearance, it is unlikely that an increase in ridge height will be supported by the Council.	Not applicable in this application.

<p>Applicants are encouraged to submit a proposed streetscene plan as part of an application which involves a proposed increased in ridge height.</p>	<p>There is no increase in ridge height in this application, so a street scene has not been included.</p>
<p>C) Hip to Gable Extensions. This type of extension is discouraged in the case of semi detached houses as it is considered that this unbalances the pair and results in a loss of symmetry.</p>	<p>Not applicable in this application.</p>
<p>In some cases, roof forms in a street may be uniform and therefore this type of alteration may erode the group value of the street and will not be supported by the Council.</p>	<p>Not applicable in this application.</p>
<p>Figure 1 – Design Guidelines (and examples of the 45 degree rule)</p>	<p>The plots in Carpenters Wood Drive are skewed relative to the street and not perpendicular. Accordingly, all the houses are staggered back from each other to a varying degree and many already intrude into the current TRDC 45 degree rule as originally built. Consequently, we propose extending to the side rather than to the rear.</p>
<p>Figure 1 – Design Guidelines (distance from flank boundaries)</p>	<p>We believe our proposal to be compliant as we have positioned the first floor side extension 1.2m in from the boundary with number 46.</p>