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## PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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LAND TO THE SIDE OF  
2 BENSTEDE  
STEVENAGE  
HERTFORDSHIRE  
SG2 8JL

PROPOSED ONE BEDROOM DWELLING

APRIL 2024



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## **1.0 General Information**

This Planning Design and Access Statement is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying planning application submitted to Stevenage Borough Council for the proposed new one bedroom dwelling on land to the side of 2 Benstede, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, which is situated on the corner of Benstede and Mandeville.

This proposal is a small amendment to the application previously approved under planning reference 23/00266/FP. The amendment consists of the exclusion of the erection of the garage serving the neighbouring property at 30 Mandeville, Stevenage. All other aspects are the same.

Benstede is located in the Oaks Cross area of Stevenage which has a predominantly residential status. A parade of shops is located approximately 10 minutes walk north of the application site providing general amenities.

The existing buildings at Benstede and the surrounding area consist, mainly, of two storey, three bedroom dwellinghouses built in the 1960's using a red brick with a profiled grey concrete interlocking roof tile.

The proposal is to build above the existing ground floor side extension to form a modest one bedroom dwelling. Pre application advice was sought from the council under planning reference 18/00157/PREAPP for a larger two bedroom dwelling. The advice given was generally favourable except for the size of the proposed dwelling. This application seeks to address that issue by simply building above the existing side extension which moves the building further from the boundary and reduces the visual impact.

## **2.0 Amount**

The accommodation will comprise of one bedroom at first floor level and a single reception room at ground floor level. This level of accommodation provides an ideal home for people entering the housing market or those wishing to downsize.

The overall plot area is 169.9m<sup>2</sup> and the footprint of the proposed dwelling is 36.7m<sup>2</sup>. This equates to a 21.6% area of developed land on the site and therefore does not constitute over development.

The remaining plot area occupied by the existing dwelling is 157.9m<sup>2</sup> and the footprint of the existing dwelling is 46.1m<sup>2</sup>. This equates to a 29.2% area of developed land on the site and again does not constitute over development.

### **3.0 Layout**

The proposed new dwelling will front the plot with the existing car parking space located to the rear will serve the new dwelling. The existing store, also located at the rear and currently within the curtilage of number 2 Benstede will be demolished to provide a larger garden for this host dwelling and access to an additional garden space for the new dwelling.

A dropped kerb is proposed at the front of the host dwelling which will enable the existing car parking space, currently located at the rear, to be repositioned. The existing store located at the rear of the site is below the council's current garage size standards and therefore cannot be regarded suitable to house a vehicle.

The private amenity space allocated to the new dwelling will be provided to the rear of the site and be bounded by a 1.8m high timber fence in accordance with section 5.1 of the Stevenage Design Guide.

The internal layout provides adequate accommodation for this modest dwelling. It provides a kitchen facing the front of the property and a lounge to the rear. A set of French doors are proposed to the lounge providing access to the rear garden. The ground floor w.c. is of adequate size to satisfy Approved Document M of the Building Regulations. At first floor level the bedroom has an outlook over the rear and will not overlook neighbouring properties.

The lounge and bedroom are south facing and will benefit from the sun for most of the day.

### **4.0 Scale**

The scale of the proposed new dwelling is in line with other properties in the area and is large enough to provide only the accommodation required. The proposed building has an overall width of 3.725 metres which is the width of the current side extension.

### **5.0 Appearance**

The building will be constructed in a brick to match the existing dwellings and have a profiled concrete roof tile, again to match.

The proposed dwelling, having a lower ridge level, will feel more subservient to the host dwelling and will be less intrusive in the general street scene when viewed from Benstede and Mandeville.

The proposed dwelling will add to the mix and character of properties in the area providing an ideal family home. Furthermore, it would assist in meeting the demand for houses within the borough.

The position of the proposed dwelling has maintained a 1.2metre gap to the boundary line at the closest point and rising to 1.8metres at the rear. The separation is consistent with other

properties in the area, notably number 17 Mandeville which is located on the opposite side of the road on the corner with Lygrave.

Furthermore, the ground level adjacent to the building is 850mm lower than the public footpath running along Mandeville. This difference in level, coupled with the existing 1950mm high fence separating the site from the footpath, and the gap between the footpath and the new dwelling ensures that the visual impact on the streetscene is minimised and deemed acceptable.

## **6.0 Landscaping**

A patio will be laid to the rear and side of the property and a bin storage area will be provided behind the neighbouring garage and close to the parking area. The rear garden will be levelled as much as possible and laid to lawn with a path leading to the parking area located to the rear.

Soft landscaping will be provided to the front garden ensuring that this does not obstruct the vision splay to Benstede.

A 1.8m high timber fence will separate the rear gardens.

## **7.0 Private Amenity**

The proposal provides adequate garden space to the front and rear of the site equalling approximately 139m<sup>2</sup> which is in accordance with section 5.3 of the Stevenage Design Guide. The depth of the rear garden is approximately 6metres. However, this is a modest, one bedroom dwelling and as such the requirement for a large garden is reduced. The area of rear amenity space is 92.1m<sup>2</sup> which far exceeds the 50m<sup>2</sup> required and makes up for the reduced depth.

Furthermore, the proposed new dwelling is located within ten minutes walking distance from Ridlins Park, reducing the need for a large garden. The rear amenity space will provide an adequate size garden for this modest dwelling.

Access to the rear garden is provided by a door from the lounge and from the side and rear of the proposed dwelling.

## **8.0 Access**

### **Pedestrian**

A level access threshold will be fitted to the new entrance door and frame providing access for disabled. The ground falls slightly from the rear to the front making gradients to access doors easy and accessible to all.

As mentioned above the internal layout will accord with part M of the building regulations ensuring that the property is accessible and usable to all.

### **Vehicular**

There is an existing vehicle access to the site located at the rear serving the host dwelling and the neighbouring property at no. 30 Mandeville. This access will be retained in its current position to serve the new dwelling which is in accordance with the Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document 2020.

An additional space will be provided to the front of no. 2 Benstede providing parking for this existing dwelling and replaces the one lost at the rear. As mentioned, the existing store located to the rear of the site fall below the council's size standards for a garage and therefore cannot be regarded as one.

Public transport links are provided by bus stops located along Broadwater Crescent and Oaks Cross which provide a regular service to Stevenage town centre, employment areas and community facilities as well as supermarkets and leisure facilities. From the town centre a main line train station provides access to London and the north.

As mentioned earlier in this statement a shopping area is located on Oaks Cross, approximately 10 minutes walking distance from the site. It is also located within easy walking distance of Longmeadow Primary School and Bedwell Middle School.

The location of the site is such that Stevenage town centre is approximately a five-minute bus journey away providing access to local leisure facilities, high street shops and employment areas therefore significantly reducing the reliance on a car and demonstrating that the proposed dwelling is within a highly sustainable location.

The proposal is also located close to the network of cycle tracks which provide access to the majority of Stevenage.

These facilities ensure that the proposed development is situated in a sustainable location, that it does not have a reliance on the motor car and is therefore in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **9.0 Planning Policy**

The proposed development is in accordance with planning policies within the Stevenage Local Plan and the Stevenage Design Guide. The proposal is for a residential unit within an existing residential area and no change of use of land is required.

The land on which the proposal sits is a vacant building plot. The existing side extension confirms that the land on which we propose to build has been previously developed. Furthermore, the site is an underused area of garden for the applicants.

The proposal will not adversely impact on the openness of the area, it will not have a detrimental impact on the environment or adjoining neighbouring properties and, as

mentioned earlier in this statement, the site is in a highly sustainable area. Therefore, it consists of a windfall site under Policy H7 and is in accordance with Policy H8 regarding densities of development.

The form of development respects the character of the surrounding area and does not over dominate the street scene. No ponds, streams or wooded areas are located in this section of the garden which would otherwise be affected by the development.

The design of the proposal has taken into consideration the requirements outlined in Planning Policy in providing a high quality of design ensuring that the proposal fits in with the locality and is regarded as sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy GD1 of the Local Plan relates to the quality of design and provides for a minimum internal floor area for a specific dwelling. The requirement for a one bedroom, two-person dwelling is 58m<sup>2</sup>. The internal floor area of the proposed dwelling would be 58.6m<sup>2</sup> which therefore satisfies Policy GD1,

It is considered that the proposal would accord with the provisions of the Section 5 of the Stevenage Design Guide (Supplementary Planning Document adopted 2009) which relates to the erection of new dwellings.

The proposed new building will exceed the requirements of Approved Document L1 of the Building Regulations with regards its thermal efficiency.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

The site is within the defined urban area of Stevenage and the current use of the site is residential.

The proposal complies with the relevant Government Guidance and Local Plan policies.

The design, mass, scale and overall appearance of the proposal has been carefully considered and accords with the relevant planning policy and is therefore deemed to be acceptable in planning terms.

The proposal would not cause any material harm to adjoining property owners, to the neighbouring amenity or street scape.

The proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the openness of the area or create any highways issues. It is a wholly appropriate form of development in this area and therefore has a good basis for the granting of planning permission.