



View of 4a from Salisbury Avenue showing hedge, entry to footpath and driveway to No 6



Hedge looking down driveway to 6 Salisbury, with Public Footpath 15 on the left and 4a on the right



Looking up drive from No 6, with 4a on the left

2. Overlooking and loss of privacy

The proposed dormer window will directly overlook our kitchen window and courtyard and possibly our son's bedroom window. We currently benefit from a very private location and the introduction of any glazing above the existing eaves height on the back elevation would result in overlooking and loss of privacy to the detriment of the residential amenity of our property and therefore be contrary to Policy 70 and 72 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

If the dormer were placed on the front elevation, this overlooking issue would be avoided.



View of the back elevation and ridgeline of 4a from the kitchen window of No 6

3. Size, height and scale

The application proposes to increase the existing ridge height by 600mm similar to the ridge height of 8 Salisbury, but this does not take into consideration the fact that Salisbury Avenue slopes downward toward Kirkwick so that ground level at 4a is lower than at 8. The proposed additional lowering of the new foundation will make the overall height and mass of the replacement dwelling overbearing for the plot. Although the new roof will be hipped, the actual footprint that it will cover is much bigger, especially along the north side elevation leading to a significant increase in bulk as viewed from the street, pavement, footpath and entry to (and exit from) our driveway, as well as from our house which is at a lower vantage. The proposal also widens the ground floor footprint to the full extent of the plot contravening the noted characteristic of the Conservation Area of "generous plots with substantial greenery" as there will be no planting to either side. The proposal references a similar property at 16 Townsend Lane, but massing in that street scene is very different from Salisbury Avenue (as detailed in ESD2: Identity Area E1 versus E2) and the plot at no 16 is substantially larger than 4a. The massing will be even more evident in contrast to the bungalow at 4 Salisbury, which is a much valued property for downsizers in the centre of town. The demolition of the existing garage to accommodate the expanded footprint will also mean that the front garden will be sacrificed for parking.

Overall, the proposed size, scale and bulk of the replacement dwelling is out of proportion to the size of the plot and its position with regard to neighbouring properties. It will lead to overcrowding on the street scene which was carefully avoided

by the use of greenery and appropriate sizing in the granting of the original permission for the group of houses. The existing generous 4-bedroom house is an appropriate use of the site. Trying to squeeze a 5-bedroom house of the proposed proportions is too much and comes at the sacrifice of the hedge, much of the mature plantings, lawn, and the general character of the area. If it were reduced to an appropriate ratio to the plot, and pulled away from the boundary to the access road, the hedge could be preserved. Given the maturity and height of the hedge, this would help disguise the bulk of the north elevation more than the proposed 2.1m fence.

If the scale of the new house were reduced, we would not object to the use of materials that are not in keeping with the neighbourhood or covenants.



Side elevation of 16 Townsend Lane, showing bulk which will be similar to the north side elevation of 4a

Design & Access Statement is misleading

Firstly, it refers to the property as a 1970s house when in fact it was built in the 1980s, with only one owner before the recent sale and is in very good condition, albeit dated. Although the house may have no architectural merit or elements to retain, there is a planning issue with regard to sustainability and waste when the house could be improved without demolition, and there is no more architectural merit to the replacement dwelling. The Statement refers several times to Townsend Lane in terms of housing styles and massing but this is not relevant as Townsend Lane is in the E2 zone of the Conservation Area whereas 4a is located on Salisbury Avenue in E1, and the plot at 16 is much larger than at 4a. The Statement emphasises that the first floor element will be set back from the neighbouring house at number 4, but fails to clarify that the ground floor will actually be sited closer to the boundary. This is also the case with the back elevation, where emphasis is put on the setting back of a section of the first floor, but not clarifying the setting forward of the ground floor and master bedroom gable. The repeated claim that the hipped roof will reduce the massing of the new house is not true in comparison to the existing house given the much larger footprint. In fact, the footprint of the new house is nearly double that of the existing. The claim that the house will sit more comfortably on the street and lessen the impact on neighbours is untrue. The house will span the entire width of the plot and be much taller, not just slightly taller, when you include the increase in ridge height and decrease in floor level. Moving the first floor away from No 4 and closer to No 8 will be at the cost of the hedge and create a massive side elevation with the two-story gable protrusions to both the front and the back (doubling the bulk of the existing house) and be fully visible from the street, pavement, public footpath and our driveway, making a huge impact on the street scene. The proposed landscaping is tiny compared to the amount that will be lost in the build combined with the previous removal of trees and shrubs from the back garden. The soft landscaping added to the house frontage will not enhance as stated, but be to the detriment of the area as it will be much less than the existing. The claim that no other trees will be removed is misleading as it does not account for the removals already undertaken and the removal of mature shrubs and lawn to the front and back.

Conclusion

The design of the house is attractive and although it makes use of materials that are not found on the street at present, we do not feel that this should be an impediment to change. And although the existing house is perfectly habitable, and of an appropriate size, we do not object to the idea of a replacement dwelling if it were more considerate of the plot and neighbouring properties, especially with regard to the inappropriate bulk and loss of natural amenity.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views.

Regards



Lisa Kiegers

