

Wadhal

Existing Condition.

The property is a semi-detached home which was previously social housing, likely built in the 30's. Over 1200 council homes were built across Botwell between 1919 and 1938. It features red brick and white render across the walls with brown clay tiles and white upvc windows. The front elevation contributes to the street scene by matching the scale, rhythm and pattern of semi-detached dwelling across Botwell Common Road. However the rear elevation can be upgraded with a new contemporary extension to increase usable space with improved layouts to support two separate flats.



Existing front elevation at Botwell Common Rd.



Existing interiors/ kitchen.



Existing rear elevation with ground floor extension.

Wadhal

W_059_Makani

Unit 1, High Street House, 83 Askew Road, London W12 9AH
e: fahad@wadhal.co.uk p: 07972233927 w: wadhal.co.uk

Design Statement.

Background

Wadhal has been appointed to undertake design proposals for an extension and conversion of a semi-detached property into two separate flats at 102 Botwell Common Road. The site footprint is approximately 360m² with an existing internal floor area of 110m² across ground and first floors. The existing building is not listed and not located within a conversation area. There is an existing ground floor extension towards the rear of the property. With the unique constraints of the site in mind there is potential for unifying extensions to rationalise the elevations and building massing and develop high-quality designs.

Location

The location is residential with mixture of two storey semi-detached and terraced homes. The pattern of semi-detached properties is well established in the area and numerous dwellings have developed extensions particularly towards Lime Grove to the north. The immediate context on Botwell Common Road shows semi-detached and terraced homes with hipped roofs in clay tiles alongside brick and render to the walls.

The pattern of semi-detached development is generally low density, and identifying small development site for high quality interventions is a critical part of addressing housing supply, as supported in the NPPF and Local Plan. The approach of such interventions should embrace design quality while retaining the intimate character of the area. The immediate context is residential with hipped roofs and small windows typical of properties of pre-war suburban development. However, with a considered extension and refurbishment, we can retain existing features while being creative with layouts to respond uniquely to changing housing demands and providing two separate units. Additionally, the exterior materials, windows, wall and roof build-ups can be upgraded for greater thermal efficiency to address long-term housing demands.

Objectives

- Deliver a conversion of semi-detached dwelling into two separate flats utilising efficient layouts and generous living spaces.
- Prioritise sustainability via thermal efficiency, passive solar design, and careful consideration of embodied carbon and renewable energy.
- Maximise energy conservation via fabric-first approach and significant insulation.
- Focus on embodied carbon for proposed materiality.
- Use space efficiently with large living, kitchen, and work-from-home spaces.
- Respect the scale, massing, and rhythm of existing buildings.
- Use complementary materials in relation to the existing context.
- Respect the context extension being subservient to the existing massing.
- Create a sense of place and local distinctiveness with high-quality design.
- Provide adequate space for bicycle storage, waste, and recycling.
- Meet and exceed minimum space standards set out in the London Plan.
- Incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and utilise permeable surfaces.

Policy

Policy DMH 4 sets out that residential conversions and redevelopment of dwellings into flats will be permitted where:

- i) it is on a residential street where the proposal will not result in more than 10% of properties being redeveloped into flats;
- ii) On residential streets longer than 1km the proposed redevelopment site should be taken as the midpoint of a 1km length of road for assessment purposes;
- iii) the internal floor area of the original building to be converted is at least 120 sqm; and
- iv) units are limited to one unit per floor for residential conversions

Botwell common road has a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings without any existing blocks of flats. It is anticipated that some of the properties may currently be operating as HMO’s. While the internal floor area of the existing dwelling is 110m², the extended footprint easily exceeds the guidance with a gross internal floor area of 162m². No more than one unit is proposed per floor, with the ground floor encompassing flat A, while the first and second floors facilitate flat B. Both flats exceed the minimum space standards set out in the London plan/ Policy DHMB 16 (Table 5.1) for a two bedroom flat and a three bedroom flat.

Given the scheme involves the addition of one extra flat, a more effective use of the site can be achieved with negligible impact on parking, congestion, amenity space and no changes to the street scene. Additionally, the provision of a new three-bedroom flat allows for a net increase in family accommodation.

Policy DHMB 11 sets out requirements for extensions and alterations. The proposal harmonises with the local context with the height, mass and bulk of the extensions being subservient to the existing dwelling. No change is proposed to the plot size or existing street pattern, roof lines or street scape rhythm with none of the extensions visible from public view. The project has been through an extensive design development process with the highest quality intended for the materiality, finishes and detailing. New landscaping is proposed in the front and rear gardens including new trees to protect and enhance amenity, biodiversity and green infrastructure. Given the shallow depth of the first floor extension, there is no impact on daylight or sunlight to the windows of the adjacent property with the 45 degree rule in mind. Additionally, allowance has been made for a screened recycling and waste area with external bins and access for collection.

Policy DHMB 17 sets out requirements for amenity space for residential units. The existing large rear garden of the property can be subdivided to provide 29m² amenity space for the ground floor flat & 90m² amenity space for the flat above. Both areas exceed the minimum requirements for two and three bedrooms flats set out in table 5.3. The current properties benefit from on-street parking bays on Botwell Common Road which can continue to be utilised. Additionally, the existing rear garden can comfortably accommodate dedicated areas for bicycle storage, waste & recycling as well as two additional parking bays to serve both flats.



View to property from Botwell Common Road.

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Pre-Application Feedback

Written pre-application advice was received from the local authority on 8th July 2024, ref. 51355/PRC/2024/68. The advice confirmed that the principle of subdividing and extending the existing building to form two residential units can be supported, but raised concerns about the scale of the extensions, the flat roof on the two storey extension, amenity space and car parking. The following statements will address how the proposals have been amended to address these concerns.

Ground Floor Extension Depth

The pre-application advice states that the single storey rear extension should not exceed 4m in depth. The proposals have been adjusted accordingly to reduce the depth of the ground floor extension to 4m, bringing it in line with the existing ground floor extension.

Two Storey Extension

The pre-application advice states that two storey flat roof extensions would not be supported. The proposals have been amended accordingly to support a hipped roof on the two storey extension, set at the eaves of the existing dwelling and corresponding to the roof profile of the main dwelling.

Rear Dormer

The pre-application advice raised concerns about the scale of the rear dormer at a width of 5m, reading as top heavy combined with the ground and first floor extensions. Accordingly, the scale of the rear dormer have been reduced to a width of just over 3m, to achieve adequate space internally to support a single bedroom/ study.

Rooflights

The pre-application advice confirmed the size and number of rooflights is acceptable, but it is recommended to reorientate them to be square with the roof slope as opposed to diamond orientation. The rooflight have been adjusted to align with the roof slope as advised.

Materiality

The pre-application advice states that any extensions should be construed in matching materials. The ground floor and first floor extensions are proposed as brick to match the existing rear elevation while the dormer is finished in clay tiles to match the existing hipped roof of the dwelling.

Amenity of Future Occupants

The pre-application advice mentions the upper floor bedroom windows overlooking the garden area and roof lights of the ground floor flat at a short distance. The number and size of roof lights on the ground floor extension was previously reduced, with the location set as far away from the first floor windows as possible. These windows were fixed with obscured glazing to further reduce any overlooking risk. All roof lights have now been omitted from the ground floor extension. With the depth of the garden reduced, overlooking into this shallow zone is not possible as illustrated in the sections.

Living Conditions

The pre-application advice mentions adherence to the minimum space standards set out in Table 3.1 of the London Plan for two and three bedroom flats. The ground floor flat has a gross internal floor area of 74m² exceeding the 70m² requirement for a 4 person, 2 bedroom flat set out in table 3.1. The first / second floor flat has a gross internal floor area of 93m² exceeding the 84m² and the 90m² requirement for a 4 person, 3 bedroom flat split over three levels. Additionally, the sections have been adjusted to achieve ceilings heights of 2.5m throughout for both flats.

Private Amenity Space

The pre-application advice highlights that a 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom flat should have at least 25 and 30m² of usable private amenity space respectively in accordance with Table 5.3. With the existing large garden of the property being subdivided, 29m² private amenity space can be supported for the 2 bedroom flat while 90m² private amenity space can be supported for the 3 bedroom flat above, exceeding the requirements on both counts.

Parking

The pre-application advice highlights that car parking could be provided from the service road at the rear of the site. This will be used for construction access non-nonetheless and we have accommodated parking and turning area for 2 cars as per the guidance provided.

Summary

The pre-application scheme raised concerns with regards to the impact on the character and appearance on the area, neighbouring residential amenity, living conditions and car parking. As highlighted in the points above, the scheme has been revised to address each concern that has been raised. We have pro-actively engaged in a pre-application process with the council and amended the proposals to comply fully with the advice received.



Existing rear elevation with ground floor extension.

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Refused Scheme

The previously submitted planning application (**ref. 51355/APP/2024/2205**) was refused on the 7th November 2024 with two reasons set out in the decision notice:

1 The proposed development, by virtue of its failure to maintain an adequate internal floor area, would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of the occupants of the proposed new upper floor flat.

2 The proposed development, due to the proximity of the private amenity space and the kitchen rooflight for the ground floor flat to the habitable windows on the rear elevation serving primary accommodation in the upper floor flat, would harm the residential amenity of the future occupiers by virtue of loss of privacy, visual intrusion and overlooking.

This section of the design statement will focus on these points alone:

1 Internal Floor Area

The case officers report concluded the three bedroom floor flat has a gross internal floor area of 86m². We are unsure how this figure was reached and have provided a simple diagram on this page illustrating how the areas are being calculated to reach a gross internal floor area of 93m². At second floor level, this does not include areas with ceiling height below 1500mm. However, it does include the extent of the staircase, storage areas and partitions as set out in the London Plan.

Further correspondence with the case officer following the refusal advised to approach this flat as a 3 bedroom, 4 person duplex with a 84m² gross internal floor area being acceptable. Accordingly, we have subdivided the first floor bedrooms with the incorporation of an ensuite so they can be utilised for singles bedrooms as advised. In this scenario, the scheme easily exceed the gross internal floor area requirement, while retaining the size of the extensions deemed acceptable previously.

2 Overlooking

The kitchen rooflight has been removed in favour of an intensive green roof for maximum screening. The new first-floor, garden facing window is setback from the ground floor extension and sits against the kitchen depth. This alongside the window height means any person standing by this window is over 2m away from the edge of the ground floor extension which blocks any possible views into the shallow garden below. The dormer window also limits any views into the garden due to the height of the third floor and possible field of views in mind. Furthermore, the depth of the ground floor garden has been reduced to 29m², meaning overlooking into this shallow zone from the windows above is rendered impossible, as illustrated via Sections C & D.

Summary

Further concerns were raised around floor areas and overlooking in the reasons for refusal for the previous application. As described above, both of these points have been addressed in full. For reasons set out above and detailed in this statement, the proposals fully accord with the relevant planning policies and as such we respectfully request that planning permission would be granted.

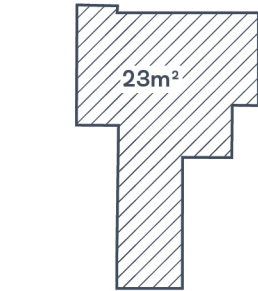
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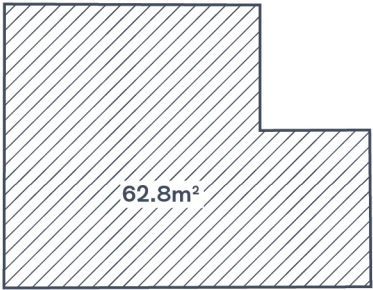
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Gross Internal Floor Area

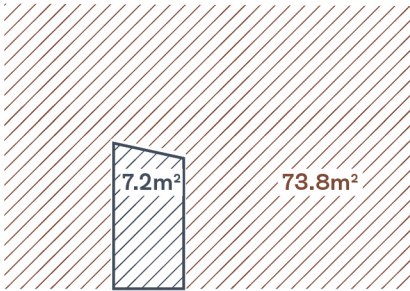
Flat A: 73.8m²
Flat B: 93m²



Second Floor



First Floor



Ground Floor