



Roger Hill Building Design

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Mr D Eaves
Head of Planning
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
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PO9 2AX

My ref: **Job Ref No.732**
Your ref:

26 April 2013

Dear Mr Eaves,

RE: New dwellings at 86 West Street, Havant, Hampshire. PO9 1LN

I refer to my meeting with yourself and John Townsend at your offices on 25 January which was to discuss revised plans for the above, and I apologise for the delay in submitting a new planning application. Please, however, now find enclosed 4 sets of the application drawings together with all relevant documents. Could you also please accept this letter as a formal request to withdraw the current application.

Before proceeding to prepare the drawings, the points of concern raised by yourself and Mr Townsend were communicated to Mr & Mrs Willetts and I would like to address these in the approximate order in which they arose:

1) Overriding principle.

Mr Townsend confirmed that the building is not listed but stands within a Conservation Area. An absolute condition of the previously accepted proposal to demolish the building was the re-construction of the front wall using the original bricks, matching tiles and the replication of original detailing - this in order to preserve the character and appearance of the front elevation without detriment to the street scene.

2) Site dimensions.

It was noted that the rear garden side walls angle inwards, making it geometrically less appropriate to provide pitched roofs over the rear single storey sections of each dwelling, as is shown on the current application drawings. The revised floor plans are now correctly representative of the footprint of the site and are based on a recent digital survey. A flat roof would therefore be more appropriate, and lantern lights are to provide natural illumination and ventilation for the innermost spaces. The height of the enclosing parapet walls are to be similar to that shown on the current application drawings.

3) Access.

The 3D sketch and 1:100 ground floor plan, as presented at our meeting in January, featured 'back-to-back' rear entrance lobbies projecting approximately 2 metres beyond the line of the proposed rear wall to the single-storey section. Mr Townsend thought this to be acceptable since access will be mainly from the rear of the properties. The lobby would not extend beyond the line of the existing extension to the neighbouring property, 84 West Street.

Mr Townsend also considered the proposed gable wall to the pair of lobbies to be an appropriate architectural form, acknowledging that this served at the same time to conceal the parapet wall between the two dwellings, the purpose of the latter being to create a more positive separation at roof level.

The enclosed plans and 3D sketch now show a mono-pitch conservatory-style roof to each of the lobbies to optimise on natural lighting.

4) Rear elevation:

The 3D sketch, as presented at our meeting, showed a door to each of the dwellings opening out onto the flat roof. This was to facilitate escape in the event of fire from the upper storeys of the dwellings, in compliance with Part B of the Building Regulations. You expressed concern about this aspect of the scheme, namely that the occupants could be inclined to make use of the roof as a terrace, with the attendant and therefore undesirable potential for overlooking onto neighbouring properties.

We acknowledge that a planning condition to restrict the use of this space would be difficult to control and have now removed the doors, re-introducing the ground floor front passageway leading to the street from a central 'protected route' serving all floors, in order to achieve a satisfactory means of escape.

The rear Bedroom 2 in each of the dwellings will therefore extend across the full width of each unit, with the windows located to one side of each room to help avoid mutual overlooking into the ground floor rooms served by skylights. The 1.1m high dividing wall between the properties will further reduce this risk.

Additional concerns relating to the proposed rear elevation were expressed by Mr Townsend, which I would like to address in the following section.

5) Floor layouts:

Mr Townsend appeared to question the practicality of a bathroom at second floor level, but this is no more than the reversal of the arrangement found in many terraced houses across the country which, typically, have a ground floor bathroom serving first floor bedrooms.

It was pointed out that the current application drawings include rooms within the roof space, only the front room of which has full headroom, this being immediately below the ridge line and not under the sloping roof on either side of it. The new plans show a flat roof formed within the area bounded by four ridge lines, so as to create sufficient headroom to enable a bathroom and box room to be provided at this level within each unit.

I was disappointed that Mr Townsend found this unacceptable, particularly in view of the fact that the existence of a flat roof would be difficult to discern - if not actually impossible - when seen head-on from the only available public viewpoint, which is at some distance and beyond the Potash Terrace car park.

The existing building is not listed and the influencing factors relate to its location within a Conservation Area, namely:

- 1) The frontage which is a street scene issue.
- 2) The rear which is a setting/scale/mass/character issue.

The frontage has already been addressed.

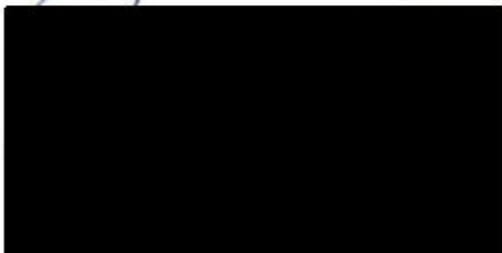
At the rear, the setting is characterised by a mixture of architectural features, the most dominant being the large elongated 2-storey extensions to the properties on either side of the application site. There are a number of windows in the roofs at or above the level of the proposed two dormers illustrated in my 3D drawing. The dormers are to be located within the sloping plane of a pitched roof which, when compared with the existing application drawings, represents only a minor variation on the same theme. Our proposal is simply to 'infill' the space between what was to have been two hipped ends. Whilst this alters the form of the roof, it is clearly not detrimental to the setting of the building and it is not dominant.

We do not therefore agree with Mr Townsend's view that this 'adjustment' is unacceptable, since it is not alien in character and, when compared with the current application, does not represent a significant increase in mass within the context of the overall size and form of the neighbouring buildings to the rear of the West Street properties. I am sorry to be expressing an opposite view on this, and to be at odds with the Conservation Officer's opinion, and very much hope that his objection will not automatically result in your refusal of the application.

The existing application drawings proposed an elongated double pitched roof with hipped ends which have no function other than to provide an amount of storage space which is excessive in relation to the requirements of a small town house. As now proposed, the utilisation of roof space in the manner shown helps achieve a balanced layout by enabling each unit to provide two bedrooms of acceptable size.

Please note that I have superimposed on the site plan the new private car park recently granted permission under APP/13/00051 in order to show how the applications relate.

Finally, please let me know if you require any further information.



Roger Hill

Enc:

cc The Rt.Hon & Mrs D Willetts