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Graham Seabrook Partnership Ltd.

## DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

TO SUPPORT APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANS  
APPROVAL AT:

3 ANSON WALK  
MOOR PARK  
MIDDLESEX

PENDING  
Received by Planning Admin

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## GRAHAM SEABROOK PARTNERSHIP Ltd

CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

The Studio Barn, Bury Farm Courtyard, Pednor Road, Chesham, Bucks. HP5 2JU  
Tel: 01494 778918 Fax: 01494 770620 E-mail: [gsp@gsparchitects.co.uk](mailto:gsp@gsparchitects.co.uk)  
Website: [www.gsparch.dial.pipex.com](http://www.gsparch.dial.pipex.com)



AERIAL VIEW OF SITE

## THE SITE

The site is in the south-western corner of the Moor Park Conservation Area close to Batchworth Lane and linking in to the southern end of Astons Road.

Anson Walk is a residential street running approximately east-west comprising eight detached dwellings on large individual plots with good tree cover. The road rises from east to west and the individual plots are on quite steeply sloping land rising from south-east to north-west. Rickmansworth Public Golf Course lies to the north of the site from which it is separated by dense tree cover.

Being located in the Moor Park Conservation Area means that the special planning 'rules' apply to site coverage, the width of the proposed works and amenity angles.

The adjacent dwellings are of different architectural styles and siting. 5 Anson Walk is a much newer house of contemporary architectural style with a split ridged gable presented to the street and 1 Anson Walk has a full two storey elevation with symmetrical hipped bays.

The dwelling 3 Anson Walk is sited deeply toward the rear of its plot with the distance from the street boundary to the main elevation being greater than the corresponding dimension from the rear boundary to the garden elevation whilst each neighbouring dwelling is sited further forward in their respective plots.

The steeply sloping nature of the location is marked by the fact that the ground floor level of 5 Anson Walk is sited 2,5m lower than the application dwelling whilst that of 1 Anson Walk is sited 4,0m higher thus making the straightforward application of the Moor Park planning rules of more academic than practical use as will be discussed later.

## THE EXISTING PROPERTY

The application site contains a relatively small detached dwelling in a style related to the English Arts and Crafts movement even though the house was built in the 1950s. The style of the house is typified by a 'tudoresque' gabled section cantilevered over a bay window at ground floor level on the eastern side and a low sweeping hipped roof containing hipped dormer windows and a double garage for the remainder of the street elevation.



Materials are also typical of this style and location, namely handmade clay brickwork and clay plain roof tiling with robust timber detailing around the low recessed main entrance.

Of particular interest is the manner of treatment of the front garden area in relation to the siting of the house: what is clear is that the original designer wished to heighten the sense of arrival at the site and maximise the travel distance to the front door so as to make a modest dwelling have allusions to grandeur which it actually doesn't possess.

Moreover the front garden is levelled as much as is practically possible to accentuate the spaciousness of the site and its grandiosity. The smaller the house is in a relatively large plot will clearly give a sense of spaciousness which the site doesn't actually possess. This was a favourite trick of architects of the stature of Sir Edwin Lutyens (Castle Drogo being a particularly spectacular example).

A concomitant of the pretentiousness of this original design intent is to squeeze the house to the rear of the site and make further rearward extension difficult or at the very least require extensive excavation and consequent need to remove substantial quantities of soil off site.



1 Anson Walk above and 5 Anson Walk right



### **PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE**

Extensive pre-application advice has taken place with this proposal both before and after the refusal of the previous application for planning permission.

The officers of the Council have been helpful in negotiating a scheme that is respectful of the original architecture, cognizant of the Moor Park Conservation Area status and which also provides the applicant with the essential substance of the accommodation he requires for his family.

The last communications with the Council's Officers was between Jas Phull, Associate Partner and Laurence Moore the Areas Planning Officer DATED 20<sup>TH</sup> November 2008.

### **TRANSPORT LINKS**

The site is not well served by public transport in the immediate vicinity and most transport is consequently of the personal and individual variety. Nevertheless the site lies approximately mid-way between Northwood and Moor Park Stations on the Metropolitan Line but more than a kilometre from either as the crow flies and much further by foot.

Bus services are available in nearby Batchwood Lane but of such a regularity to make the site relatively inaccessible by public transport.

### **ACCESS**

Vehicular access to the site is available from Anson Walk and a three car integral garage is proposed for the extended property. This garage also contains space for cycle storage. Parking for a minimum of two additional vehicles will be available in the forecourt.

Although there is access from the street to the house without steps there is a difference in level of approximately 0,9m over a distance of 32m making an average slope of nearly 1 in 36 which is easily negotiable by a wheelchair.

Level access into and within the house is easily achievable owing to the well-protected porch and a disable standard visitor's WC is available off the main hall between living room and study.

### **THE BRIEF**

The brief was to design alterations and a residential extension to the existing house so as to allow the potential of the generous site to be reflected in the new design. Moreover, owing to the social and economic changes that have taken place in society since Moor Park was originally built and conceived, brought about mainly by the introduction and ever strengthening application of metropolitan Green Belt Policy at local and National level such areas as Moor Park are natural targets for independently wealthy people who, in previous times, could have considered developing a green field site for their large detached and impressive homes.

Planning Policy itself has therefore arguably created the contemporary development pressure on locations such as Moor Park and although Conservation Area status and special planning rules may be invoked to withstand the tide of change it cannot be socially or aesthetically acceptable that such localities are retained in aspic and as a result planning policy must contain and direct organic demand in the most appropriate way.

The brief required the creation of additional space up to the special planning limits of the 'footprint' not exceeding 15% of the gross site area nor the frontage being filled to an extent greater than 80%. In addition, an unlit basement is proposed to contain a gymnasium, wine store and cinema, all of which accommodation will require careful means to secure the proposed passive ventilation.

A further planning requirement to observe 45 degree amenity angles at first floor and above has been achieved but with the special condition that the first floor accommodation at the north west corner qualifies as being located at ground floor level owing to the effect of the extreme contours of the site. This is most accurately represented in the drawings by the proposed west elevation which shows the scheme from the levels pertaining at the western site boundary.

## THE DESIGN

The design of the proposals arises directly from the client's brief on the one hand and the pre-application advice given by the Council on the other.

In brief the proposals seek:

1. To increase the footprint of the extended house up to the 15% maximum of site area allowable
2. To observe the rule requiring that the house fills no more than 80% of the plot width
3. To observe the limit of first floor extensions beyond the 45 degree amenity lines uniquely drawn from the normal extension of the front and rear elevations as they subtend the shared boundaries (rather than from the dwellings themselves as is the norm elsewhere).
4. Not to intrude upon the forward line of the existing street elevation (despite the fact of the 4m difference of the rearward siting of the house relative to a notional building line drawn between the front facades of the neighbouring dwellings)
5. To maintain the existing street elevation in its entirety
6. To empathise with the existing design by retaining hipped dormer windows at first floor level and a low sweeping main roof to cill level caves at first floor
7. Not to introduce a more aggressively signalled main entrance than which exists already.

The proposals to which this Statement relates contain and accurately reflect the above pre-application advice.

But in forcing the allowable extensions within the planning rules the extensions have been forced north-westward into the steeply sloping rear garden. Thus the planning rules themselves as adumbrated in pre-application advice force the design to address a change of level of the rear garden that will require substantial retaining constructions.

The actual design proposed therefore seeks to make a virtue of these level changes and the house as proposed has consequently two ground floors; the first of which is the existing ground floor level but the second ground floor is in the north-west corner of the extended dwelling where the (otherwise) first-floor proposed master bedroom is the ground floor level to the 'upper level' garden.

This device has a number of benefits:

- It allows direct access to a bedroom terrace (albeit one floor higher than the main house terrace)
- It avoids in part the necessity for substantial sub-soil excavation and removal from site
- It also permits of the master bedroom wing to be treated as a ground floor in relation to the amenity angle from 1 Anson Walk even though it's proposed floor level is 1.6m lower than the ground floor level of 1 Anson Walk. In practice these large level changes affect the simple applicability of amenity angles as space is not experienced in two-dimension. Accordingly, the proposal does actually conform to the amenity angle rule as applied at the Moor Park Conservation Area.

The design of the rear elevation is more contemporary than the street elevation and it is based upon the general idea of blurring the experience of inside and outside such that the rear terrace becomes a natural extension to the living space in the house. Being on the north side of the house solar heat gain through large areas of glazing will also be avoided, thus making the need for mechanical ventilation or

air-conditioning unnecessary and maintaining a lower demand for energy. It is also the case that the rear elevation is not visible from any neighbouring plot owing to the density of the retained tree planting.

A secondary theme in the design of the rear elevation is to create a house with conspicuous visual richness in form, material and chiaroscuro.

The flank wall facing 5 Anson walk is slightly realigned around the proposed visitor's toilet accommodation on the line of the existing inglenook and the main living room is extended northwards. Otherwise this elevation remains unchanged and the French windows contained in the existing flank wall are to be retained thus making the aspects of privacy and overlooking of 5 Anson Walk no worse than exists currently on this boundary.

#### **HEIGHT**

The scheme design does not propose to raise the existing ridge level. The ridges to the new roofs to the westward extension are all subservient to the main roof ridge in accordance with planning policy.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY**

The principal document for assessing sustainability is the Sustainable Communities SPD entitled 'Planning your future' and in particular the sustainability checklist on pages 20-23. Other considerations include the sixteen design features of the 'Lifetime Homes' initiative and SPD, and the benefits of Secured by Design all of which issues are covered by this Design and Access Statement.

#### **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Renewable energy considerations lie at the heart of much of current design thinking and whilst the proposals at this stage make no specific proposals for renewables it is the applicant's intention to review renewables should the application for full planning consent be successful.

Consideration will be given to, solar water heating and photo-voltaic electricity generation in addition to the provision of thermal insulation to at least the currently stringent standards now specified by the Building Regulations.

Owing either to access constraints or the size of the proposed developments other renewables such as biomass heating or Combined Heat and Power are considered to be inappropriate to these redevelopment proposals.

A further consideration at this stage is the potential conflict of Conservation Area status and the fact that the main south facing roof is that belonging to the street elevation; the Council may therefore wish to consider further the priorities of renewable energy sourcing against the potential visual intrusion of solar panels and PV cells on the main roof elevation and express such considerations as a condition to any planning consent.

#### **AMENITY SPACE**

There is ample amenity space within the scheme even with the 15% limit. A landscaping scheme is being prepared to accompany the application.

#### **TREES**

The site is heavily wooded especially to the road frontage and no change is proposed to these mature trees.

There are also a number of fruit trees in the garden as identified on the tree survey plan from Geoff Bunyan of Bunyan Associates and it is the intention of this application that they be removed in their entirety.

Finally there is a current planning application currently lodged by the applicant with the Council for the removal of three trees in the rear garden as follows:

1. The willow.
2. Large pine in the middle of the garden
3. Smaller pine to the right (shown as a Yew tree on the plan).

The reference number for this application is 08/2070/TCA. As a result there is no BS5837 survey attached to this application as the situation regarding trees has already been covered by this other application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

### **MATERIALS and SUSTAINABILITY**

The proposals contained in this application for external material selection states that new materials will as far as is practically possible match the existing in colour, proportion and quality.

In addition to the sourcing of materials from local suppliers wherever possible, and selection to reflect and enhance the character of the area, due consideration will also be given to the overall 'carbon' footprint of the construction process as well as to the finished development.

Thus short delivery journeys for building materials will also be a lively issue of the development process. In terms of internal finishes, it is proposed to use low-allergy and formaldehyde-free construction materials. Timber will be sourced exclusively from renewable and sustainable sources and prefabrication will be used wherever possible in order to reduce waste *and* the length of the construction period.

### **SECURITY**

By reference to the principles of Secured by Design the following is proposed:

1. Windows: All windows to the ground levels and any other accessible windows will comply with BS 7950 with authenticated testing. Double glazing units will have 6.8mm laminated outer panes.
2. Entrance doors: are to meet PAS 24 specification having enhanced security including any glazing and will be fitted with audio-visual remote door release mechanisms.
3. Terrace doors: French doors to the rear terrace will meet the same security standards as the main entrance doors (see above for details).
4. Cycle storage: is proposed in the secure garage.
5. Bin stores: The bin store has been specifically located so as not to be a climbing aid to access higher level windows in the development. Any doors will be fitted with a self-closing mechanism and a slam-shut capability in accordance with BS 3621.
6. Rainwater down pipes will be flush fitting also to dissuade climbing
7. External security lighting will be installed in consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer (see below).

### **CAR PARKING**

Car parking provision is in the form of three garage spaces, any of which is capable of use by a wheelchair user and direct access to the house is possible from the garage for security purposes. A minimum of two additional vehicles can be parked on the vehicle forecourt.

It is possible for all cars to be turned in the site itself to permit vehicles leaving in a forward gear only; however such considerations are somewhat academic as traffic loading on this road is extremely light.

### **REFUSE**

The bin store has been designed to accommodate the bins as recommended by the Council's Code for domestic buildings.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability issues are an important aspect of the design and are touched on in the detailed specification of materials for construction above.

Detailed mechanical and electrical services design has not yet been carried out on the scheme as the cost and effort could be a misuse of resources in the absence of a constructive planning permission, but it is the intention of the applicant to take an active approach to sustainability issues and design aspects in the detailed specifications of mechanical and internal and external electrical installations.

For this reason also detailed proposals for external lighting have not been included within this application pending a constructive planning permission; the application is made on the understanding that a planning consent may be conditioned to meet the Council's preferences in this respect. Needless to say the developer will install low-level low-glare external lighting to permit a safe negotiation of the driveway for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Owing to the existence of the Conservation Area status no solar energy collection is proposed – unless this can be agreed with the Council's officers – as the only south facing roof is the existing main roof of the property and the opportunity therefore does not present itself to consider these renewable energy sources further at this stage.

### **CONCLUSION**

The applicant is intent upon providing an appropriate residential development to this attractive part of the Moor Park Conservation Area.

The proposed alterations and extension has been carefully designed in accordance with the specific planning policies governing development in the Conservation Area and in direct accordance with pre-application advice as contained in the statement above

It is the firm intention of the applicant that the extended house will be as much a positive contribution to the street scene as is the current dwelling.

Finally, it is to be noted that every effort has been painstakingly expended to bring the proposal entirely into line with the spirit and letter of the new PPS 3 regarding residential development and as such the applicant and designer seek a productive consent from Three Rivers District Council to proceed unhindered with the proposed redevelopment.

4612/G1/stc  
Thursday, December 18, 2008