

31 Grove Place planning application for wall and shed

Design and Access statement

The property

31 Grove Place is named Bickersteth House due to its connection with the church. Constructed in 1890 as the annex to the church hall, it was converted in 1970 with some unfortunate features such as mis-sized aluminium windows which neither aged well nor contributed to the area.

During the extensive renovation we have taken great care to respect the ethos of the building. For example, replacement windows were selected to reflect the history of the building, based on the earliest drawings that we could find from archives.

It has been very satisfying to receive a wide range of compliments on the near-finished result of this fine house including a comment that it is deemed to make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

There is a garden to the south, bounded by the house, a brick wall rising to over three meters and a fence which is in disrepair.

Access

Access to the garden is through a gate which gives directly on to Grove Place.

Access to the hard standing, which has been used for parking a single vehicle for as long as anyone can remember, is directly from Grove Place. A car can be parked on the hard standing; access is gained in the same way as is typical for a residents' bay, by reversing into it.

There are no changes to pedestrian or vehicular access in the proposal, save for the placement of the garden gate.

Layout

This application originally included a proposal to make a minor enlargement to the size of the hard standing. This has been withdrawn from the application on discovery that the proposal contravened the Neighbourhood Plan. This information came as a shock, not least as we fully support the Plan, having voted for it.

There is, therefore, no longer a proposal to adjust the layout of the hard standing in this application. Both the application and the drawings have been resubmitted to reflect this.

There is a proposal to move the garden gate further south. The gate would retain its relationship to Grove Place i.e. direct access. This adjustment would facilitate moving rubbish out on collection days as the bins will be at the bottom of the garden. An advantage could be some reduction to any noise disturbance to neighbours as the bins will be rolled a shorter distance.

There will be no alteration to the layout of trees. Detailed documentation has been submitted as part of the application setting out the measures that will be taken to preserve the roots of the tree near the boundary.

Scale and appearance

The proposal is to replace the fence with a wall and to make a modest increase to its height.

At the north end, the wall will adjoin Bickersteth House at the level of the decorative line, creating a consistent feel, which the fence fails to achieve. At the south end, the wall will adjoin the wall of the Well Road neighbour at the lowest point of that wall. This approach has been taken to respect the existing environment and to provide design consistency.

The proposed wall is 35cm higher than the fence, nonetheless this remains in keeping with the environment. It is also considerably lower than some walls in the surrounding area, including the neighbour's wall where it adjoins Bickersteth House

The wall will be constructed of brick to match that of the neighbour's wall. Both the brick type and construction style, for example the capping, will be in clear keeping the existing wall of the neighbour.

The proposed gate will reflect the design of the front door. This design can be achieved with a wall, but not with a fence.

The shed will be below the level of the wall, making it unobtrusive.

Landscaping

The landscaping of the garden will respect the existing garden, for example with the maintenance of tree and shrub volume. The tree plan, part of a separately approved application has been designed with suitability, sustainability and interest all in mind.

The proposal includes the addition of a modest shed for the storage of bicycles and garden tools. The scale of the shed will be proportionate with the garden and its height will be below that of the wall. The shed will have a sedum, living roof. It will be clad and pre-aged cedar, making it in keeping with its environment.

Drainage in the garden is good. There is no collection of surface water, this is unlikely to change with the addition of a slab for the modestly sized shed.

Also, the existing drain adjoining the hard standing at the south end of Grove Place is adequate to deal with any demands placed on it.

The hard standing was constructed of concrete that was in disrepair. It also had an unsightly collapsible metal parking bollard. The appearance of this area has been markedly improved, and kept in line with the ethos of Bickersteth House, through the laying of granite setts and the removal of the bollard.

Heritage considerations

The renovation of Bickersteth House has been conducted with strong reference to its heritage and that of its surroundings in a conservation zone.

The proposed wall will be more consistent with the heritage of the area, for example through the removal of the bollard and laying of setts.

This application has been adjusted on discovery of the oversight in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and is now aligned to it.

Denzil Rankine 22.02.20