

9A / 9B Rosebery Avenue, Harpenden

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

May 2024

Introduction

The site is approximately 905m square in area and located within a residential street of Harpenden and is within the Conservation Area. The road comprises large detached houses on generous plots, most of which are approximately 17 meters in width and about 40 meters in depth. The existing property was built in the 1970s as a pair of semi detached houses built historically in the garden of no.11. It is therefore somewhat out of character with the surrounding houses on the road which are all detached, either original houses of an "Avenue" character, or extended and re furnished 1970s properties. The existing house therefore has no architectural merit and is out of keeping with the vast majority of period houses on the road. Although the property is within the Conservation Area it is not Locally Listed. The existing house to be demolished is currently set well back from the main road and has the benefit of a longer garden than most houses on the road.

Although the proposal here involves the loss of one 3 bedroom residential unit, this is insignificant in relation to the general housing stock in Harpenden and there is already precedent from the planning department for the reduction of residential units already on the road at 1 Rosebery Avenue. Here, the original house was converted into 14 flats and then planning permission was granted in 2023 for it's conversion back into one dwelling, thus losing 13 units. Also, 11 Rosebery Avenue, the house next door, was converted into three separate flats and then back into one house in 2008 (15/05/2008), this showing that the council are not averse to losing residential units if there is a benefit to the locality. In this case at 9A / 9B Rosebery Avenue, a house out of keeping with the road in terms of its architectural character and appearance is being replaced with a single dwelling much more in keeping with the road in terms of it's aesthetic appeal and visual amenity. It will also replace an old 1970s house which is not environmentally satisfactory in terms of heat loss and energy consumption. The replacement dwelling by contrast will have much higher levels of insulation and be fitted with environmentally appropriate solar panels and air source heat pumps. It will therefore benefit the area in both visual and environmental terms, and this in itself outweighs the loss of one 3 bed unit.

There are a variety of different styles of house on the road, but they are generally of a traditional style with red brick with brown plain tiles. Most have either been extended over the years, in various styles, with a number having been demolished and rebuilt with new attic accommodation. This development over the years has resulted in a road where there is a good mixture of traditional architectural styles. The existing property to be re built has no such style or character worth keeping.

The proposal here is to demolish the existing 1970s building and to re build a new five bedroom dwelling on three floors with the existing vehicular crossover retained.

Design

The replacement dwelling has now been set down by 350mm from the existing so it is more in line with the street frontage of the other houses on this side of the road. The two storey rear line of the house is in line with the neighbouring house at no. 11 with a sunken single storey rear wing providing an open plan kitchen dining living area opening on to a lowered patio area. There are then steps leading back up to the main garden level. From the front, the house is set well back from the neighbouring house at no. 11 and has been designed generally in a symmetrical fashion with two single storey wings to the sides set well back from the front elevation. To the centre is a two storey gable entrance feature. The height of the new dwelling will match that of the house to be demolished, but as the new roof is of a hipped design rather than the existing gable roof, the main roof form will appear less bulky. Its ridge is also set well below that of no.11 by approximately 1.4m

To the rear, the house has two modest sized dormer windows to the attic bedrooms to the main roof. These are again common in this area of the Avenues. The main roof to the new dwelling has a fully hipped roof shape with a small area of crown roof on which are located 3no. solar panels. Crown roofs are a feature of these new build houses in the Conservation area providing they are not over sized. (see recently approved new build a 16 Townsend Lane, Harpenden). This crown roof is only 2.5x4.5m in size and would not be intrusive in the appearance of the Conservation Area. It also allows the ridge height not to go above that of the existing house and so sits comfortably in the street scene.

6no. further solar panels have been added to the side roof face. This elevation also has a conservation style rooflight to the attic bathroom.

The rear elevation has single storey accommodation with a pitched roof design with a standing seam metal roof. These roof areas also include two flat roof rooflights which are again features granted planning approval in the Avenues locally recently. (see 16 Townsend Lane, Harpenden new build)

Two air source heat pumps are also included to the side elevation adjacent to the neighbour's garage which are now a specific requirement of building regulations and make the dwelling more environmentally efficient. Acoustic screening will be added if required.

The two storey elements of the new house are all set well within the 45 degree lines from both the neighbour's rear most habitable ground floor room windows. The visual impact therefore of the new house from the rear gardens will not be detrimental to the neighbours.

The new house is constructed of a stock red facing brickwork to match that of no.11 with a dark brown plain clay tiled roof with white timber Georgian style white timber casement windows to the front elevation. The elevations also benefit from Portland stone detailing around the windows and also around the recessed entrance door area.

Bin and recycling storage areas are included to the utility side of the house adjacent to the rear patio area.

Tree protection measures have been put in place to ensure the trees and vegetation retained in the rear garden areas are not affected by the building works.

The front driveway can accommodate four cars which is more than adequate for a five bedroom house

Access

The existing vehicular crossover is to be retained.

Landscaping

To the front of the new dwelling, new low soft landscaping has been added adjacent to the house and front step and ramp area with also a new hedge to match the existing at no.11 behind a low brick wall. With the removal of a tree to the rear garden, two new trees have been added to the rear garden adjacent to the sunken seating area. The existing trees and hedging are generally retained to the remaining rear garden areas to the perimeter of the site.

Conclusion

The overall impact of the replacement dwelling will therefore not be adverse to the street and will in fact improve the visual amenity of the road. It will be a quality building in terms of both design and materials used, and its size and bulk in keeping with the other large houses in the road. Its rear projection into

the garden is acceptable in terms of the 45 degree lines and it's two storey elements are set well away from the boundaries by 2-3 meters, much like the other large houses on the road. The single storey rear projection is set well down into the ground and so it's impact on the aspect from the houses at 9 and 11 Roesbery Avenue will be minimal. Although the new dwelling is larger in footprint than the existing house to be demolished, it still sits comfortably within the plot and is similar in its bulk and size as all the other large houses on the street. There is also president in the road for the reduction of residential units already at 1 and 11 Rosebery Avenue, and the new house will perform better in environmental terms than the house to be demolished. To conclude, the replacement house will benefit the area on all levels and fit into the area well being a positive addition to Rosebery Avenue.