

DESIGN STATEMENT

January 2024



Ashley Pines, Barnet Gate Lane Barnet EN5 2AA

INTRODUCTION

A full planning application is being submitted for a scheme to build 2 No. new dwellings on land currently occupied by a dwelling known as Ashley Pines, a substantial detached dwelling on Barnet Gate Lane in the London Borough of Barnet. The existing property would be demolished together with a detached double garage sited in the substantial front garden. A planning application (Ref 23/1996/FUL) was submitted in May 2023 with additional detailed documents submitted during its consideration, but ultimately refused in July 2023. A subsequent Pre-Application (Ref 23/8288/QCE) forms the basis for a revised scheme with final advice contained in the Officer's Report issued in December 2023. The building is neither listed, nor located in a Conservation Area. This Design Statement has been appended to that application to explain the relevant planning considerations in its support.

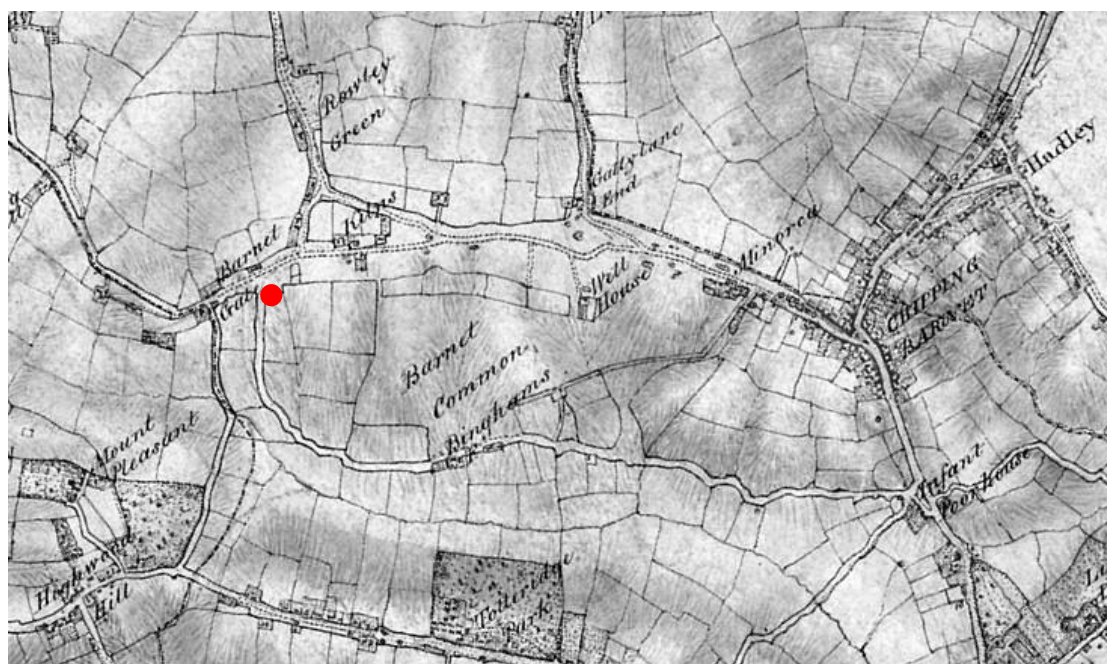


Aerial photos with plot outlined in red

THE SITE

Ashley Pines is a substantial part single and part double storey, self-contained and detached private dwelling set within the hamlet known as Barnet Gate, itself dating back to a Roman settlement. The Victorian era Gate public House is located just to the west of Barnet Gate Lane at the corner of Barnet Road and Hendon Wood Lane. The area was historically known for brick works and a 19th century map confirms that the Rockways housing estate just behind Ashley Pines was developed on the remains of one of these. There are no obvious historic remnants of this rich history however and the environs of Ashley Pines are typified by mid and later 20th century housing developments. Further to the South along Barnet Gate Lane its eastern side adjoins the Green Belt on land which originally formed agricultural holdings and the Barnet Common. Ashley Pines itself sits some distance north of the Green Belt and both faces and adjoins other private residential properties. There is a Tree Preservation Order (TPO / ref 01/1960) which covers 44 individual trees including 9 No. on the property just off-site of Ashley Pines. A professional Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been completed by MDJ Arboricultural Consultancy Ltd which is submitted together with this application.

Barnet Gate Lane branches off of Barnet Road, the A411 which provides links to High Barnet to the East and the A1 and Elstree to the West. Both directions provide significant shopping centres providing full ranges of commercial offerings. Barnet Road is also the local artery linking Barnet Hospital as well as a broad range of primary and secondary schools as well as a 6th form college. Bus services 107 & 384 both run along Barnet Road and providing connection to the London Underground at High Barnet station on the Northern Line. The local area is characterised by a mixture of single and double storey contextual dwellings of brick and render finish with pitched roofs. Houses are generally set substantially back from the road with paved forecourts providing parking as well as soft landscaping. With 4 of the TPO evergreen trees situated near the front boundary of Ashley Pines it is substantially more screened from Barnet Gate Lane than many of its neighbours.



Historic map of Barnet Gate dated 1805



Ordnance Survey map dating from the late 19th century

The existing plot of Ashley Pines is roughly rectangular with slightly angled borders measuring 55M in depth at its centreline and with width tapering from 30M at the front to 25M at the rear. The width of the plot is more than twice that of the typical plots on Barnet Gate Lane with most typically measuring approximately 12M. The properties immediately to the North of Ashley Pines, No's 15A & 15B, would clearly appear to represent an historical subdivision of a larger plot with each of the new detached dwellings sited on a plot 14M wide. The plot is located on the northern stretch of the road from its termination at Barnet Road and where it is lined on both west and east sides with dwellings. The longer inhabited stretch to the South features properties on its west side only facing open land on the East which forms part of the Green Belt. There is some diversity in the form of individual dwellings with a row of 7 terraced properties and a converted industrial building as well as 6 detached bungalows with rooms in the roof on the west side, however most properties along the full length of Barnet Gate Lane are substantial, detached, double storey houses. The architectural details of the properties are generally of mixed vernacular styles reflecting the pervading forms and designs of mid to late 20th Century suburbs. All properties are set back from the road with paved forecourts providing parking as well as soft landscaping. Deep plots provide ample private rear amenity gardens. Front, side and rear dormer windows are typical features in the context as are side and rear extensions to the original dwellings. The plot of Ashley Pines slopes gently down from the left to right side boundaries as well as from the front to rear, consistent with the local topography. Gaps between original dwellings and side boundaries were never particularly generous locally, but these have frequently been filled in with later extensions.



Views to front of Ashley Pines and to neighbours either side

Although the generous setbacks on Barnet Gate Lane present a generally landscaped character to the road, Ashley Pines is notable for the significant number of mature specimen conifers and continuous hedging which significantly screen the existing buildings from passing views. The existing dwelling is part single and part double storey and stretches to 23M in width. A substantial detached, double garage 7M x 7.3M is situated to the front of the dwelling adjoining the side boundary to No.

17 to the South. This garage has a pitched roof running parallel to the public highway. A single driveway entrance at the north end of the frontage provides access to the substantial paved forecourt of the property. Consent was recently granted (Ref 23/0373/HSE) to form a second crossover to the front of the garage in an area which is already largely paved for car parking.



Views towards Garden Close

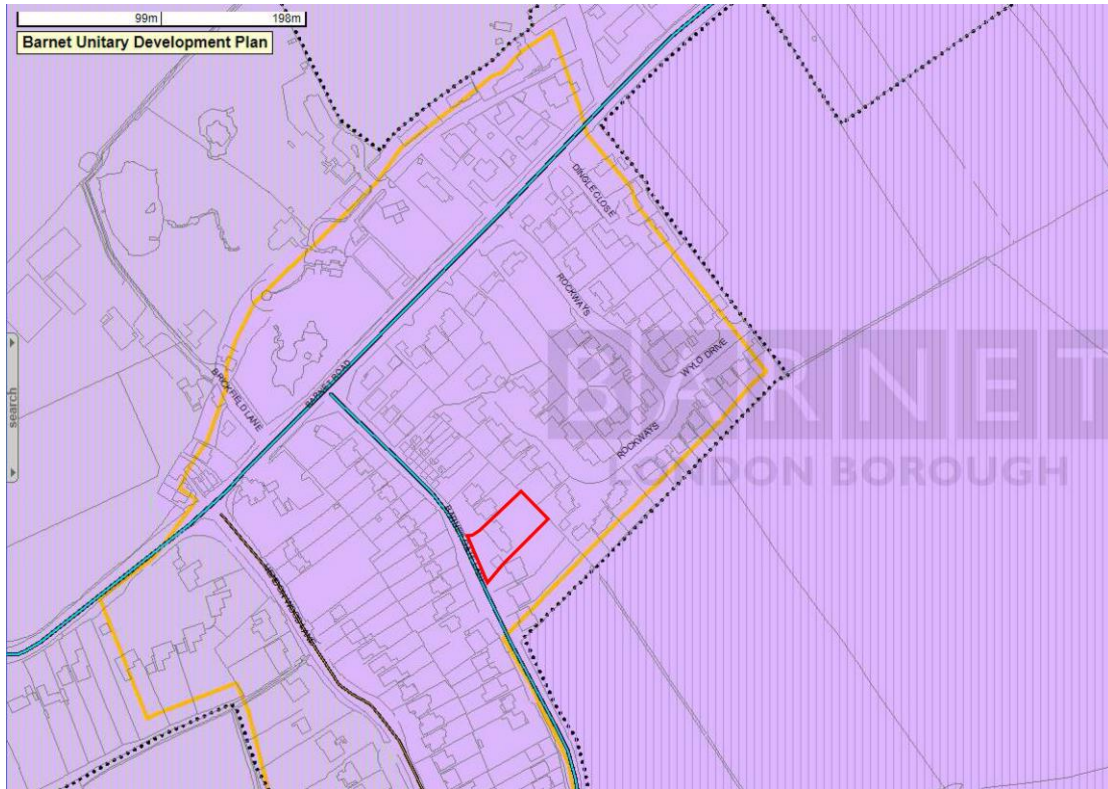


Views of front forecourt and garage of Ashley Pines

The existing rear garden of Ashley Pines measuring approximately 27M x 27M is very generous in size and reasonably secluded due to mature planting and the 5 No. TPO specimen trees at the rear left corner and along its right-hand boundary. A large outbuilding 2.5M x 4.6M is situated near the bottom of the lawn just in front of the 3M deep rear planting which screens the garden from the properties of the Rockways Estate to the rear. These ensure that the plot is almost completely obscured from No. 17 to the South as well as neighbours to the rear. No. 15B to the North faces the plot with a nearly blank flank wall behind a brick boundary wall. A small high-level window at 1st floor level serves a bathroom rather than a habitable room.



Views of rear garden to Ashley Pines



Local Plan Proposals Map / LB Barnet

PLANNING POLICY

The excerpt above of the Proposals Map from the adopted Local Plan of Barnet establishes that the plot is neither located in a Conservation Area or the Green Belt. In fact, the Green Belt boundaries are relatively remote from Ashley Pines although the local residential context is fully surrounded by its designated land. The yellow outline indicates that the plot is included an Area of Special Archaeological Significance, due no doubt to the historical development of Barnet Gate.

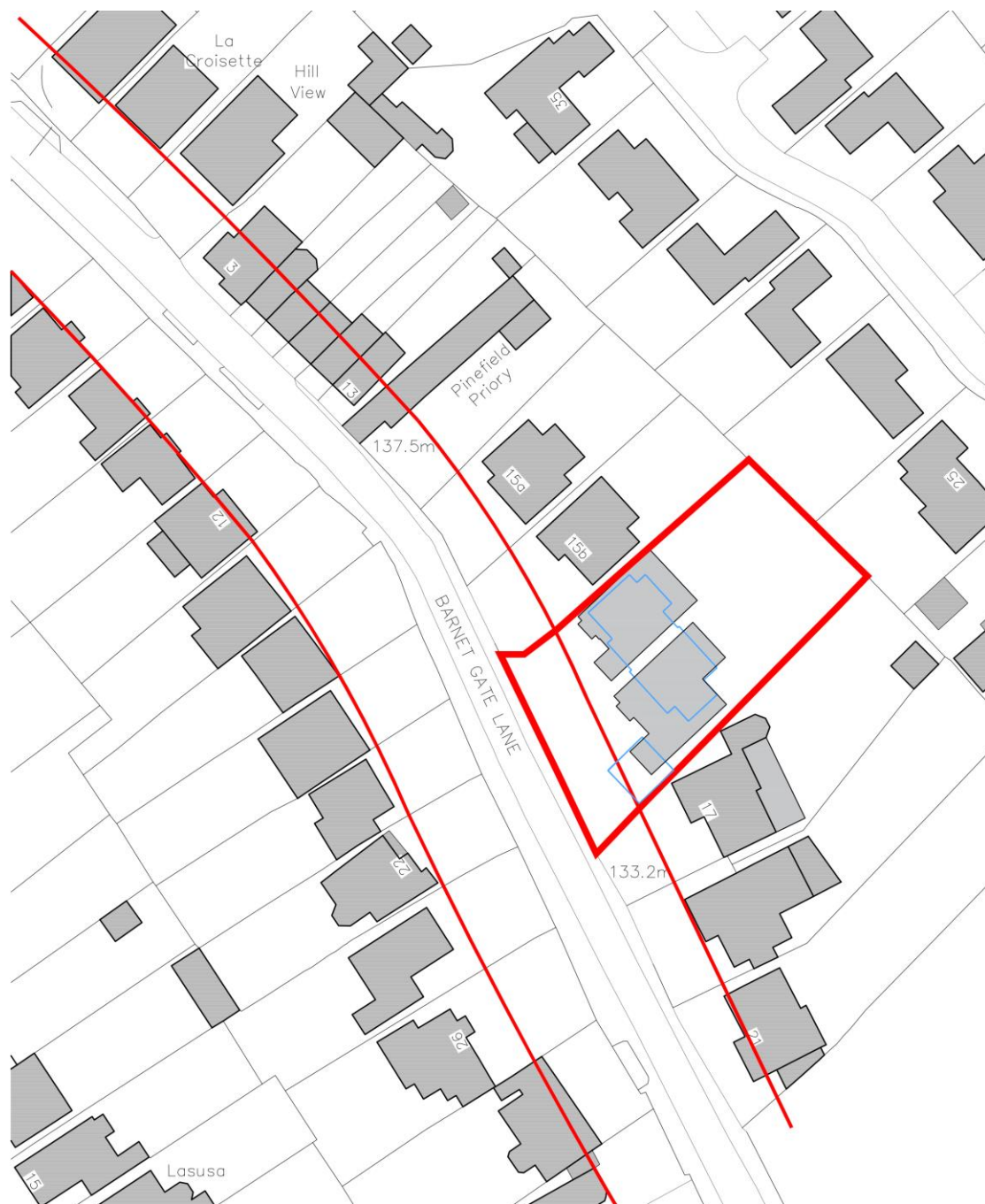
In sympathy with PPS1 the proposal would provide a strong example of sustainable development by protecting and enhancing the character of the existing context while providing modern, high quality, low energy new dwellings. The proposal also achieves the aim of PPS3 in achieving high quality housing through good design. The proposals have been carefully designed in relation to the proportions and articulation of the existing context and neighbouring dwellings. The massing and form of the proposed design responds intelligently to the constraints of the context to ensure minimal visual impact and opportunities for overlooking. Matching the local material palette, the new dwellings incorporate architectural detailing, massing and materials which would be of high quality and would enhance and contribute positively to the existing context.

The proposed design has been carefully considered with respect to the UDP policies GBEEnv1, GBEEnv2. Policy D1 (Design) specifically encourages use of “good design ... as important for the extension and modification of existing buildings” noting that “there is great potential for this type of development in the borough.” The proposed design has also been developed with due consideration of Policy D2 (Character) and D5 (Outlook) as elaborated in other sections of this statement. With respect to Policy D4 (Over-development), the proposed additional accommodation has been carefully considered to ensure these will not adversely impact adjoining residential users. In any case, the proposed additional accommodation broadly follows the form of neighbouring existing dwellings and would contribute more positively to the

streetscape than the existing dwelling which is at best neutral in its impact. The existing dwelling is smaller than many other buildings on Barnet Gate Lane while the garden plot is approximately twice the average size and can certainly support an additional dwelling of equivalent size to its neighbours without having prejudicial impact on adjoining properties.

Policy H18 (Amenity Space Standards) requires minimum garden area of 85m² for a house of seven or more habitable rooms: this proposal will provide 276.9m² for the left-hand property and 374.7m² for the right hand one in their rear gardens alone. Policy H27 (Extensions to Residential Property) is addressed throughout this Design Statement.

The detailed response of the proposals to the SPD on Residential Design Guidance is addressed throughout this document.



Revised proposed site plan indicating predominant street wall lines along Barnet Gate Lane

PRE-APPLICATION AGREEMENT ON REVISED SCHEME

Planning Application Ref 23/1996/FUL was determined on 18th July 2023 with consent refused on grounds clearly outlined in the accompanying Officer's Report. Discussion with the Planning Officer Refael Saffer throughout the application process clarified a number of detailed issues enabling responses from the applicant which influenced the determination. Ultimately several matters remained which could not be resolved without material amendments to the scheme. The Officer recommended submission of a Pre-Application as the next stage to enable resolution of the outstanding matters prior to re-submission of a full Planning Application. From careful reading of the Officer's Report an initial revised scheme was prepared and discussed at both a site meeting as well as a follow-on meeting attended by the Officer and the Service Director. The acceptable parameters for further revisions were agreed and resubmitted prior to issue of the Pre-Application report.

Principle of Development

The Case Officer's Report confirmed that "given the plot size of the applicant site, sufficient space is, in principle, ensured for the creation of 2no. dwellings, with the adjacent site (no. 15 Barnet Gate Lane) also having developed two dwellings across a single site (application no. N00615A)". This is welcome confirmation that the size and layout of the existing plot would support subdivision to provide a pair of new dwellings "subject to their compliance with relevant design guidelines...".

Summary of Principle Amendments

The primary changes from the original application scheme to the current scheme include an increase in the separation distance between Plot B and the neighbour at No. 17 Barnet Gate Lane by 1.0M at 1st and 2nd floors; the angled relationship means that the gap now varies between 4.3-7.5M. The 1st floor level of Plot B has also been pulled further back from the street frontage to ensure it approximately aligns with that of No. 17. The roof rise and slope have both been lowered to reduce the bulk of the form and front and rear facing gables have been eliminated. The storey heights of both Plot A & B have been compressed to significantly reduce the overall height of the proposal with Plot A now 1.0M lower and Plot B 1.6M lower compared to the application scheme. Due to the sloped topography Plot A would now sit 0.7M lower than No. 15B and Plot B would be 1.6M higher than No. 17 – the latter having been reduced from the previous scheme at 3.2M. The elevations were altered to eliminate the rear facing balconies and improve fenestration to the rear first floor bedroom of Plot B. We note that the increased width of Plot B has also improved the setting of the TPO trees along the site's Southeastern side boundary by increasing the spacious garden in which they would be located.

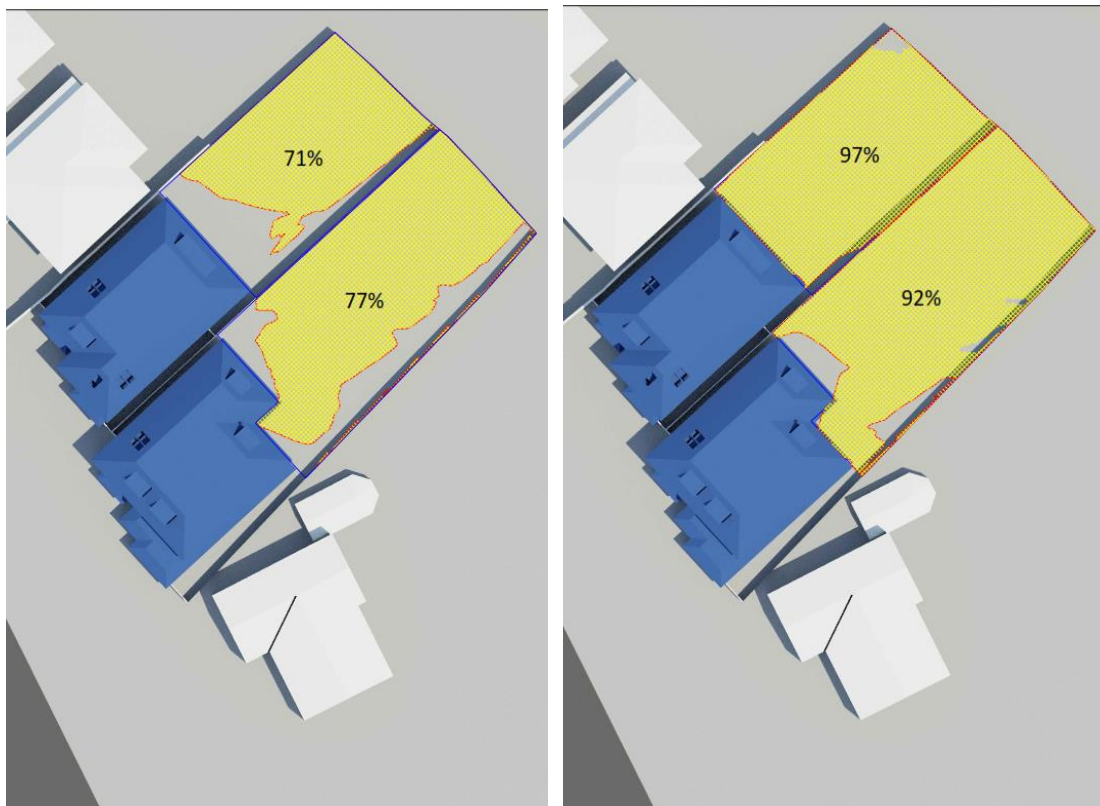
Impact on Character & Neighbour Amenity

With respect to the reduced bulk to the front of Plot B, the Pre-Application report concludes that "...this element would not look overly prominent with the street scene." The report also finds that "the dwellings which are currently proposed respect the overall heights of surrounding dwellings; ... the heights of the proposed buildings would be in proportion with surrounding houses, whilst respecting the natural drop in levels from south to north of the street." The amendments to the bulk and form of the roofs of the proposed dwellings and placement of dormers were generally supported with the sole exception of the width of a rear facing dormer to Plot B which crossed the valley of its adjoining roof. The size of this dormer has been amended in the new application scheme. The Pre-Application report concludes that "overall, the proposal is considered to maintain the residential amenities of the neighbouring occupiers..."

Trees

Preliminary review of the application scheme by Barnet's Arboriculture department raised several concerns with regard to the TPO protected trees, including their setting and whether they would cast too much shadow on reduced size rear gardens – particularly to Plot B in which they are predominantly located. The Applicant submitted a response to the Arboriculture Department's concerns which included detailed response from MDJ Arboricultural Consultancy as well as dated/timed photographs illustrating both the limited extent of the canopy of these trees and the extremely limited summer shadowing due to their orientation to the garden. A daylight/sunlight study commissioned from CHP Surveyors Ltd conducted under BRE guidelines demonstrated that both winter and summer conditions in the pair of rear gardens significantly exceed the minimum 50% BRE standard for sunlight exposure. The summer exposures are both above 90% while the winter exposures both exceed 70%. We note that the increased width of Plot B has also improved the setting of the TPO trees along the site's southeastern side boundary by increasing the spacious garden in which they would be located.

As part of final amendments agreed at Pre-Application stage, the front setback of Plot B was increased to improve its relationship to No. 17 next door. As a consequence the rear outrigger has been extended, with the change assessed by the applicant's arboriculturist who concluded that this change will not have any adverse impact on the closest tree T5 whose notional root protection area it would cross into. The conclusion is supported by excavation of a trial pit to the depth of the outrigger which encountered no roots exceeding the allowable dimension. The full findings have been submitted with this new application and will be considered by the Council's arboricultural officer as part of its consultation.



Percentage of rear gardens receiving minimum standard of winter & summer sunlight exposure

PROPOSAL

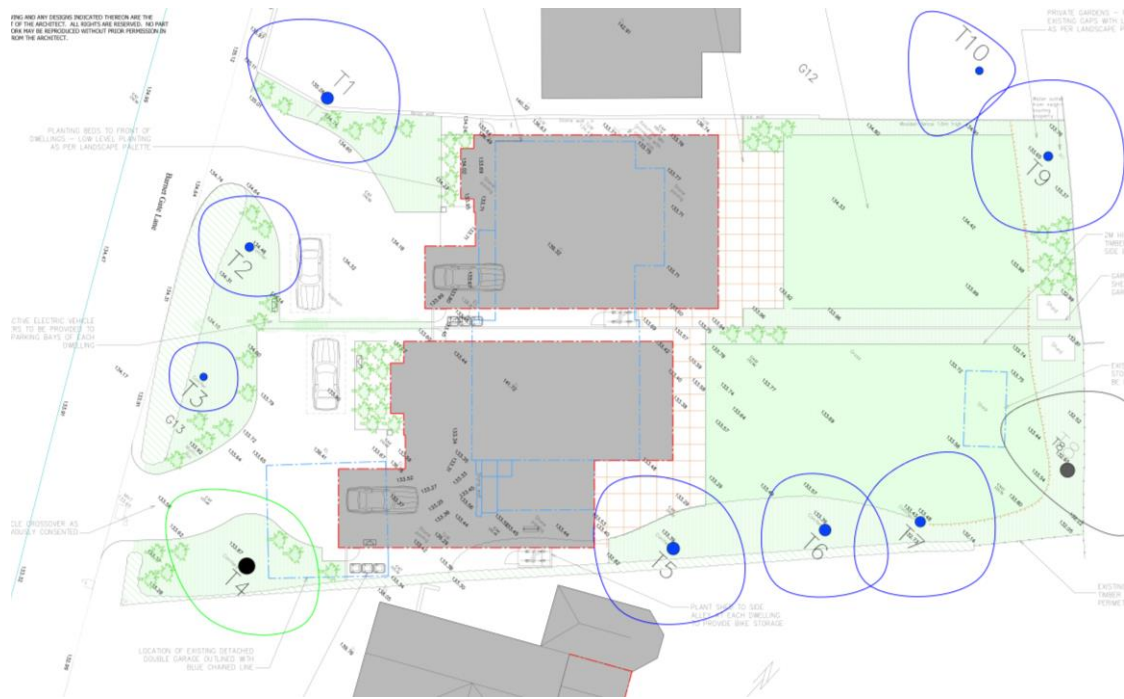
The new proposed scheme for redevelopment of Ashley Pines has been carefully considered in relation to the adopted SPD, Residential Design Guidance. Together with close analysis of the existing context - and detailed feedback from the Council at application and pre-application stages - this document provides the guidance needed to assess the various aspects of the proposal and to justify consent for the scheme.

The owners of Ashley Pines propose to demolish the existing part single, and part double storey dwelling and replace it with a pair of new build, 4-5 bedroom 2 storey dwellings of 365.0m² and 384.8m² including accommodation in their pitched roofs. Each dwelling would provide 3 reception spaces at ground floor as well as an integral garage, 4 ensuite bedrooms and ancillary spaces at loft level. The existing dwelling with its detached garage situated in the front garden adjoining the side boundary to No. 17 Barnet Gate Lane comprising 272m² of footprint compares to 378m² for the 2 new dwellings. This is a relatively modest uplift of approximately 100m² or 36% increase on the existing; this would be roughly equivalent to a 4M deep rear extension behind the original dwelling which would generally be acceptable in planning terms for a detached dwelling in this context.

As discussed in the site analysis section above, splitting the plot in half would provide plots more typical to the context in both width and depth. The width of the existing Ashley Pines is an outlier in the context as is the detached, double garage in its front garden. The siting of the 2 new dwellings is proposed to occupy the primary footprint of the existing dwelling both to maintain generous sized rear amenity gardens, but also in order to minimise intrusion into the root protection areas (RPA) of the TPO specimen trees which surround the plot. The street frontages of the new dwellings would be staggered in response to the gently curving layout of this section of Barnet Gate Lane. The diagram on the preceding page indicates the typical setbacks of the street wall although this is significantly broken by the terraced dwellings at No.'s 3-13 ending with No. 15 Pinefield Priory. The staggered frontages of the new 2 dwellings would mediate between the unusually deep setback at No. 15B and the angled relationship to No.'s 17, 19 & 21 with the progressively reduced setbacks. With respect to 'Building line and setbacks' the SPD states: "a strong building line creates continuity of frontage and provides definition and enclosure to the public realm... where there is a strong building line, any new development should be in keeping with this." The section concludes that "in case of infill areas, replication of existing pattern of setbacks should be taken into account." In moving into closer alignment with adjoining neighbours, the proposal reinforces the prevailing morphology of the local context and would thus improve on the existing siting.



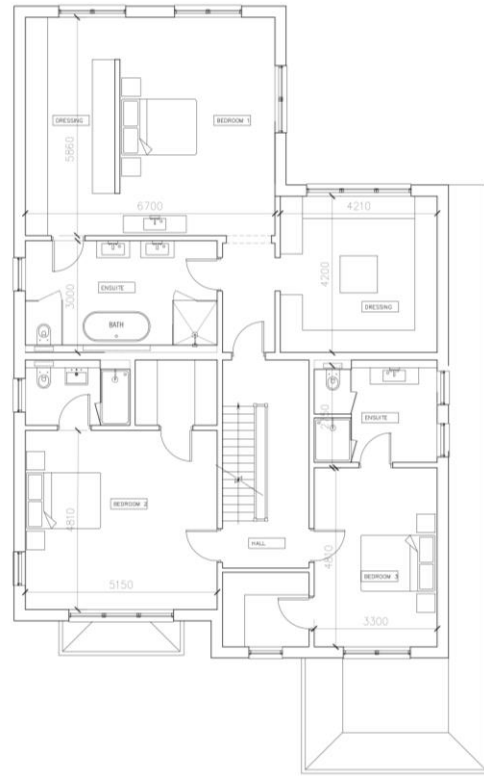
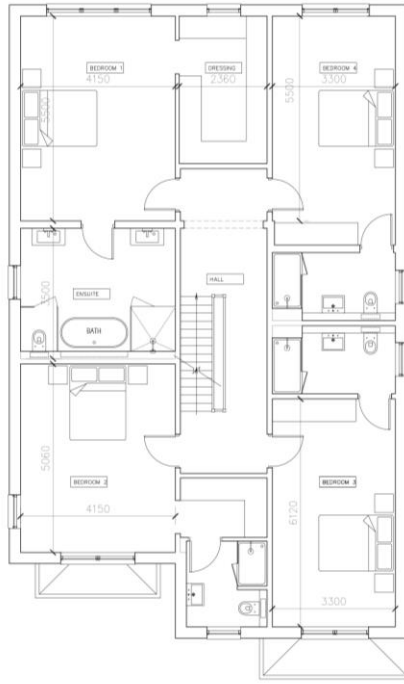
Views along Barnet Gate Lane illustrating street wall



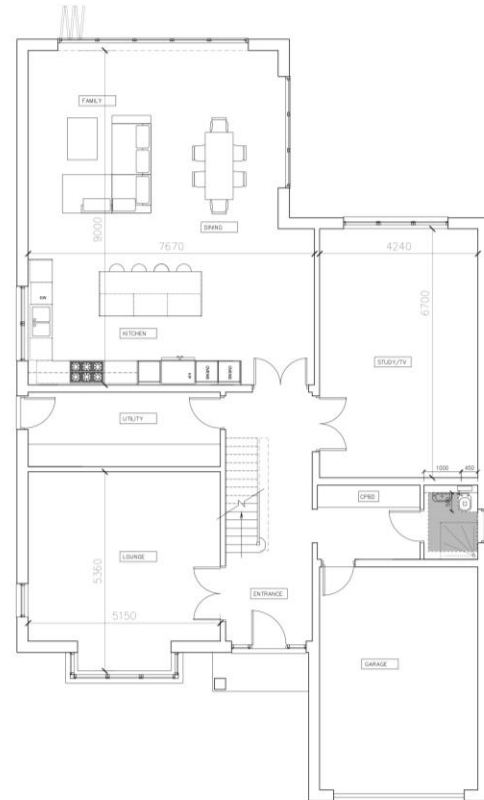
Proposed site plan with footprint of existing dwelling indicated with blue chained line

Side alleys would be provided between the new dwellings as well as to their neighbours on either side. The separation distance to No. 15B and between the pair would measure 2M in width while due to the angled geometry to No. 17 it would measure between 4.3M & 7.5M between the upper storeys and a minimum of 2.3M to the closest corner of that property's single storey side extension. Separation distances of properties in the local context vary particularly widely and there is no fixed minimum for separation distances in the SPD Residential Design Guide. There are minimal existing side facing windows on either neighbouring property. The only window apparent at No. 15B is a high level one at 1st floor level which serves a bathroom; the drop in site level would ensure that no unacceptable impact on light reaching this window would be possible. The existing fencing, planting and TPO trees along the shared boundary with No. 17 would severely restrict any possible side views, however there are no upper-level side windows at No. 17 and only a secondary window at ground floor level serving the kitchen with its primary openings facing onto the rear garden. However, even that window faces at an angle toward the proposed new dwelling and would be situated approximately 5.8M away. In any case the only proposed new side facing windows at the upper level serve a bathroom and would be obscure glazed.

The new building scheme would provide 378m² of building footprint compared to 272m² for the existing scheme, representing an increase of 36%. However, due to the more efficient site plan, increased depth of the rear amenity gardens and more compact parking arrangement, total hardstanding on the site would actually be slightly reduced from 772.3m² to 770.0m². Achieving greater density of development on the plot, without any consequent increase in built area, while providing a second habitable dwelling would improve the sustainability of the plot and the neighbourhood. Regarding site density, Barnet refers to Table 3.2 of the London Plan which recommends 150-200hr/ha (habitable rooms/hectare) and 25-55u/ha (units/hectare) for this location. The new scheme would represent 131hr/ha and 13u/ha, significantly below the minimum standard.



2 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLANS
1 : 100



1 PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLANS
1 : 100

← PLOT A / ASHLEY PINES →

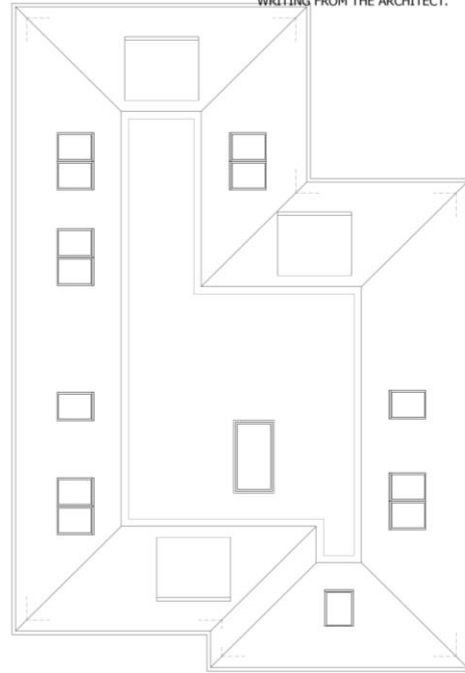
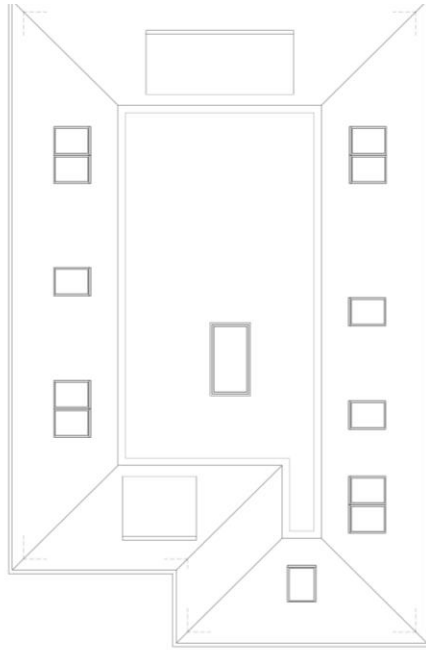
← PLOT B / ASHLEY PINES →

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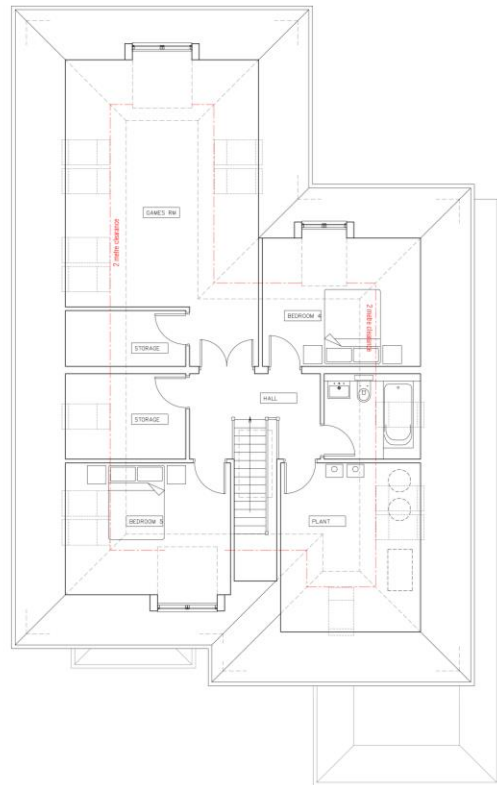
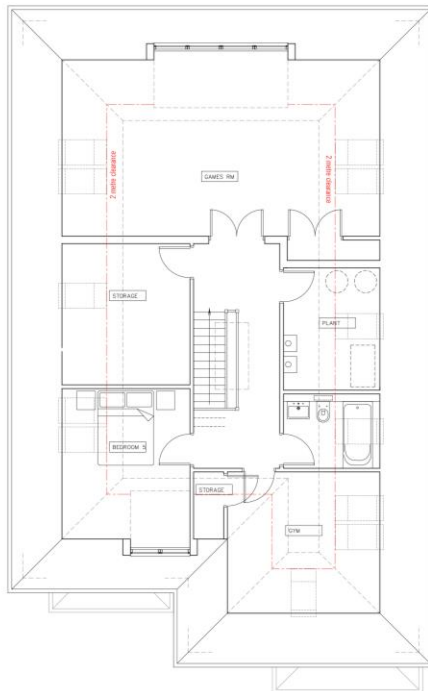
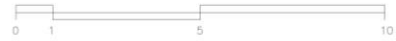
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4

PROPOSED ROOF PLANS

1 : 100



3

PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLANS

1 : 100

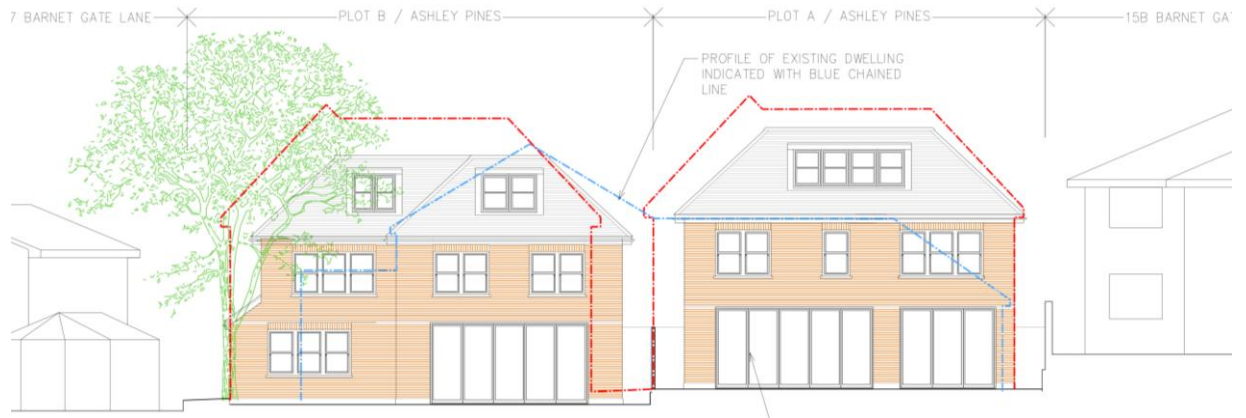


Proposed front street elevation compared with original application design

Design of Dwellings

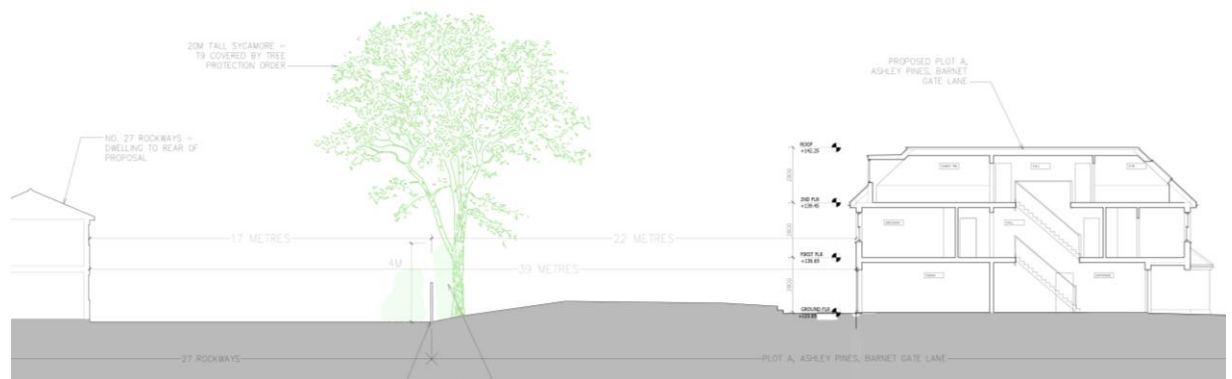
The new dwellings would be similar in height to the ridge of the existing house, stepping down by 0.7M from No. 15B. The falling site levels across the site would allow the right-hand house to be set 0.9M lower than the left stepping down 1.6M to the ridge of No. 17. The storey heights and roof forms and pitch would be consistent with the local context. The SPD advises that “new development should recognise the scale, massing and roof form of surrounding buildings and reflect these where they are a positive attribute of the area’s character”. The proposed 2 storey dwellings would match the existing scale, massing and roof forms of the context more closely than the bungalow they replace. The position and massing of the new dwellings would reinforce the streetscape and fit comfortably with their neighbours. The architectural articulation, massing, windows and materials of the proposal have been carefully considered to provide clear links to the architectural language of neighbouring houses presented in a contemporary idiom. Buff brick finish is the most common local material, as are white finished windows, deep overhanging eaves and pitched/gabled roof forms with relatively steep slopes. The proposal picks up cues from the palette and details of neighbouring dwellings so that the new dwellings would contribute positively to enhancing the street scene and represent the replacement of a relatively undistinguished existing dwelling with one of high-quality design and materials.

The SPD states that “extensions to properties should not be overbearing or unduly obtrusive” and confirms that schemes will be assessed to ensure they will not result in harmful loss of privacy, loss of light, loss of outlook or an overbearing impact on adjoining properties. Detailed guidelines for this assessment are not provided but this design proposal has complied with general principles ensuring that the new massing will not intrude unacceptably into visibility splays from existing windows on adjoining properties. The rear façade of the left-hand property aligns with that of No. 15B and that of the right-hand property falls within a projection of the rear façade of No. 17.



Proposed rear garden elevation compared with original application design

The gables which featured in the original design have been removed, the pitch and height of the roofs have been lowered to reduce the bulk of the roof form and dormers have been sized and placed to ensure they would sit comfortably on their roof planes. The proposed elevations have been amended more notably to the rear where the area of glazing at upper floor levels has been reduced in response to Officer comments. The potential impact of the new dwellings on the privacy of adjoining neighbours including those to the rear and sides has been fully considered with the previous scheme and judged acceptable. The new dwellings would be sited a minimum of 39M away from No.'s 27 & 29 Rockways across the rear boundary which would be enhanced with new planting to ensure mutual privacy is secured. Existing site levels of the rear garden would be maintained to ensure no new overlooking would be created onto the lower gardens of the Rockways properties.



Proposed site section illustrating relationship to neighbouring properties at Rockways

External Amenity & Car Parking

Section 8 of the SPD provides guidance on provision of adequate amenity space for dwellings. The policy encourages a non-prescriptive approach, but Table 1.2 in the Appendix sets out the minimum standards: 85m² should be provided for a dwelling of the scale proposed. The private rear amenity gardens for each plot would significantly exceed the minimum 85m² standard under Barnet policy: Plot A – 276.9m²; Plot B – 374.7m². New paved terraces accessed directly from the Kitchen/Family rooms at the rear of the dwellings would provide good accessibility for all users of the garden amenity spaces. The remaining open garden spaces would be wholly consistent with the local context and would provide a positive contribution to both its setting and amenity value.

Policy DM17 of Barnet's Development Management Plan outlines that new development should meet car parking standards set out in the London Plan. C3 development is provided with a unilateral standard of between 1.5-2 spaces per unit. In the new scheme both houses would be provided with a single attached garage with a second space on the forecourt, so that each dwelling would comply with the maximum provision of 2 car parking spaces each. Both spaces would be provided with active electric charging points as indicated on the site plan. Cycle storage is provided in plant enclosures located in the side alleys of each property.

Refuse and recycling storage is provided in the side alleys of each dwelling. The rear garden is currently enclosed by hedging and fencing which will be retained and renewed where required with similar materials. A large, existing garden storage building will be removed as part of the project works and replaced with new equipment storage buildings for each property.

Arboricultural Impact

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been commissioned by the applicants to assess the detailed impact of the new scheme on existing trees by MDJ Arboricultural Consultancy Ltd. The significant number of TPO protected evergreen trees around the periphery of the property have been carefully considered so that no unacceptable impacts would result from the proposals. Their full report is submitted as part of this application and concludes that the arboricultural impact of the scheme would be negligible. This analysis has been supplemented with evidence from trial pits excavated to the front side and rear of the existing property demonstrating the absence of significant roots within the footprint of the proposed new dwellings. The most significant amendment from the previous application scheme is the increased depth of the outrigger to Plot B which MDJ have assessed in a supplement to their original report.

ACCESS STATEMENT

Off-street car parking will provide easy access in close proximity to the main entrances complying with standards. The development's internal and external spaces will be planned and detailed to take into account the needs of all users in a fashion consistent with the constraints of the site topography. The existing slope to the site will be regraded to enable level threshold access to the main entrances and also to patios in the private amenity gardens to the rear of the properties. Staircases, internal space standards, lighting, fittings, and sanitary accommodation will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations & relevant environmental standards. An accessible WC convertible with a shower will be incorporated on the entry level of each house. Suitable complying lighting and electrics will be provided. Windows will be cleanable from inside.

CONCLUSIONS

- The proposal to replace the existing dwelling is justifiable since it holds no particular merit to warrant protection and the proposal represent a design of high quality which would enhance the context
- The building to plot ratio after redevelopment would represent an intensity of development of the site which is typical for the context of Barnet Gate Lane and neighbouring roads
- The proposal would not result in loss of amenity to adjoining properties because the scheme has been designed with particular response to the relationships with adjoining existing buildings to prevent overlook or overbearance
- Redevelopment would provide the opportunity to form new more sustainable, lower energy, modern family homes benefitting both their occupants and the neighbouring context
- The revised design proposal has been amended following thorough consideration by the Council of both the first application submission and a follow-up Pre-Application and has consequently resolved earlier concerns to their full satisfaction.