

ARCHITECT'S DESCRIPTION

December 2022

RE: Development consisting of: (i) Alterations and associated repairs to the existing two storey corner extension to the rear, (north-east), of the house, including the provision of a new flat roof with a roof-light, (ii) Proposed new two storey flat roofed extension with roof-light(s) to the rear (south-east) with associated alterations to the existing building & development as approved under **Planning Application Ref. No. SD21B/0530**, (iii) Proposed new site entrance, (piers, vehicular and pedestrian gates) from the back (east), of the property, onto Laurel Park, (iv) Proposed solar panels, (v) New garden wall with associated gates, (vi) All ancillary site works above and below ground at **Oak Lodge, New Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, D22 F516**. The property is a **Protected Structure, RPS No. 156**.

The proposed works for which planning permission is now sought can be summarised as follows:

- (i) Alterations and associated repairs to the two storey corner extension to the rear, including the provision of a new flat roof with a roof-light.
- (ii) Proposed new two storey flat roofed extension with roof-light(s) to the back (East) with associated alterations to the existing building and development as approved under **Planning Application Ref. No. SD21B/0530**, Proposed new site entrance, (piers, vehicular and pedestrian gates) to the east, (back), of the property.
- (iii) Proposed new site entrance, (piers, vehicular and pedestrian gates) to the east, (back), of the property,
- (iv) Proposed solar panels,
- (v) New garden wall with associated gates,
- (vi) All ancillary site works above and below ground

Works in relation to Planning Application Ref. No.: SD21B/0530 are on site and our clients hope to have enough work done to facilitate their moving into the house soon, possibly Spring 2023. The budget is limited so it is likely that the proposed work will be done gradually over time.

NOTE: The enclosed ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT (AHA): it is intended that this document be read as an extension of the original Architectural Heritage Assessment by ARC Consultants submitted with Planning Application Ref. No.: SD21B/0530 last year, a copy of which is enclosed. As a continuation of the earlier document the new AHA does not repeat the description of the existing house.

PROPOSED EXTENSION AND ALTERATIONS:

The existing rooms are smaller than one might expect in a modern house of this scale and floor to ceiling heights in half the basement (2.2m) are lower than recommended. The proposed extension is to include accommodation that typically associated with modern day living to make a more comfortable home with en-suite, utility room, guest bathroom at the same level as the living rooms and a home office, all of which are features that one expects to find in a house today.

In the interest of respecting the original plan layout and minimizing changes to the original part of the house it is proposed to put the additional accommodation which is largely comprised of service accommodation in a modern extension to keep the original building intact while avoiding a pastiche solution.

The best use for this property is that of an owner-occupied family home as this use is in keeping with the building's original purpose and is one that generally ensures the building is kept in a good state of repair, budget permitting. It is widely accepted that old houses will need additional accommodation such as that proposed for Oak Lodge if they are to continue being used as family homes. The alternative is that older houses and their lands will be developed as apartments/housing schemes or for commercial/office use, all of which tend to have a significant impact on the overall architectural heritage character of a property.

PROPOSED FLAT ROOF AND EXTENSION HEIGHT:

The enclosed sections, (Drawing No. 21-04-PP2-04) show the first floor of the existing extension is lower than that of the adjacent room. The existing steps down to it are very steep and uncomfortable to use; easy to fall down. The small first floor room in the existing extension is shallow in depth which increases the perceived impact of the reduced ceiling height on the window (east) side of the room.

Permission was granted under Planning Application Ref. No.: SD21B/0530 to raise the floor level of the existing extension room to match that of the back of the original part of the house. Reference to the photographs below and the existing section drawing shows that once the floor is raised the floor to ceiling height in the room will range from 1.7m-2m at best particularly as if the ceiling is retained it is likely to need additional support and ideally some breathable insulation to line the slope of the ceiling.



Raising the floor level to match that of the adjacent hall is important in the interest of safety and the overall feeling of continuity between the existing and proposed hall extension. The current arrangement of accessing the existing first floor extension room through the original (north-east) room is uncomfortable and particularly inappropriate for a bathroom. Making a new doorway in the south wall of the existing extension makes the room accessible from the hall and facilitates the reinstatement of the original floor plan in the north-east reception room.

The proposed provision of a bathroom to the upper ground floor, the floor associated with day to day living and family social events facilitates keeping the social areas of the house separate from the sleeping/private basement area of this family home.

By making all of the accommodation at first floor to the back of the house at one level the house is more user friendly to people who may be unsteady on their feet, have sight issues or simply unfamiliar with the house and in this regard the house already has a lot of steps and stairs so the avoidance of more steps is a welcome help in this regard, particularly when it comes to allowing those who might need assistance with stairs some independence (dignity) when in the back part of the upper floor.

Opening up works suggest that an original window opening in the east side of the north-east reception room was altered to form the connecting doorway when the existing extension was built and that the window was used as the window in the east elevation of the existing extension. It is proposed as part of the works to move this window back to what is thought to be its original position in the east façade of the reception room to the north-east. Privacy between the reception room and bathroom can be achieved by placing a studwork partition to one side of the window, a reversible change, the space behind the mirror could be backlit and possibly mirrored.

In considering the design of the proposed extension the possibility of stepping down into the existing extension from the proposed new hall was considered but building regulation requirements in relation to steps at doorways, the existing room size and potential for slips and trips makes this an inappropriate solution. Also considered was a step between the new and existing hallways but again the risk of trips, resulting low ceiling in the basement entrance and feeling of disconnection between the new and old is not desirable. It should be noted that on a day-to-day basis the basement entrance will be used as the main entrance to the house because the original front steps, although attractive, are very steep and as a result are uncomfortable and do not suit day to day bringing shopping and the likes in and out of the house.

The proposed stepped arrangement of the roof to avoid interference with the original eaves of the main part of the house means accepting a low ceiling height at first floor level in the proposed extension albeit for part of the rooms. The original part of the house, even at first floor level is quite dull owing to the existing window sizes and orientation, the single exception being the bay window in the south-west room. The proposed floor to ceiling heights on the east side of the extension coupled with the provision of a

proposed roof light over the new extension hall and bathroom will enhance daylight levels in the upper floor halls (new and existing) and bathroom while also compensating for the acceptance of the lower ceiling level on the west side of these spaces. The proposed windows provide attractive views of the garden to the south, yard and outbuilding adding to the overall quality and enjoyment of the house.

Reference to the proposed extension sections show how it is proposed to step the roof around the existing eaves of the original building in a manner that allows for maintenance. It is proposed that the floor to ceiling height in the proposed home office/study and bathroom ranges from circa 2.2m to 2.4m and from 2.2m to 2.68m in the extension to the hall, the existing adjacent hall being 2.68m tall. The proposed parapets are lower than was proposed in the previous planning application. Flat roofs are proposed in the interest of height, minimal impact on the building fabric of the original part of the house. The proposed parapet coping pieces provide a neat trim and although a new intervention to this house this is a modern interpretation of a parapet, a feature in keeping with the tradition of houses of a similar period.

PROPOSED WORKS TO THE EXISTING CORNER EXTENSION & IMPACTS ON ORIGINAL BUILDING FABRIC

The existing corner extension is unstable; it was not well built and is not properly tied into the main part of the house. The engineer has advised that adding weight to the top of the walls in the form of blockwork would be beneficial in terms of stabilizing this fragile structure. The existing extension roof is in poor condition and if retained is likely to need renewal meaning replacement/reinstatement. The roof leaks along the parapet to the north. The photographs below show that the top of the existing extension roof is immediately below the soffit of the main roof, the maximum possible height in this style of extension without cutting into the original roof or stepping around it.



Right: Relationship between the corner extension roof and the eaves to the main house and Left, the similar relationship between the central extension asbestos roof and the main eaves.

It is proposed to keep repairs to the existing extension walls to a minimum, limiting works to the retention of the existing walls with minor alterations shown on the enclosed drawings. Should remaking of a wall or section of wall be necessary it is proposed to use materials that match like for like with the existing, meaning brick walls, lime mortar and plaster. Careful propping if required will be to the engineer's recommendation and specification during the construction period.

As stated in the section on the proposed flat roof and extension above:

- The existing extension first floor room is very compromised in terms of the floor to ceiling levels and replacement of the existing roof with a flat roof would address this issue while avoiding disturbance of the eaves and roof over the original part of the house.
- It is proposed to relocate the window in the existing extension's east elevation to what is believed to be its original location in the east of the adjacent original principal room which will reinstate the original plan form and character of the room.

Photographs below show the existing basement window to the north of the corner extension is a later adaptation of a doorway. The window itself is simply a makeshift glazed screen fixed into position. It is proposed to fit a new window with a thermally broken metal frame to match the new screen previously approved under Planning Application Ref. No.: SD21B/0530.



PROPOSED NEW SITE ENTRANCE TO THE BACK (EAST)

It is proposed to keep the existing site entrance in the interest of the property's historical setting and layout. However, the existing gate arrangement has very limited sight lines making it a dangerous blind exit immediately beside a busy pedestrian crossing beside a school.

To address this problem a new (second) site entrance is proposed onto Laurel Park on the east side of the site in the interest of safety. New vehicular and pedestrian gates are proposed as shown on the proposed drawings. This new arrangement will facilitate not just safer access for the applicant's family and friends but also for bin collection and the like. It is proposed that the new gates and associated pillars blend in with the height of the existing wall onto Laurel Lodge while also protecting the privacy and security of the property.

Constructing the proposed new entrance means making an opening in the modern blockwork wall onto Laurel Park and a low brickwork wall in poor condition on the house (west) side of the boundary, see photograph below. If the brickwork that is removed to form the new opening is in good enough condition it may be possible to use it to increase the height of the brickwork on either side of the new opening which would enhance the appearance of this boundary treatment when seen from inside the property. Photographs showing the existing boundary as seen from Laurel Park are included in the enclosed Architectural Heritage Assessment document.



At this stage of the project, the budget for the new gates is unknown and this is something that affects the design of the selected gates. As a result, it may be some time before the final design of, or gate selection is decided as other works to the property will take priority. The clients have expressed a preference for metal gates with a protective painted coating in a colour to later selection.

It is proposed that the design of the entrance gates is detail that could be subject to later agreement. In the meantime, it is respectfully requested that permission be granted for the new site entrance as proposed which includes overall gate dimensions.

PROPOSED GARDEN WALL:

The garden and property at present suffer from a feeling of exposure and general lack of privacy at the front of the house. This feeling is compounded as the property is on a busy bus route with frequent double decker busses passing the house. This visual exposure also raises security concerns.

It is proposed to create a more private space with an enhanced feeling of safety and security by building a new garden wall between the front and south (main private) garden space. It is proposed that the new wall will follow a line from the south western corner of the house to the southern boundary wall, starting on the garden (south) side of the retaining wall to the basement perimeter path. This position means that the proposed wall can be constructed without touching original building fabric.

It is proposed that the new wall includes a gateway to allow for ease of access around the house and bringing maintenance/gardening equipment through to the proposed enclosed side south garden. The existing change in level between the yard on the east side of the house and garden on the south side together with the width of the gate in the from the yard makes access for equipment, e.g. a drive-on lawnmower, only possible from the south western side.

It is proposed to fit the basement perimeter path with a gate and side screen connected to the new wall in the interest of privacy and security. This is a minor, reversible change proposed in the interest of making the property more secure.

The design of the gates is to later detail as it may be sometime before a budget for these gates becomes available. They are reversible features that can easily be added or changed overtime as funds become available. It is proposed that the garden wall be blockwork, rendered, capped and painted to blend in with the house.

It is proposed to line the proposed garden wall with hedging and/or planting which will in time obscure the proposed wall from view. The proposed wall will have slight to negligible impact on the overall appearance of the protected structure.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND PROPOSED SOLAR PANELS:

The need for energy efficiency in the interest of both the planet and assisting with the running costs of all buildings is becoming more and more apparent and is now an urgent matter. The proposed extension will also help with running costs by creating an insulating effect on the east side of the building, acting like a large double height porch. In addition to this effect it is proposed to fit a thirty-tube system of solar panels to the south facing section of roof facing into the valley. The proposed system will have an overall area of approximately two square metres and will be mounted on small steel brackets that raise the panels approximately 100mm above the line of the slates. The fact that the panels sit slightly above the line of the roof maintains airflow over the slates. The installation will involve the use of six number 10mm bolts to fit the unit to the roof and the removal of one slate to allow for bringing pipes out through the roof. Should additional support be needed under the solar panels it is likely to involve the insertion of some bracing between a limited number of existing joists subject to the engineer's specification and approval. The proposed solar panels will not be visible from outside the roof valley making their visual impact on the building as a whole minimal to negligible.

DRAINAGE:

The proposed drainage layout was approved under Planning Application Ref. No.: SD21B/0530 under which it was and is proposed to keep foul and surface water separate. The soak-away is designed to take the surface water from the proposed extension and is in-situ. Where applicable new ground surfaces will be permeable. Please refer to the enclosed Site Layout Plan.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed extension provides important ancillary accommodation to the house bringing it in line with the expectations of modern day living with minimal impact on the original house layout, retaining its character while generally improving comfort levels. On completion of the works the building will have been transformed from a property in a state of serious disrepair to a comfortable family home in good condition with modern conveniences and minimal changes to the layout of the original part of the house, period features retained for future generations, an important conservation gain.