

DRIVEWAY LEVEL

It is claimed that the driveway has been raised in the region of 550mm to 600mm.

This is false.

Raising the floor so dramatically would have made access to the garage impossible for a normal family car.

The floor of the garage was actually lowered by 112mm by removing the existing paving and replacing them by concrete, however, due to the presence of existing drains as well as water, electricity and gas services, we were unable to go any lower. This can easily be verified by comparing the height of the garage door on the architect's drawing (2100mm) and the height of the installed door (2200mm).

Please note that all heights and measurements referred to in this document can be found in the PROPOSED SITE & LOCATION PLAN, SITE SECTION & STREET SCENE dated March 2015 and available on the Planning website.

Even though the garage floor was lowered, because it is more practical to have a horizontal floor, that new level had to be brought forward by 1800mm. This in turn caused a slightly steeper slope as the height has to be reached in 15.2m rather than 17m.

It was also imperative that the driveway slope should rise as evenly as possible to facilitate access by wheelchair. As you will be aware our house has been redesigned to allow full access by wheelchair users: wider doors throughout, spacious bathrooms and a large lift at the centre of the house.

As it stands, the driveway permits wheelchair access by the simple addition of two small removable wooden ramps on the front patio. In that context the height of the front patio was reduced to 4487mm from the 4697mm height marked on the submitted plan, to bring it level with the driveway.

The table below shows the overall differences between the heights indicated on the submitted plan and the levels as they were built. The heights noted on the plans were in fact the heights measured for a topographic survey prior to plans being drawn. It follows that the "proposed levels" on the submitted plans are in fact the original levels as surveyed.

For the avoidance of doubt, there are 2 methods that can be used to confirm the maximum height of the driveway as has been built versus the original levels:

1. Method 1: By reference to the bottom of the front door which is marked as 4697mm on the plan (door level unchanged) it is easy to measure using a spirit level that the garage floor is lower by 210mm, giving a height of 4487mm for the top end of the driveway. Compared to the figure of 4342mm marked on the proposed plan, this is a difference of merely 145mm.
2. Method 2: By measuring the height of the retaining wall between no.40 and no.39 (1230mm), then measuring the difference in levels between the top of that wall and the highest point of the

driveway (170mm). Around 100mm need to be added to account for the very slight rise of the no.39's driveway. The total is a rise of 1500mm as opposed to the 1st method result of 1492mm (4487mm-2995mm). The difference with the "proposed" height would then be 153mm higher.

3. The distance from the point where the driveway comes level with the top of the retaining wall to the front of the garage wall/edge of garage floor is 1400mm. This is consistent with a rising rate of 98mm for each metre of driveway and validates the above calculations.

All measurements in metres:

From road	Proposed	Built	Difference	
0	2.995	2.995	0	Road level
3	3.248	3.289	0.041	
8	3.697	3.780	0.083	
13	4.153	4.271	0.118	
15.2	4.342	4.487	0.145	Garage floor level
18.5	4.599	4.487	-0.112	Original floor level

It is difficult to understand how the complainants arrived at an estimation of 550mm to 600mm rise in the driveway when by reference to the published data and some very simple measurements a figure of around 150mm can easily be worked out.

STREET SCENE

First it has to be said that we were not aware that what had been drawn by our architect and presented to us as an artistic suggestion for the front garden would become a firm condition of the permission to build the front and rear extensions.

Looking at the car parked behind the front wall and greenery in the PROPOSED STREET SCENE, it is obvious that the rise in the drive has not been taken into account. The car has been drawn as if at street level, but it would not be possible to drop down abruptly to street level by at least 300mm from the driveway level. A more accurate representation would have the top 800 to 1000mm of the car showing.

The suggestion in the drawing was to lower the front wall from 1000mm to 500mm and replace the top 500mm of the wall with about 350mm of greenery. This would obviously provide less screening. It is unfeasible to require that cars parked in a Conservation Area should be made invisible, however, by adding a garage to the side of the house we have ensured that our own car is never parked outside for any length of time.

The concerns from the owners of no.41 that they might see a car from their bedroom window are understood but we have planted a row of shrubs that should grow to a height of 2000mm and, in time,

provide even more screening than was represented on the PROPOSED SITE SECTION A-A. It should also be noted that the paved area drops down gradually by 500mm from the driveway to the top left corner, in order to minimise the impact of any visitor's cars parking at the front of the house. It is our intention to mask the road to a certain extent and also try to screen part of the garden, dustbins and driveway of no.39 by planting shrubs in planters.