

Design and Access Statement - 2 Church Walk, Millom, LA18 5BZ

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1. Introduction

This design and access statement is submitted as part of a householder planning application to add 3-storey side and rear extensions, a 2-storey rear extension, raise the roof height and provide a rear-facing terrace at 2 Church Walk, Millom.

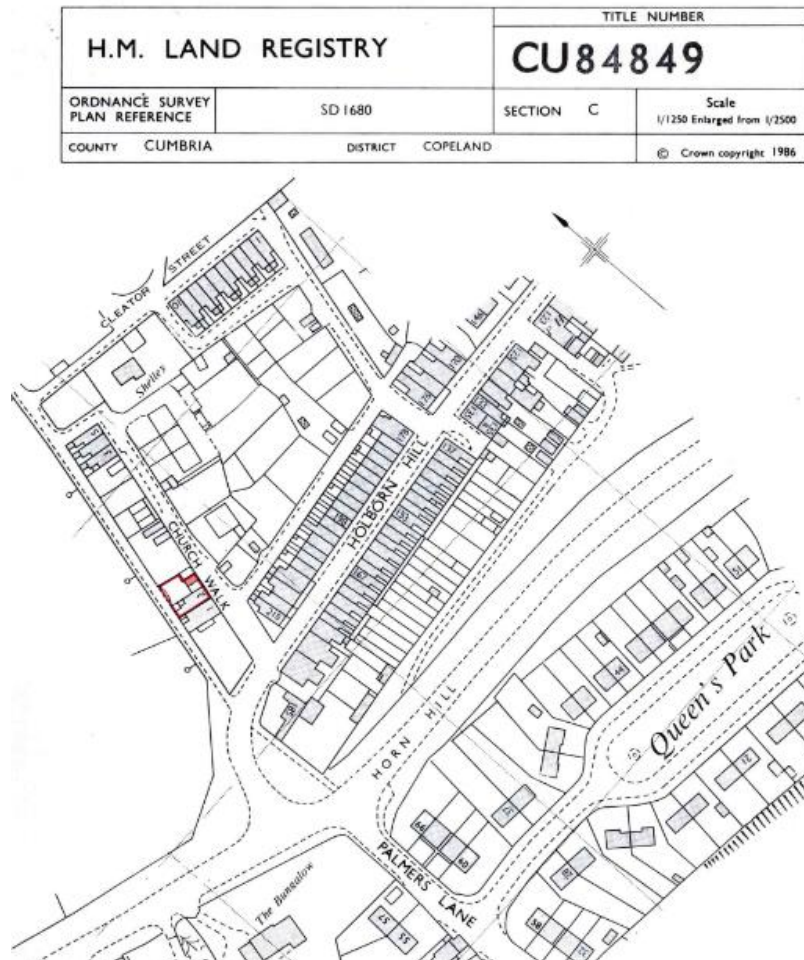
The aim of this Design and Access Statement is to demonstrate the following:

- The principle of the development is acceptable, and clearly takes into consideration planning policies relevant to the site.
- The proposal will have a positive impact on the street scene and its local context.
- That the proposal practically meets the needs of inhabitants.

The property, comprising a 3-storey house and 2 adjoining garages, is owned by the applicant Marc Almond. Marc and his family are moving from Manchester to Millom and this property will be the permanent family home.

2.0 Site Context

2.1 Location



2.2 Existing site

The 175 sqm. site at 2 Church Walk is located adjacent to and within the Millom town boundary. It lies on the western edge of the Holborn Hill residential area.

The site slopes down from front to rear by 1.15m and is occupied by a 3-storey house with offshot single-storey kitchen/bathroom plus 2 garages, see Figs 1a and 1b. The front door of the house and the garage entrances open directly onto Church Walk.

The dwelling is of masonry construction with a pebbledash finish, pitched tiled roof and PVCU doors and windows. The house is in need of total modernisation and upgrading to current building standards.



The exposed chimney stacks, front return wall and disused external fireplace suggest that there was previously an additional structure on this site and this is supported by the 38.7sqm of concrete hardstanding at the rear of the site. A garden area of 33.6 sqm occupies the remainder of the site.

The rear gate provides access to the public path running along the rear of the properties.

The property does not lie within a conservation area and is not listed. It is not close to any listed or locally listed buildings.



Figures 1a and 1b: Dwelling on application site

2.3 The Western Gateway

The local neighbourhood, seen in Fig 2, is described in *Spatial Framework: A Vision for Millom, Aug 2018*

“Housing on Holborn Hill predates the development of the town of Millom and this street retains a distinctive, tight-knit historic form. The A5093 forms the main approach into the town. The junction with Holborn Hill currently presents a poor-quality gateway into the town, with visually exposed backs of buildings and dilapidated garages.”



Figure 2: Aerial view

Approaching this gateway into town, the rear of the 3-storey buildings on Church Walk are prominent, see Fig 3.



Figure 3: View from A5093

2.4 Layout

Looking Eastwards from Church Walk the land rises between the two roads of Holborn Hill and Pannatt Hill and is used as garden space, allotments and garages. The piecemeal pattern of local development is evidenced by the variety of house ages and styles, see Fig 4. The oldest houses (green and yellow blocks in the diagram) are

- the terraces along Holborn Hill
- the adjoining 3-storey houses (Nos 1 and 2) at the southern end of Church Walk
- the row of 2-storey terraced houses at the northern end of Church Walk
- the row of 2-storey terraced houses at Cleator St



Figure 4: Piecemeal pattern of development

More recent structures are the bungalows and detached houses (not colour-coded). There are also some 20 lock-up garages (the red blocks) within 100m of the site.

By highlighting the 3-storey units, it can be seen that they have been used to bookend the terraces. At the foot of Holborn Hill, on the North side, there is an apparent discrepancy to this layout as the last 2 units are 2-storey. However, there is no discrepancy as these 2 units were in fact late additions to the 3-storey bookends.

2.5 Character of housing

Neighbouring mid-20th Century infill development is hugely varied in style, diluting any uniformity in the neighbourhood. Church Walk includes terraced, detached and semi-detached properties in addition to 11 lock-up garages. There is no sense of a consistent architectural character to the street, as evidenced by the following photos. Examples are shown in figs 5 to 8.



Figure 6: No.1 Church Walk



Figure 5: House on Church Walk



Figure 7: Houses on Church Walk



Figure 8: Character of houses on Church Walk

In contrast, a consistency of architectural style is found in the adjacent Holborn Hill, see Figs 9 and 10.



Figure 9: Holborn Hill, north side



Figure 10: Holborn Hill, south side

3.0 Planning

3.1 Planning History

There is no record of a previous planning application at this site.

3.2 Planning Policy Documents

Various planning policy documents were studied.

Copeland Vision 2040 includes a Future Homes statement:

“An improved mix of housing models and new innovative build types will help the borough adapt to changing aspirations and needs across all demographics, particularly those of young families, an increasing cohort of young entrepreneurs and students, as well as our growing senior population.

We will raise the standards in the quality of design in our new homes and neighbourhoods, delivering zero carbon homes and providing a test bed for new design techniques and modular construction.

Copeland will have a mix of aspirational high quality homes with enhancements to overall housing stock to sustain existing communities, and to attract and retain the skilled workforce that will support our future economy.”

CLEP 2020 Annual Report identifies that a better and greater variety of housing is one of the keys to attracting people into Cumbria.

SHMA 2021 identifies

- that the focus for new market housing over the plan period should be 2-3 bed properties.
- a need for more specialised types of housing such as executive homes and key worker and student accommodation.

3.3 Pre-Application Feedback

Following submission of the pre-application form, the planning officer emailed the following concerns with regard to the original design:

- the proposal would overdevelop the site and exceed Policy DM18 criteria D requirements.
- the proposed first-floor rear terrace allowed overlooking and loss of privacy for the neighbouring properties
- the proposed scale and design did not respect the existing property

In response, the project was redesigned to address these issues:

Overdevelopment

Responding to the overdevelopment item, the large workshop area has been greatly reduced.

Item D of Policy DM18 allows extensions where it does not result in a loss of 50% or more of the undeveloped curtilage of the parent property. The current area of undeveloped curtilage is 33.6 sqm and the garden area following the proposed works will be 39sqm. Accordingly, there is compliance with Item D.

To conclude, there is no overdevelopment of the site.

Overlooking

The measures taken to remove any overlooking and eliminate any loss of privacy for the neighbouring properties comprise:

- A reduction in size of the first-floor terrace and its relocation away from the neighbouring property
- A vertical timber partition that shields the side of the reduced first floor pergola terrace
- The side window on the first-floor rear projection has been removed

Scale and Design

The concerns regarding the scale and design are addressed under the Design heading below.

4.0 Design

4.1 Constraints and Opportunities

The major physical constraints for the site are:

- The sloping ground, a difference of 1.15m from front to rear
- The need to support the adjoining 3-storey house during and after the development
- The third party ownership of the garage on the corner of the site
- The proximity of the adjacent bungalow

The major opportunities for the development are:

- To improve the external appearance of the dwelling
- To introduce some architectural rhythm to the street
- To increase the number of bedrooms from 2 to 3
- To take advantage of the stunning views of the National Park

4.2 Design Proposal

The original split-level layout to accommodate the sloping site has been replaced by a proposal to raise the rear garden level to the same level as the neighbours gardens.

At ground level, there are two ensuite bedrooms, a systems room, workshop and storage. On the first floor, there is an open-plan kitchen/dining space, utility room and a home office. On the second floor, there is a 3rd en-suite bedroom plus the living room. Parking for one vehicle is provided by the integral garage and there is on-street parking also available.

At first-floor level a pergola terrace overlooks the open countryside to the rear of the dwelling. A rear garden provides amenity plus space for storage of the refuse bins.

4.3 Extent

The existing general internal area (GIA) is 135 sqm:

- Ground Floor 69sqm
- 1st Floor 33
- 2nd Floor 33

The proposed GIA is 213 sqm:

- Ground Floor 89 sqm
- 1st Floor 63
- 2nd Floor 61

4.4 Design Concept

It was noted earlier that the 3-storey bookended terraces of Holborn Hill, see Fig 11, are an important architectural feature of this historic neighbourhood.



Figure 11: Bookended terrace

Fortuitously, the site is in a location that can reinforce this bookend feature. The site is adjacent to an existing 3-storey house and located towards the end of a row of properties that have the potential for redevelopment, see Fig 12. Planning permission was granted in 2014 for a 4-bedroomed house to replace the garages north of the application site.



Figure 12: Location at end of terrace

4.5 Scale

There is the potential to introduce some regularity to the architectural styling of this street by duplicating the mass of the existing original building at No 1. This duplication includes the dual-pitched roof over a street-facing gable and the offshot tower to the rear.

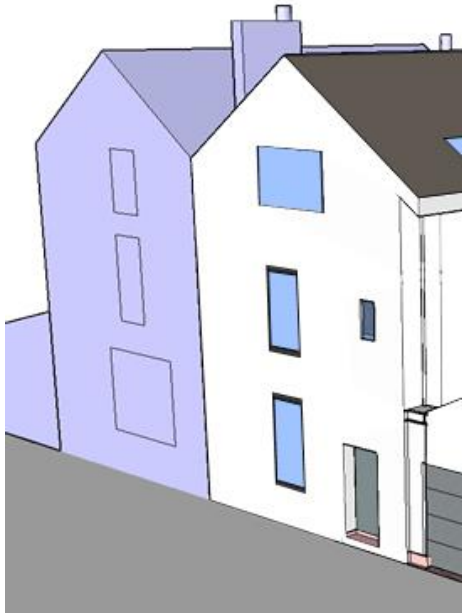


Figure 14: Dual-pitched roof

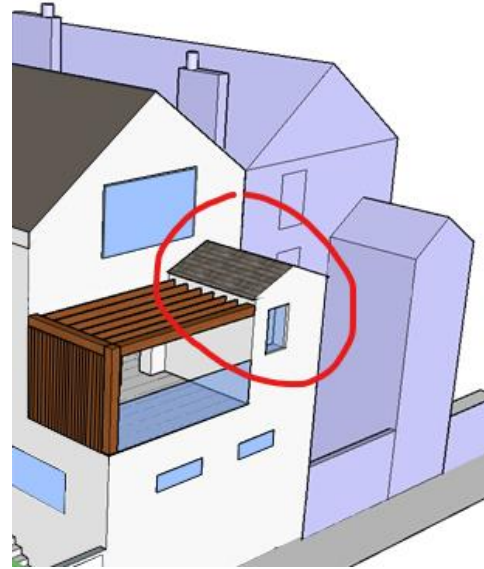


Figure 13: Offshot tower

This proposed massing has a similar impact to that of existing nearby 3-storey bookends, as seen in Fig 11. The building lines at the front and rear have been respected and the raised roof, an increase of just 0.62m, is no higher than the roof of No 1.

Although it could be more cost-effective to demolish the existing house and start afresh, sustainable construction policy recommends the retention of existing structures as far as possible. Accordingly, the main house structure is retained with the exception of the roof structure and roof cladding.

The width of the side extension is dictated by the necessary width for a new enclosed stairwell for the 3-storey house plus the width of an integral garage, see Fig 15.

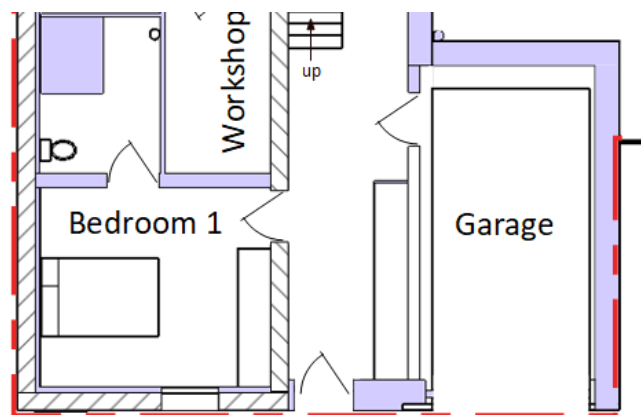


Figure 15: Width of side extension

The scale of the development is sympathetic to the area and to the needs of the neighbours.

4.6 Response to pre-application concerns raised

The pre-application feedback stated concern that the scale did not respect the existing property. This is disputed as, in determining the scale of the extension, consideration was given to the existing property, to the immediate neighbouring properties and to the immediate neighbourhood. All 3 of these factors were considered against each other in order to arrive at the most appropriately scaled solution.

The existing property is semi-detached and, mindful of the general aesthetic requirement to optimise the balance of two adjacent properties, the application property was scaled upwards (by less than a metre) to form a balanced pair of houses. The existence of pairs of 3-storey bookends in the immediate area gives relevance and authority to this decision.

The twinning of the two houses required a 90-degree rotation of the roof ridge. This was justified by considering the alternative, which was to have a 3-storey gable-end overlooking the single-storey bungalow, creating an abrupt transition of scale. The introduction of a dual-pitched roof on the single-storey garage softens the transition down to a 2-storey level.

The pitch of the main roof slope matches the pitch of the neighbouring roof pitch and the width of the frontage accommodates the staircase enclosure required for the 3-storey house.

The pre-application feedback stated concern that the design did not respect the existing property. Further detail was requested but to date no response has been received. It was deduced that the concern referred to the colour of the roof tiles, the modern treatment of the first floor windows on the frontage and the removal of the garden space; these aspects of the original design have now been corrected.

Otherwise, it is considered the design gives considerable respect to the existing property. It is still recognisable as a 3-storey family house with integral garage, fronting directly onto the road, and retaining the offshot feature to the rear. The extensions improve the family use and the expansion of the rear outlook respects the opportunity presented by the location of the property. The existing brick walls are retained to reflect its history and the ugly northern elevation with dominant grey chimney stacks is transformed.

The design not only respects the existing property, it respects its immediate location and the architecture of the locality. There is a compromise among these three aspects and this situation is typical in that one aspect takes the lead and the others follow. In this case the architectural merit of the existing property is not as strong as the requirement for a balanced pair of semi-detached houses or the need to provide a transition between the 3-storey and single-storey neighbouring properties or the opportunity to embrace the bookend feature typical of the area.

Once the design decision was made to mirror the adjacent property and to rotate the main ridge by 90 degrees, the direction of the design flow was set. Subsidiary design decisions were then made that respected the character of the original building as much as possible. The existing front windows were retained and, combined with the new 2nd storey window, formed an asymmetric layout that matched the neighbouring asymmetric window layout. Characteristics that were not retained were considered to be of low or even negative architectural value.

The proposal is considered to incorporate good design, as required by the NPPF.

4.6 Layout

Consideration was given whether the erection of a 3-storey structure would cause unacceptable blocking of views toward the open countryside. Looking at the map in Fig 16, it can be seen that there is no house directly behind the site.

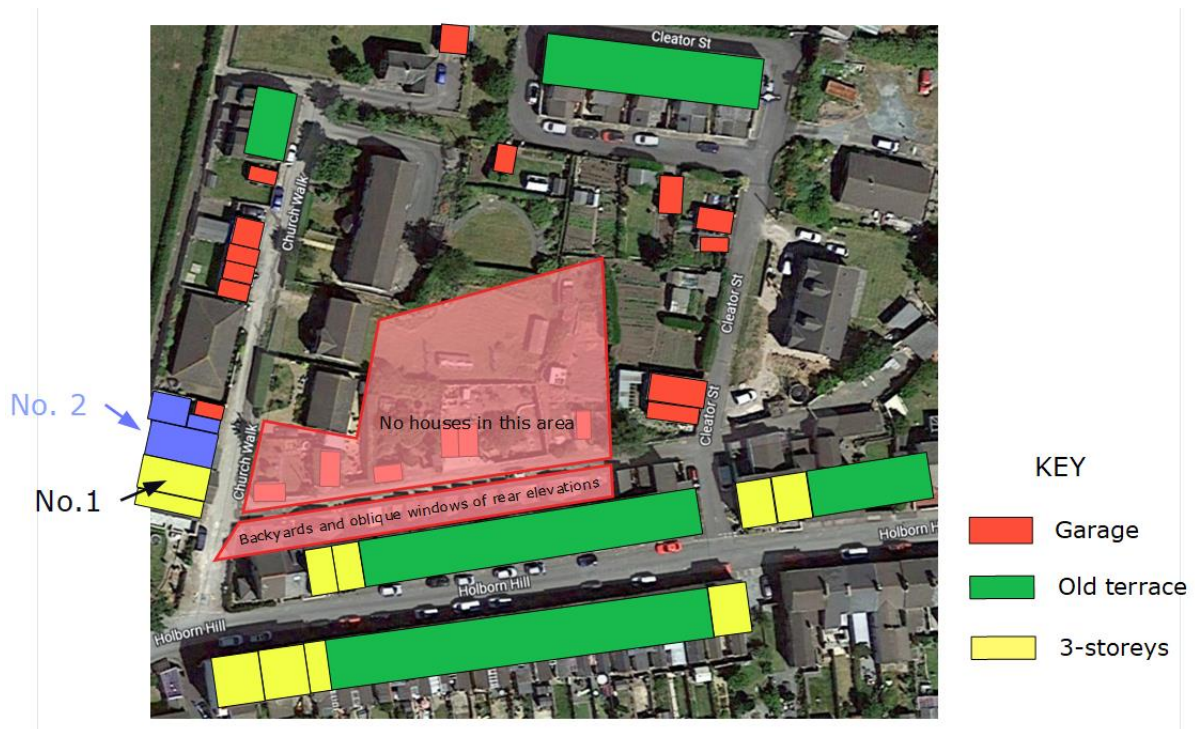


Figure 16: No houses to the East

The bungalow to the east of the site does not directly face the proposed development. Further east of the site for a distance of some **100m**, there are only garages and allotments.

To the South East of the site, the rear elevations of the houses on Holborn Hill have few windows of habitable rooms and these are oriented obliquely to the site, see Fig 17.



Figure 17: Oblique orientation of windows

4.7 Sunlight and daylight

Consideration was given to the impact on available sunlight and daylight to the neighbouring bungalow, see Fig 18. There are two rooms on the side elevation of the bungalow facing this site, a front bedroom and a rear lounge.



Figure 18: Neighbouring bungalow

The front bedroom receives daylight through a single window on the side elevation, located within a 1.2m deep recess. The BRE test using the vertical 25 degree angle suggests that daylight is impacted if a development is erected directly in front of a window and breaks through a nominal 25 degree line. The bungalow roof overshadows this window at an angle of 24 degrees and it is therefore considered that the development will not cause a noticeable reduction of daylight.

The rear lounge receives daylight through French windows on the side elevation and two large windows on the rear elevation.



Figure 19: French windows of neighbouring bungalow

Applying the 25-degree test to the French windows from the vertical centre of the glazing, the test succeeds.

The BRE tests are only guidelines for common scenarios. The availability of daylight and sunlight is to be assessed primarily by the actual layout of a development within its setting. An important factor is whether there are alternative sources of light on other elevations. In this case, the prime sources of daylight for the living room are the two large rear-facing windows that are only blocked by the neighbours own shrubbery.

4.8 Overlooking

The only windows on the side elevation facing the neighbour are the rooflights in the main roof, the first floor toilet window which will have opaque glazing and the ground floor bedroom window.

None of these windows result in any overlooking.

4.11 Appearance

The adjoining 3-storey property has white rendered walls, contrasting black framed windows and a pitched roof.

The application property has pebbledash render on the front, which is unappealing and long past its 30-year life. Similarly with the grey render coat on the north elevation. From a structural viewpoint and to rectify rainwater ingress, it is recommended that the existing render is replaced.

To match the adjoining structure, the main structure will be white-rendered and windows will be slimline grey UPVC, with black sills and headers, matching the adjacent property. The garage and front doors will be finished in a matt black. The original grey concrete interlocking roof tiles will be replaced by a modern equivalent.

4.12 Highways and Parking

The site is located on a private road that has the capacity to support on-street parking. The proposals include the provision of an integral garage.

5.0 Access

Access arrangements will remain largely as existing, with the front door and garage opening directly onto the street and a rear gate giving access to the rear footpath.

6.0 Flood Risk Assessment

The site is in an area that is classed as a flood zone 1 and therefore is in an area that has a low probability of flooding.

7.0 Sustainability

The proposed extensions will incorporate sustainable techniques wherever possible, thereby reducing CO2 emissions and thus supporting Strategic Policy DS2PU. A fabric first approach is adopted, ensuring the correct materials are selected to maximise the efficiency of the thermal envelope. Combined with minimal thermal bridging and maximum air tightness of the dwelling, this results in a house that requires minimal supplementary heating. The extension walls and roof are

cellulose-insulated timber panels and the use of timber for the entire superstructure ensures the development will be net zero carbon.

Other sustainable techniques to be implemented include:

- Insulated concrete slab foundation, encasing underfloor heating pipes
- Triple glazing
- Composite external doors construction
- Ventilation Heat Recovery system
- Low energy LED lighting
- Photo-voltaic panels on the south-facing roof slope

9.0 Conclusion

On balance, it is considered that the extension would be in accordance with the aims and objectives of both the adopted Copeland Local Plan and the NPPF.