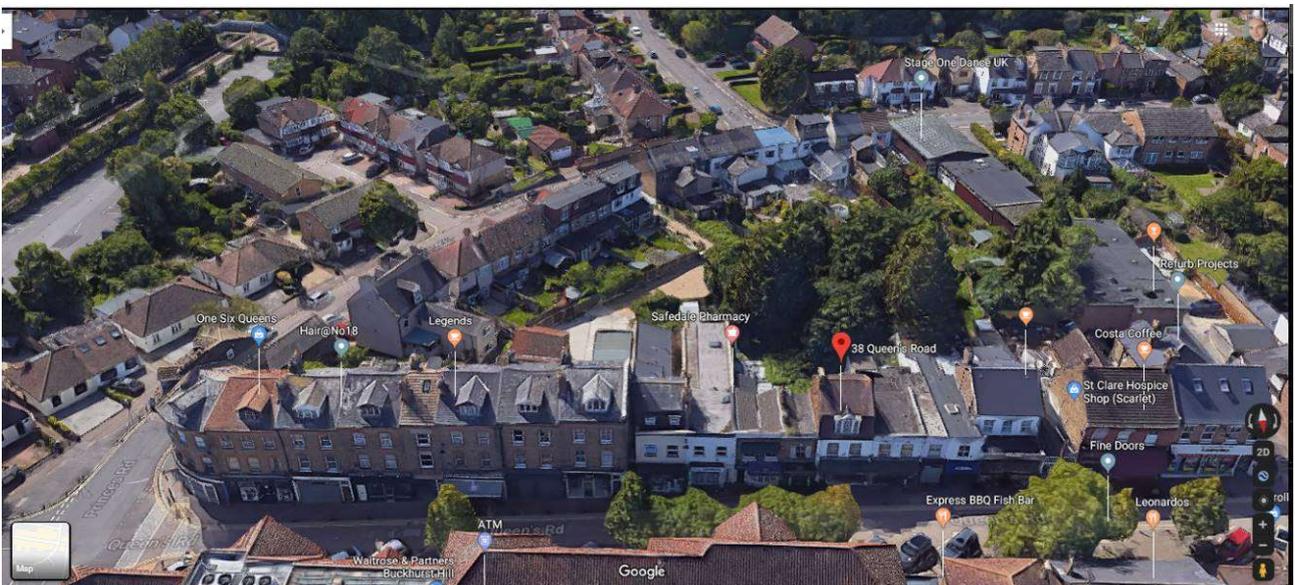


# **DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**



**Alterations & extension to create  
3no flats, with amended retail  
space to front.**

**38 Queens Road  
Buckhurst Hill  
IG9 5BY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The site is located near the end of Queen's Road, just outside the conservation area. Currently there is a retail unit fronting Queen's Road with residential accommodation over two storeys above accessed through the shop. The site also includes an annexe single volume building to the rear. Between the two buildings is a long courtyard garden. It is set within a series of small retail units, similarly with residential or office accommodation to the rear and above.

The proposed scheme is to retain the façade fronting Queen's Road as existing, and retain retail use at Ground Floor. The internal layout of the shop is amended to provide ancillary accessible staff WC and mini Kitchen, and to provide a dedicated separate access to the flats from the Queen's Road front.

The building behind will be extended and expanded to provide 1 no. one bedroom two person flat at ground and first floor, and 1 no. two bedroom three person flat with ground floor entrance with living accommodation at first floor and existing second floor. The scale of the proposal is in line and in character with the approved scheme at No 32, which in turn was similar to the scheme at No 30, both of which are now built.

In addition there is a single volume annexe to the rear of the site which is at right angles to the site and crosses at the back of Nos 40, 40a and 42 Queen's Road as well as to the rear gardens to properties on Princes Road. We propose to convert this building to 1 no. two bedroom single storey flat, to fit within the current building envelope.

In addition to the works proposed, the front of the building will be modified to provide level access.

Each flat will have a dedicated amenity area to provide garden space and secure bicycle storage.

A communal area for bin storage is shown to the rear.

Flat roofs and shallow roofs will be used for photovoltaic solar power panels. None of the flat roofs are designated balcony or terrace areas and access is only for maintenance.

### **1.0 THE EXISTING PROPERTY - USE**

The building fronting Queen's Road consists of a retail shop with residential accommodation on two stories above. To the rear the annexe building has the appearance of semi industrial use but is currently vacant. The area between the buildings is earth, and will be landscaped as garden.

The building is part of a terrace of buildings of similar mixed retail, residential and office use.

### **2.0 AMOUNT**

The site area is 287.5m<sup>2</sup>.

The existing buildings have a footprint of 179m<sup>2</sup>.

The new proposed development has a footprint of 190m<sup>2</sup>, approximately 66% of the site area.

This will consist of a 37m<sup>2</sup> retail unit and 3no flats of between 55.5m<sup>2</sup> and 88.0m<sup>2</sup>.

Waste and recycling provisions will be in accordance with the EFDC for new residential developments, but allowance is to be made for wheeling the bins through to the street, limiting bin size. There is a dedicated refuse and recycling area shown within the rear amenity area. In addition storage will be provided for one 5 litre green kitchen caddy in each flat.

### **3.0 LAYOUT**

Retail unit is retained at the Queen's Road front at ground floor level. A separate corridor access to the side of the shop, using the existing side door, will allow independent access to the flats, including to the annexe at the rear. Post boxes are located in the corridor.

To the rear of the front building, Flat 1 is a one bedroom two person duplex over two storeys (ground and first floors) with a private garden amenity area.

Flat 2 is a two bedroom three person apartment, with access at ground level and living accommodation at first and the existing second floors. A dedicated private garden amenity area is provided to the rear of the building for this flat.

The annexe building at the rear will be Flat 3, a two bedroom three person flat built within the envelope of the existing. Part of the area will be shaped to allow for a courtyard and a garden amenity space. The existing external walls on the boundary are unchanged and the roof profile no higher than the existing, so that from the properties that back the site to the rear and rear sides no change will be visible.

This is a no parking scheme. This is justified by the location of the site in a town centre location, with public transport options, together with the fact secure bicycle provision is allowed for.

#### 4.0 SCALE

The proposal does not involve any increase to the height of the existing building. The front of the building, from ground floor to the ridge and chimney at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is retained so that there is no increase in bulk visible from Queen's Road. The rear of the front building is neatened up and extended at ground and first floors in line with that of the recent works to No32.

The rear annexe building which is tucked away between the back gardens of properties on both Queen's Road and Princes Road, will not be enlarged and the development will be within the existing building envelope (footprint and roof profile).

#### 5.0 LANDSCAPING

An indicative landscaping proposal is shown, but a detailed scheme will be developed to both provide screening and privacy and green and usable amenity space for the residents.

#### 6.0 APPEARANCE

By retaining the front façade and roof profile there is no change to the appearance facing Queen's Road. Changes to the rear will be in London Stock face brick and will match in size and character the extension to the rear of No 32. The overall appearance to the rear, which is currently an untidy mess of piecemeal extensions, will be considerably enhanced by the neat squared off proposal.

The external brick walls to the rear annexe will be retained, cleaned and restored. New walls will be built to match. If the condition of the existing walls is found unsatisfactory it will be rebuilt with bricks to match existing. Every effort will be made to leave the existing boundary wall to the Princes Street sides untouched.

- The extension will be traditional buff London Stock brick, in keeping with the surrounding buildings.
- Windows will be aluminium framed with dark grey/black frames.
- The pitched roof to the front building will be retained as clay tiles.
- The existing external brick walls to the annexe are to be retained, restored or replaced to match.
- New walls to the annexe to be bricks to match existing.
- The roof to the annexe will be a flat single ply membrane concealed behind a brick parapet.



Streetview to Queens Road front



Rear of building



View of No 32 showing similar bulk and materials to our proposal



View showing back of building with No 32 in relation to site.



Internal and external view of the rear annexe building.

## 7.0 ACCESS

Access is from Queen's Road.

This is a car free proposal as explained earlier, as the area is well served by public transport, and the flats likely to appeal to young childless professionals.

Six secure bicycle storage spaces are shown indicatively. To address security concerns bicycle storage will be within each flat amenity space and there is ample room for additional bicycles if required.

As concluded by the appeal inspector (see below) there are limited opportunities within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site to park cars as it is the subject of controls. However, the site is within an area that has very good access to public transport, with bus stops and an underground station within walking distance and a wide range of shops and other facilities close to the appeal site.

The site is within a highly sustainable location, providing ample opportunities for future occupiers to travel by modes other than the private car, such as walking, cycling and public transport, which weigh in favour of the development.

The ground floor flats are designed for barrier free level access. Internal layouts to all the flats comply with current building regulations in respect of corridor and door widths, bathroom layouts, etc.

## 8.0 PREVIOUS PLANNING REFUSAL AND APPEAL

8.1 An application, ref EPF/0251/20, for 5 no. one bedroom flats with amended retail space to front was refused permission on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

The reason for the refusal were:

1. The proposed annexe extension, including the terrace, would have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of adjoining residents due to the scale, mass and bulk of the extension, its proximity to and dominance of the shared boundary, and the perception of overlooking from the siting and screening of the terrace....
2. The proposed second floor extension results in a bulky and incongruous addition to the building, have an overbearing impact of the adjoining properties and intrusive in the wider setting....
3. The application does not provide sufficient information to satisfy the Council, as competent authority, that the proposed development will not adversely affect the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area for Conservation and there are no alternative solutions or imperative reasons of overriding public interest why the proposed development should be permitted.
4. The proposals would result in an increase in on-street parking pressure in the surrounding area by reason of the level of development proposed, and by the lack of appropriate provision for alternative means of travel, particularly cycling....
5. The proposed development results in an over intensive development on a limited site, as evidenced by the intrusive and bulky nature of the extensions, the inadequate provision for refuse storage and collection and the resultant intrusive nature and character of the development, resulting in a poor standard of general amenity for future occupiers and an adverse impact on the surrounding area....

8.2 The refusal was appealed – ref APP/J1535/W/20/3259388. The Appeal Inspector was Graham Wyatt, and the appeal was dismissed on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

The following were the pertinent conclusions to the appeal:

- Annexe:

The annexe extension at first floor would overlook and be harmful to neighbouring properties.

The proposed extension in height of 3.7m to the annexe was regarded as an “unneighbourly form of development that would be clearly visible and would dominate the garden areas of the of the properties that surround it”. Thus the development would result in harm to the living conditions of adjoining occupiers.

- Second Floor Extension (front building):

The appeal inspector concluded “the Council’s decision notice refers solely to the effect of the second floor extension that is of concern and from my own observations, I have no reason to disagree with that assessment.... The proposed second floor addition would introduce an extension that, given its not inconsiderable size in relation to the overall roof scape, would overly dominate the appeal property. This also gives the building an unbalanced appearance in comparison to the properties that adjoin it, resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the area, which would be clearly visible from surrounding properties.”

However, although the appeal inspector concluded that “I am not persuaded that the development would have an overbearing effect, and thereby harming the living conditions, that the occupiers of No. 40a currently enjoy”, his overall conclusion was that the proposed second floor extension would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.

- Living conditions – Future Occupiers

With regard to bin provision and cycle storage the appeal inspector concluded that “the appeal site is within a mixed use area with other properties in the vicinity that are also in residential use. Presenting refuse bins on Queens Road on collection days would be an accepted event and without substantive evidence to the contrary, appears to take place without particular amenity issues. Furthermore, it is evident that the development would provide adequate amenity space for the development, together with areas for refuse bins and cycle storage. Moreover, there is nothing before me to suggest that the proposed storage area for six cycles would not be sufficient to serve the development.... Thus, I do not consider that the development would result in an over intensive use of the site leading to a poor level of general amenity for future occupiers or the surrounding area.”

- Parking

The appeal inspector concluded: “Although I acknowledge the Council’s arguments regarding parking, given its location, there are limited opportunities within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site to park cars as it is the subject of controls. However, the site is within an area that has very good access to public transport, with bus stops and an underground station within walking distance and a wide range of shops and other facilities

close to the appeal site. Thus, notwithstanding that the development is not 'car free' as described by the Council, the site is within a highly sustainable location, providing ample opportunities for future occupiers to travel by modes other than the private car, such as walking, cycling and public transport, which weigh in favour of the development. Thus, given the limited opportunities to park close to the site and the opportunities to access high quality public transport in the vicinity, I am not persuaded that the development would indeed lead to additional on-street parking pressure.... Thus, given the location of the appeal site and the convenience of access to public transport, as well as opportunities to walk and cycle to services and amenities, the proposal could be accessed via means other than the private car. For the reasons given above, the development would not lead to on-street parking pressure. It would not be in conflict with Policies CP1, CP6 and ST6 of the LP, Policies SP1 and T1 of the LPSV and paragraph 108 of the Framework."

- Epping Forest SAC

Because the proposal being assessed was not acceptable in planning terms the inspector was unable to undertake an Appropriate Assessment. But he noted that "the appellant has provided a unilateral undertaking to provide a financial contribution towards mitigating the effect of the development on the SAC, which principally derives from recreational pressure and air pollution."

- Other matters

With regard to the argument that lawful use of the annexe as a business premises could be resumed at any time, the inspector concluded that "there is no evidence before me that a business use would resume should this appeal fail, or that such a use would be appreciably more harmful to the adjoining residents than the proposed residential use."

On a positive note the inspector concluded that the "site is within a highly sustainable location and seeks to make effective use of previously developed land. The development as a windfall site would also increase housing in the District, helping to boost the Council's housing provision and to meet its requirements."

### 8.3 Amendments to the design in the light of the refusal

The reasons for refusal have been addressed as follows:

1. The annexe building will be converted into a single flat with no extension or upper storey or terrace and no increase in scale, mass or bulk.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor extension to the front building, deemed bulky and incongruous, has been omitted from the proposal.
3. Since the decision was made, EFDC has progressed a way forward in regard to the SAC and, as noted by the appeal inspector, our client has provided a unilateral undertaking to provide a financial contribution towards mitigating the effect of the development on the SAC. Note that the new proposal is for 3 flats, not 5 so the impact on the SAC is reduced.
4. The appeal inspector dismissed the argument that the proposal would increase off street parking pressure, and that there is ample alternatives to travel by private car, including adequate bicycle storage facilities (which we have amended to show contained within the private amenity area of each flat – to improve security).
5. The bulky nature of the extensions has been addressed with the new proposal for 3 new flats, rather than 5, with no extension at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level and no extension to the annexe building.

The decisions given by the council and confirmed by the appeal is that there was no objection to the proposed ground floor and first floor extensions, which are retained in this proposal.

We argue that proposal greatly improves the visual and aesthetic appearance of the buildings, especially to the rear. The amendments made in this new application meet the objections for the original refusal, and that, together with the appeal decision on matters such as parking and the SAC we trust that our current proposal will be favourably received.