

Design & Access Statement

31A Whitlow Road, Chorlton Green, M21 9FQ



Former English school converted into house units in Chorlton Green's conservation area.

April 2022



(Location Plan)

Background

The council describes the site as 'situated approximately three miles southwest of the city centre, the conservation area at Chorlton Green is centred on the tranquil residential area of the Green itself, the last remaining vestige of the original village.

The boundary is tightly drawn round the backs of the properties fronting the Green and includes the St. Clements churchyard and the Bowling Green hotel on Brookburn Road. This small conservation area was one of the first two to be designated in the City of Manchester in July 1970.

The existing building is a conversion of the former St. Clement's Church School from one building into four residential dwellings. Most of the works was comprised of alterations to the interior of the building. There is an area to the rear of the building which is used for private parking, bin store, and access for the dwellings. Vehicle access is made via Crossland Road. Street parking is also available towards the front of the property.

A 2-storey side extension was added to number 31A which included timber cladding and a glazed wrap into the properties roof. The property has been inhabited by our client after construction was completed.

For this application, the client had approached Just H Architects to create a proposal which includes additional space for a family home with changing needs. This includes additional kitchen space, toilets, bedroom, WFH study, and storage space.



(Existing Site Photos)

Existing Property

The building is located on Whitlow Road, centred on the residential area of the Green, which is noted as the last remaining vestige of the original village. Planning was granted in 2008 for the former conversion, which included 3 four-bed and 1 five-bed houses. The building's aesthetic is a hybrid of the original building with the addition of modern elements. Internally there is a consistent display of exposed timber roofing, iron windows and English bond brickwork, timber flooring and white plaster.

The property is significant to the area as it provides a unique character which offers a break in the typical housing typology seen across Chorlton Green. The building is not listed, however, the former school's aesthetic from the front elevation is distinctive to the local area. This development will not affect any other property within the conservation area, with all noticeable alterations found towards the rear, hidden from the public highway. The original façade will remain as existing. The original key elements from the rear elevation, such as windows, will be retained and reused within the proposed development. The proposal wishes to retain as much of the original building as possible, whilst making the house more suitable for ever-changing family needs.

The Proposed Works

All works of the proposal are focused within the first unit of the building (31A). The proposal includes a small wrap around extension to the ground floor of the property, towards the rear of unit. The extension is to be in line to the building line of 31B. This has been done to create more internal kitchen, living, and storage space without breaching the former school's furthest projection. The existing rear bi-folding door will be retained to the new position to keep the overall aesthetic of the external ground floor.

The first floor includes an extension to the rear bedroom. The original property lacks storage space, this development will aim to resolve this by including a larger walk-in wardrobe for family storage. A small balcony area has been added to the roof area of the ground floor extension which overlooks the resident's garden. This will provide a private and recessed space for the master bedroom.

Lastly, a second-floor extension is proposed to create a small additional bedroom facing the rear of the house. A small new gable end wall will be made with an arched window in a similar design to the original iron windows found on the side of 31B Whitlow Road. Access to this space is made through the existing hallway connecting to the second-floor bedrooms. The extension has been offset from the neighbouring roof (31B) and skylight window from the existing bedroom.



The Impact of the Proposal

We believe the impact of the proposal is of a positive nature. The development will help provide comfortable living area for a growing family home. Little storage provisions were made within the original development for the end users. Our proposal will help the residents increase their storage space, whilst providing a more open and connected living area. A main element of this proposal is to create an additional bedroom to accommodate the client's family requirements. We have tested multiple design iterations to produce a scheme which works both from functional and aesthetic perspectives. The concept we have finalised is the best adaptation as it provides a similar form to the former school.

Preservation

The proposal aims to preserve the original building, by keeping all alterations towards the rear of the property which has previously been altered in 2008. It is our view that the front elevation holds the highest heritage asset of the property and thus will not be altered as part of this development as it is key to the overall aesthetic of the conservation area, as viewed from the Green. The development will not overreach past the furthest point of the original building, thereby not affecting the views or light for the neighbours. The materials used in the development will be of similar finishes to the original development. The ground and first floor rear windows will be retained and reused to keep the character of the building.

Access & Layout

The existing access to the site will remain as the development is focused on the rear of the house.

The existing left side contains a small walkway which serves no importance to the function of the house. All shared access routes are unaffected by this proposal. The side of the property will be partially filled with the ground floor wrap around extension. Access into this space can still be made from the front of the property. The layout of the house's footprint will slightly increase from a plan perspective but has been designed to keep within the client's site boundary.

Scale & Appearance

The scale of the proposal has been designed to be respectful of the original buildings form and neighbouring properties. The extension will not over sail the property line of the original house or pass the corner of the adjoining 31 Whitelow Road. The heights of the extensions will be under the ridge height of the original roof. The proposed appearance will also adopt the colour palette of the existing finishes found on the building. This includes timber, glazing, and brick. We believe the successful architecture of the 2008 proposal should be highlighted and continued to the new development. This will allow for a modern adaptation of the property, within a well-established, varying aesthetic of the architecture in Chorlton. This will keep the proposal contextually driven and not change the character of the conservation area.

For further information, please refer the planning drawings.