

# Design & Access Statement

**24 Downs Hill  
Beckenham  
BR3 5HB**



## **Revised Scheme (April 2017)**

***Demolition of the existing two-storey building and redevelopment to construct a two-storey, residential dwellinghouse, with second-floor accommodation in the roof; to contain six bedrooms, two reception rooms and guest room, with associated refuse storage, secure bicycle store, existing front and rear gardens, amenity space and off-street parking spaces***

Planning Portal Reference: PP-05845110

Date of Re-submission: 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017

# 1.0 Executive Summary

**1.1** This Design and Access statement is to be read in conjunction with the revised planning application which has been submitted by Indigo Blue Works Ltd on behalf of William and Nicola Bloomer, who are the freehold owners of the above-mentioned property.

**1.2** This Design and Access statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Bloomer, to support the revised planning application submitted on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017 (LB Bromley planning reference DC/17/00812/FULL1) for the proposed demolition of the existing two-storey building and redevelopment to construct a two-storey residential dwellinghouse, with second-floor accommodation in the roof space; to contain six bedrooms, two reception rooms and guest room, with associated refuse storage, secure bicycle store, existing front and rear gardens, amenity space and off-street parking spaces.

**1.3** The revised proposal reduces the scale of the original application by reducing the footprint of the new house, and removing the previously proposed basement. The smaller footprint of the revised proposal means that it will not be possible to reuse the foundations or walls of the existing buildings. However, it will still be possible to recycle much of the existing building onsite during the redevelopment.

**1.4** The redeveloped dwellinghouse now proposed will be drawn in still further at the sides (compared to the original application) to create a significant separation gap of 4.1m at the northern boundary with 26 Downs Hill and 1.1m from the southern boundary, 3.3m between houses. The proposed new house will now sit very separately and distinctly in its own plot (the existing building runs the full width of the plot, including a side extension to the north and garage to the south).

**1.5** Mr and Mrs Bloomer bought the property in late autumn 2016 with the express intention of remodelling it as a permanent home for their own young family. The revised application creates a more sustainable, modern home that will provide much improved and more flexible accommodation and will make a far greater contribution to the Downs Hill Conservation Area than the existing building does.

**1.6** The revised proposal, including the design element of the development, is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), regional planning policies in the form of the London Plan and the London Borough of Bromley's local planning policies and documents, as set out in this Design and Access Statement. The applicants also feel that the smaller scale of the revised proposal now responds even better to the pre-application feedback and advice received in February 2017.

**1.7** The revised proposal no longer includes an excavated basement level.

**1.8** Following helpful pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the revised design has been further modified to better blend with its surroundings and immediate neighbours and makes an improved contribution to the heritage asset of the conservation area. The design now steps back a substantial 4.1m at the northern side to create a very clear separation gap at the boundary with 26 Downs Hill.

**1.9** The new design also creates an interesting roofscape echoing the deep pitched roof form found next door at number 26. The second-floor master bedroom suite is located comfortably within this roof space with windows in the high gables and roof-lights to the front and to the rear as is common throughout the area. The three houses to either side of 24 Downs Hill (numbers 26, 28 and 30 to the north and 20, 18 and 16 to the south) all contain part second-floor accommodation in their roof spaces. The ridge height of the

gable peaks of the revised building will be the same as those of its northern neighbours at 26 and 28 Downs Hill. The revised new house has also been designed to create ample space where it meets its neighbours either side giving them 'room to breathe', in marked contrast to the existing building at the site.

**1.10** Much of the existing building will be recycled onsite and reused in the construction of the new house. The proposals still introduce many environmentally-friendly and energy-saving features, to enable the new house to make a very positive contribution to the Council's sustainability aspirations.

**1.11** It is acknowledged by the pre-application advice, that the existing house (built in 1951) does not contribute to the conservation area and that its replacement maybe worthwhile. By following the advice, the applicants have sought to create a modern house, with flexible accommodation, in a contemporary, but complementary design that can provide quality family living and make a positive contribution to the local built and natural environment.

**1.12** The applicants have been in discussions with their neighbours at both 20 and 26 Downs Hill regarding the redevelopment proposals. The owners at number 20 had some misgivings about both the proximity of the original proposals and the basement excavations. In responding to those concerns the applicants have revised the new redevelopment still further to 'flip' the plan layout and move the new house further away from the existing house at 20 Downs Hill as well as removing the proposed basement element completely. Although all the houses in the area are unique buildings, the proposed new rear elevation does not extend beyond the neighbouring building lines and there will be no issues of overlooking in either direction, or of daylight/sunlight shadowing.

## **2.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this statement is to explain the design and land use context of the revised proposal and to then deliver an impact assessment of these under a brief examination of applicable planning policy in light of the received pre-application advice.

### **2.1 A redesigned and redeveloped home**

**2.1.1** After initial thought and design work to create the perfect home for the Bloomer family, the applicants submitted a pre-application enquiry in late 2016. Following dialogue and internal consultation, feedback and advice was received from the LPA in early February 2017. Initial thoughts on that advice led to the original planning application registered on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017, however, further reflections on the scale of the proposals and discussions with the neighbours on either side have led to revised proposals and these amendments to the application.

**2.1.2** Planning permission is now sought for the revised redevelopment of 24 Downs Hill to include the demolition of the existing two-storey building and redevelopment to construct a two-storey, residential dwellinghouse, with second-floor accommodation in the roof space; to contain six bedrooms, two reception rooms and guest room, with associated refuse storage, secure bicycle store, existing front and rear gardens, amenity space and off-street parking spaces.

**2.1.2** The revised proposals are no longer based on the existing foundations and do not reuse the external structure of the existing house. Instead, the proposed redevelopment will now create a completely new home and building. The proposed accommodation will range over the ground and first floors as present, extended rearwards on both floors, with the addition of a master bedroom suite in the roof space. The revised application no longer has a basement to the rear. The submitted plan drawing and front and rear elevational drawings (drawing number 2720-rev1) show the building now proposed with the existing house, superimposed in red, to show the comparison of footprint, height and scale.

**2.1.3** The proposed redevelopment will maintain the same amenity space in both front and rear gardens, and now with comfortable side access between the proposed new house and both the north and south boundaries. To the rear, an external balconied terrace at ground-floor level will replace the existing external ground-floor terrace area. All existing trees, shrubberies, screens and boundary treatments will be maintained.

**2.1.4** Secure bicycle storage and refuse and recycling storage is provided within the development and with easy external access. A minimum of two onsite car parking spaces are provided within the development.

### **2.2 The site and surroundings**

**2.2.1** The site is located on the eastern side of Downs Hill, opposite its junction with The Avenue, and forms part of the Downs Hill Conservation Area. The current house has been on this site for 65 years.

**2.2.2** The topography of the land in the local area slopes quite steeply from west to east and more gradually from north to south. As a result, the houses on the west side of Downs Hill are considerably elevated compared to the subject property and its neighbours on the east side. To the rear of the property, the hillside affords dramatic views over the wooded valley and railway, towards Bromley and Chislehurst to the east.

**2.2.3** The position of the property, together with established building lines and mature landscape, means it is not overlooked and neither does it overlook any of its neighbours. The revised proposals follow the same careful design principles to preserve this privacy in all directions.

**2.2.4** The Downs Hill Conservation Area SPD and the pre-application advice, have helped shape the redesign of the submitted proposals. The applicants' original design was an unashamed modern house which borrowed contemporary design features from others in the conservation area and from the one locally listed building, the flat-roofed, art deco design in nearby Foxgrove Road. It was helpful to understand that contemporary design is not ruled out by the LPA in this location and it is acknowledged that both the designs and materials vary across the conservation area. However, in responding to the pre-application advice the applicants initially sought to radically overhaul their original design to better blend with the immediate neighbours and avoid being over dominant in the street scene. This further revision to reduce the scale and ambition of the new home is, we believe, a better fit still. The twin peaks of the deep pitched and gabled roof now echoes its northern neighbour and includes other design features found in the vicinity. The overall scale and height remains in keeping with the area, although of course now smaller than originally proposed, and considerably less than the redevelopment under construction at number 28. The buildings to the south follow the sloping nature of the natural topography of the land and appear lower than the subject property, just as the houses on the opposite side of the road are much higher.

**2.2.5** The detail of materials and finishes can be a matter controlled by condition, but it is the applicants' intention for the external walls to be finished predominately in white render, again in keeping with many other houses in the conservation area.

**2.2.6** The proposed redevelopment has been designed to replace the unremarkable existing building, blending in scale and height with its neighbours to make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

## 3.0 Revised Proposal

**Demolition of the existing two-storey building and redevelopment to construct a two-storey, residential dwellinghouse, with second-floor accommodation in the roof space; to contain six bedrooms, two reception rooms and guest room, with associated refuse storage, secure bicycle store, existing front and rear gardens, amenity space and off-street parking spaces.**

**3.1** This revised application seeks planning permission to replace the existing house with a better designed, more modern and flexible accommodation, which will involve the demolition of the existing two storey building, and redevelopment to create a new home.

**3.2** The revised proposal is no longer based on the existing foundations. As a result the applicants are able to respond better to the requested made by the pre-application advice, and have now drawn the redesigned building in still further at the sides and reduced the overall width compared with the existing building.

**3.3** The proposed redesign will be an improvement to the current bland appearance of the existing house which, it is acknowledged, fails to make any significant contribution to the conservation area. Please see below photos 1 and 2 of the present house and diagram 1 – 4 of the revised redevelopment.



**Photo 1** Existing building at 24 Downs Hill





**Photo 2** Rear view of the existing house



**Diagram 1** Proposed redevelopment seen from the front



**Diagram 2** *Proposed redevelopment seen from the rear*



**Diagram 3** *Comparison front elevation showing the proposed redevelopment in relation to its neighbours*



**Diagram 4** *Comparison rear elevation showing the proposed redevelopment in relation to its neighbours*



**3.4.1** The proposed redevelopment remains empathetic to its surroundings, respecting its neighbours in both height and scale, and will complement the local conservation area. Diagrams 5–8 below show perspectives of the proposed redevelopment seen looking in both directions from the front and the rear. It is important to remember that these perspectives are for architectural and scale comparisons purposes only. The diagrams do not show any of the existing trees (all of which will be retained) or any other landscaping features or boundary treatments. As a result, these diagrams do not represent actual views. In reality, the mature trees and landscaping on the subject site and in the surrounding plots affords only glimpses of any one house and very little of an actual street scene when viewed from the public highway.



**Diagram 5** *Perspective of the proposed redevelopment in relation to its neighbours as seen from the front looking south from 28 Downs Hill (currently under construction)*



**Diagram 6** *Perspective of the proposed redevelopment in relation to its neighbours as seen from the front looking north from 18 Downs Hill*

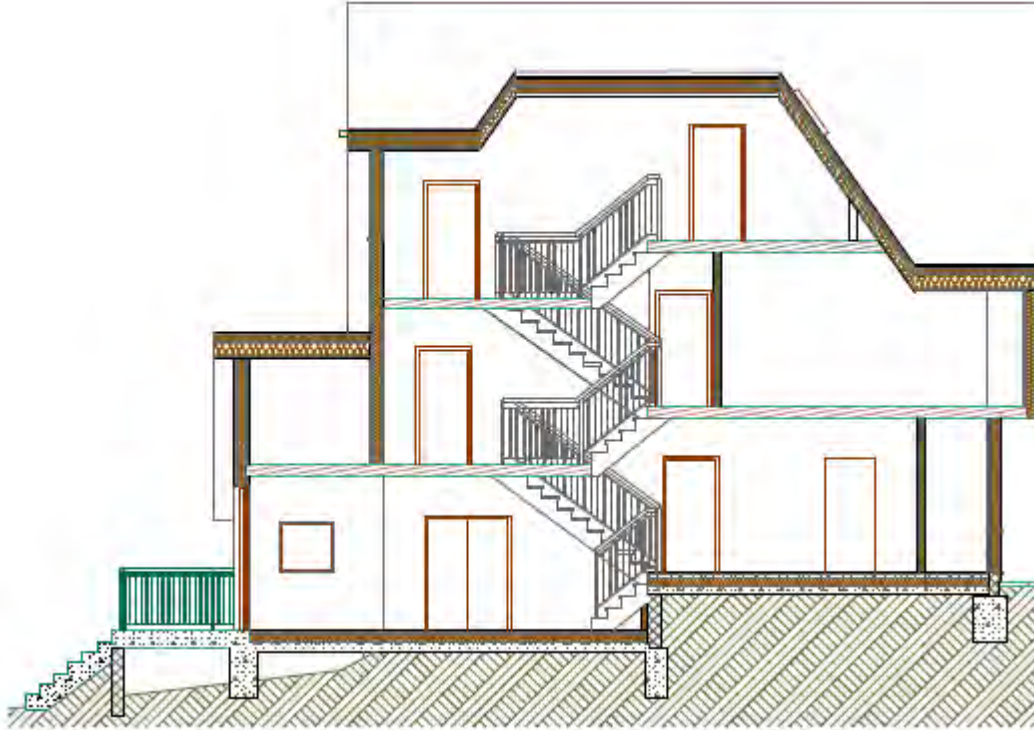


**Diagram 7** *Perspective of the proposed redevelopment in relation to its neighbours as seen from the rear looking south from 28 Downs Hill (currently under construction)*



**Diagram 8** *Perspective of the proposed redevelopment in relation to its neighbours as seen from the rear looking north from 18 Downs Hill*

**3.4.2** As can be seen from the revised Section 1 below each floor in the proposed redevelopment has a split level and accommodation at the rear of the redevelopment is 1m lower than accommodation at the front. This provides greater design interest within the new house and also ensures that the extended rearward section of the redevelopment, and its ground-floor terrace, cannot overlook neighbouring properties on either side.

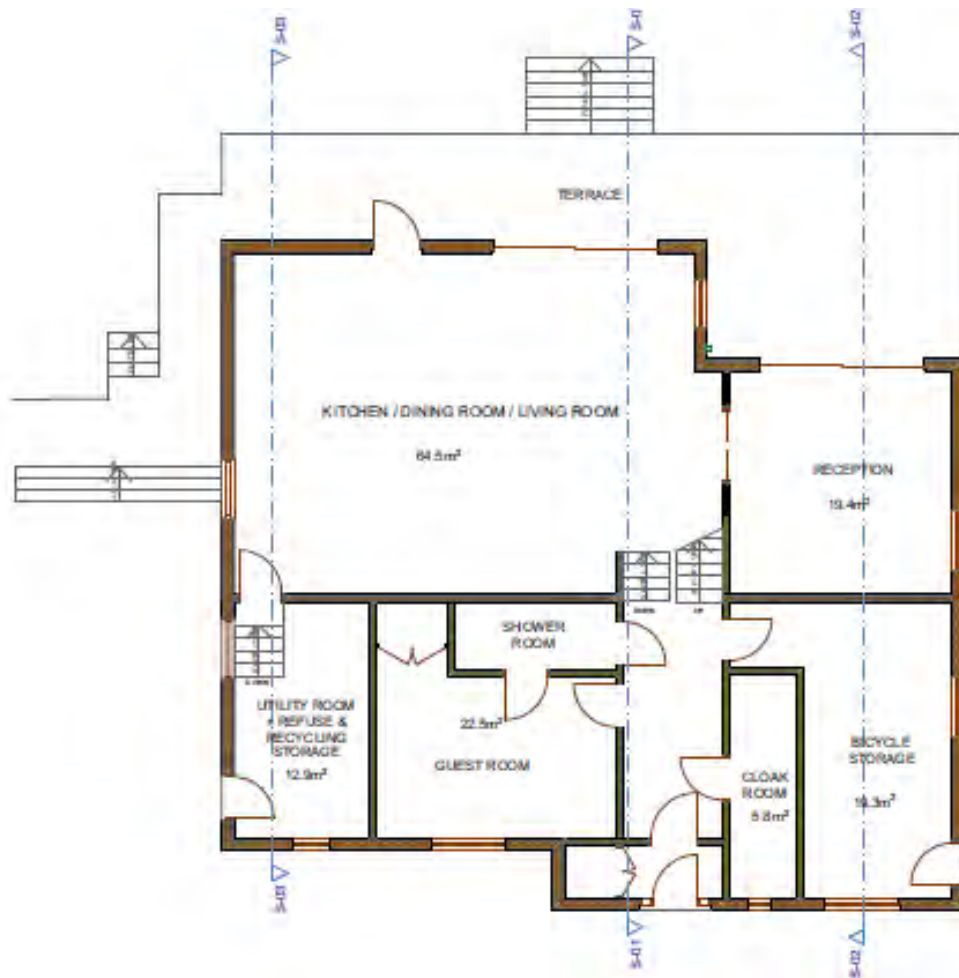


**Section 1** *Showing the proposed rear accommodation in the redevelopment 1m lower in relation to the front of the property*

### 3.5 Schedule of proposed accommodation by floor

#### 3.5.1 Ground-floor (revised)

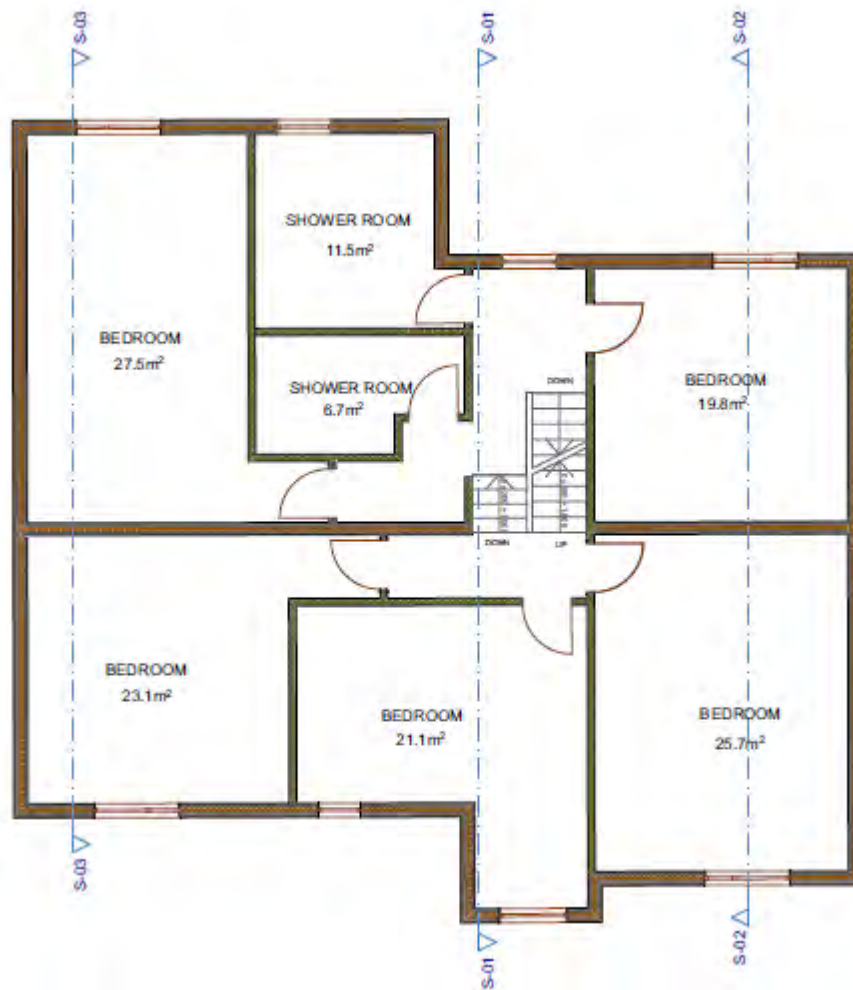
- Reception 19.4m<sup>2</sup>
- Kitchen/Dinning Room/Living Room 64.5 m<sup>2</sup>
- Guest Room 22.5m<sup>2</sup>
- Cloakroom 5.8m<sup>2</sup>
- Utility Room 12.9m<sup>2</sup>
- Bicycle Store 19.3m<sup>2</sup>



**Plan 1** Revised Ground-floor accommodation

### 3.5.2 First-floor (revised)

- Bedroom 1 27.5m<sup>2</sup>
- Bedroom 2 19.8m<sup>2</sup>
- Bedroom 3 25.7m<sup>2</sup>
- Bedroom 4 21.1m<sup>2</sup>
- Bedroom 5 23.1m<sup>2</sup>
- Shower Room 1 11.5m<sup>2</sup>
- Shower Room 2 6.7m<sup>2</sup>

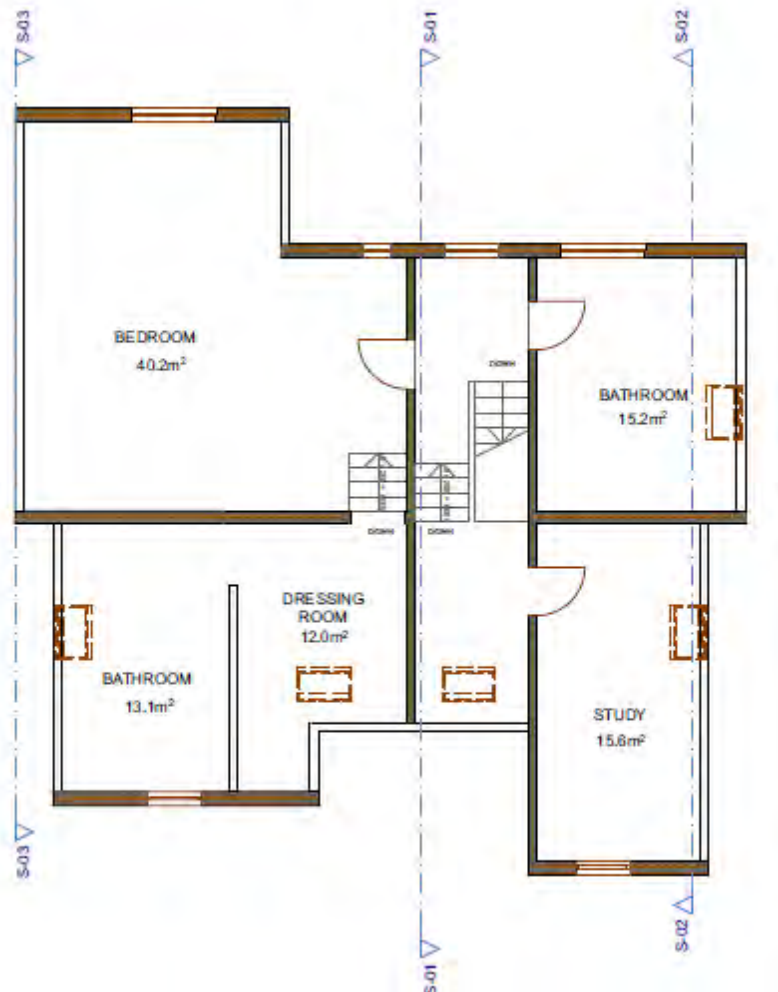


**Plan 2** Revised First-floor accommodation



### 3.5.3 Second-floor (revised)

- Study 15.6m<sup>2</sup>
- Bathroom 15.2m<sup>2</sup>
- Master Suite
  - o Bedroom 40.2m<sup>2</sup>
  - o Bathroom 13.1m<sup>2</sup>
  - o Dressing Room 12.0m<sup>2</sup>



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### Plan 3 Revised Second-floor accommodation

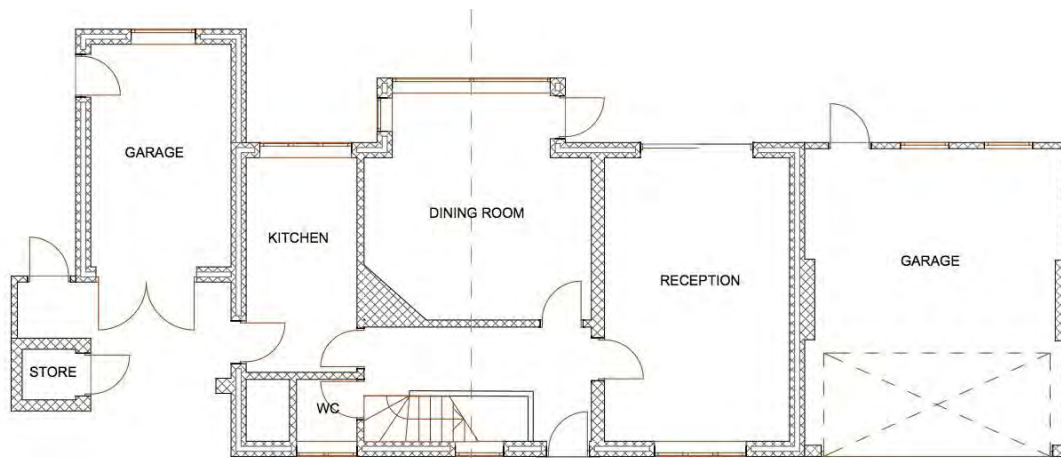
The total gross internal floor area of the proposed accommodation, combined with bicycle storage, refuse storage, utility, lobby and ancillary space is **546 m<sup>2</sup>**



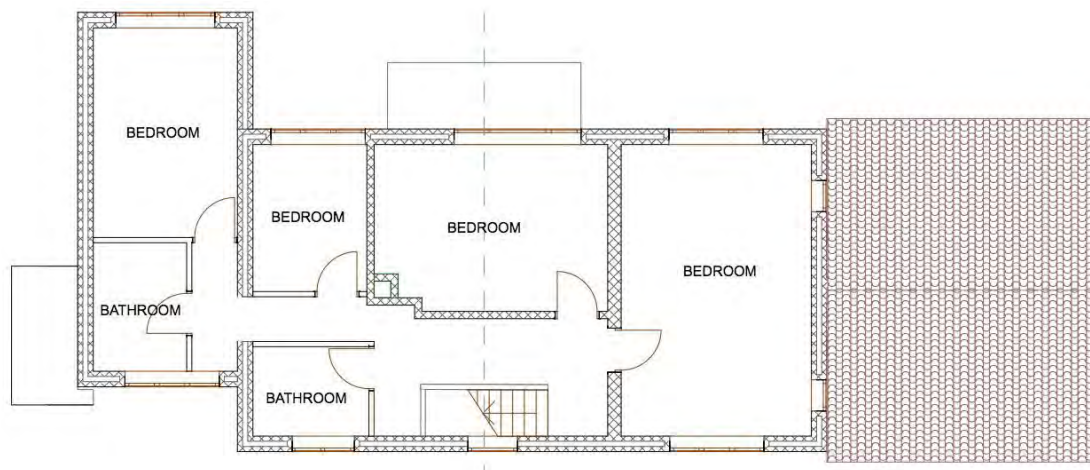
## 4.0 Layout and design

**4.1** The property currently comprises a two-storey, four-bedroom house with accommodation at ground and first floor levels. The building appears to have been extended from its original 1951 form with a two-storey side extension to the north taking the property to that boundary with number 26, and with the addition of a garage to the south, again extending the built form across the whole site to the boundary with 20 Downs Hill (a house that was built in the 1960s). The revised proposal is now to demolish the existing building and construct a new two-storey, building, extended rearwards, with accommodation in the roof space. The new house will provide six bedrooms and two reception rooms, with a guest room and associated utility spaces, refuse storage, a secure bicycle store and with onsite parking space for at least two cars.

**4.2** The existing property is unremarkable in its design, finish and features. The pre-application feedback acknowledges that it fails to make any significant contribution to the conservation area or the local street scene. The ground floor is currently poorly laid out with two reception rooms, a kitchen, store room and garage, as shown in plan 5 below. The proposed ground floor layout of the redevelopment makes far better use of available space for modern family living.



**Plan 5** Ground Floor - Existing



**Plan 6** First Floor - Existing

**4.3** The existing external ground-floor terrace, to the rear of the house, will still become a balconied terrace, but at a lower level than the existing terrace, so there can be no overlooking to, or from, neighbouring properties.

**4.4** In the revised design two new utility and storage spaces are created at ground-floor level with easy internal and external access. These will provide secure bicycle storage and workshop space, and a separate utility space to house the refuse and recycling arrangements. Adequate off-street parking is provided on the driveway for at least two cars.

#### **4.5 Design approach**

**4.5.1** The applicants still desire a unique house that fully meets the developing needs of their family. The design approach has been to deliver their internal space and layout requirements; respond to the pre-application feedback to better blend with its immediate neighbours; meet the requirements of the Downs Hill Conservation Area SPD; and for the building to sit comfortably in its plot without over-dominating the street scene. The applicants trust all these criteria have been successfully achieved through the revised proposals.

**4.5.2** The applicants have also been keen to achieve a sustainable, energy-efficient and environmentally friendly home. To that end the redesigned house will incorporate several features to significantly reduce the site's carbon-footprint, its dependency on fossil fuels and help conserve water. The revised design still offers the possibility for the inclusion of a green roof, together with roof tile photovoltaic arrays, and grey-water recycling. The applicants will continue to evaluate a range of sustainability measures and will report further, in consultation with the LPA, during the planning process.

**4.5.3** The floor areas of all the rooms in the redevelopment continues to comfortably exceed the minimum standards required by both regional and local planning policies.

**4.5.4** Following the recent pre-application advice from the LPA, the applicants conducted a local design study of neighbouring and nearby properties in the Downs Hill Conservation Area (DHCA). The photographs below show the range of designs and materials in this immediate part of the conservation area. Although a departure from the original application's design, the revised proposal continues to borrow and echo many of these local DHCA design features. It is both a high-quality contemporary design and compatible with the local character, as required by the pre-application advice and the policies contained in the Downs Hill Conservation Area SPD and the local plan.

Neighbouring and nearby DHCA properties showing the range of design features and finishes adopted for the redesign of the proposed redeveloped house.



Substantial properties opposite 24 Downs Hill showing pitched and gabled roofs



Downs Hill Conservation Area (DHCA) property showing white render and feature window



14 Downs Hill showing pitched and hipped roof with feature gable and white rendered finish



16 Downs Hill with second-floor roof space accommodation



A building of more modern design and finish at 18 Downs Hill



Another modern design next door at 20 Downs Hill





DHCA property showing roof space accommodation and a feature gable



More roof space accommodation and white rendered finish

## 5.0 Relevant Planning Policies

### 5.1 Development plan policies and standards

The Development Plan for the purposes of S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the London Plan 2011, the London Borough of Bromley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and emerging Local Plan, a suite of planning documents that outline the borough's planning policies, including various supplementary planning documents.

### 5.2 The London Plan

Consolidated with Alterations since 2004 includes the objective: *To accommodate London's growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces.* This proposal will meet the above objective, by only providing housing on land that has already been built upon and will not extend beyond established building lines, or infringe on any public space.

### 5.3 London Borough of Bromley UDP and emerging Local Plan

#### 5.3.1 Relevant Policies

The submitted application will be determined in accordance with the following UDP policies:

BE1 Design of New Development

BE12 Development in Conservation Areas

BE14 Trees in Conservation Areas

NE7 Development and Trees

H7 Housing Density and Design

H9 Side Space

T3 Parking

T18 Road Safety

### **5.3.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance**

The following are also likely to be relevant to the application:

SPG1: General Design Principles

SPG2: Residential Design Guidance

Together with the Supplementary Planning Document for the Downs Hill Conservation Area.

### **5.3.3 LB Bromley emerging Local Plan**

We understand that the LPA's Local Plan is still to be submitted to the Secretary of State, these are nevertheless documents of material consideration and the draft policies will be given appropriate weight.

Draft Policy 4 Housing Design

Draft Policy 8 Side Space

Draft Policy 30 Parking

Draft Policy 32 Road Safety

Draft Policy 37 General Design of Development

Draft Policy 41 Conservation Areas

Draft Policy 43 Trees in Conservation Areas 3

Draft Policy 73 Development and Trees

All the relevant policies of the UDP and the emerging Local Plan have been considered and the revised proposed development has been designed with these in mind.

### **5.3.4 Internal space, layout and baseline standards**

As demonstrated in this document, the footprint of all proposed rooms generously exceeds the minimum standard requirements.

### **5.3.5 Refuse and recycling**

As shown in the proposed drawings in this document, adequate refuse and recycling storage is provided.

## **5.4 Design quality**

**5.4.1** At every level of planning policy, from the NPPF to the emerging Local Plan, requires good design and the integration of new development into the natural and built environment. With the guidance of local policy and the helpful advice of the pre-application feedback, the applicants believe that the proposed revised redevelopment recognises and responds to the distinctive local character and will contribute to creating a high architectural standard of quality urban design. The character of the subject property, in both its immediate and wider setting, has been examined in depth and the proposed redesigned redevelopment is considered to be in keeping with policy.

### **5.4.2** In particular, the DHCA SPD states:

*The Council will expect all proposals for new development to conform to the character of the area, especially in regard to scale and height of construction, location within a plot and the design and materials used. It is*

*hoped that all improvement works will take into account the character of the buildings and alter them as little as possible.*

Following the pre-application advice and the design study set out at 4.5.4 above, the applicants believe that the key point and objectives of the DHCA SPD have been met in the proposed redesign.

**5.4.3** Although a larger building than the existing house, the revised redevelopment does not stray beyond the established building lines of neighbouring properties. The proposals will not cause the loss of sunlight or daylight to adjoining dwellings or gardens. At the request of neighbours, the applicants have produced a shadowing study to demonstrate the effect of the path of the sun at key dates and times during the year. See attached document *Summer Daylight Study*.

**5.4.4** As requested in the pre-application advice, the applicants have taken the opportunity in this revised application to improve still further the setting of the dwelling with its plot by creating substantial space at the northern boundary and the redesigned house has been drawn in at both sides.

**5.4.5 Design conclusions**

- It is accepted that the impact of the loss of the existing building on the character and appearance of the conservation area will not be great and indeed its replacement may be beneficial
- The proposed replacement building will now enhance the character and appearance of its setting and the wider conservation area
- The scale, height and footprint of the proposal is in keeping with the area in general and its impact on the visual and residential amenities of neighbouring properties will be minimal
- Overall, the applicants believe that revised application represents an improvement on the existing building to compliment the heritage asset of the conservation area and its setting

## **6.0 Flooding**

As supported by the Land Registry in association with the Environment Agency, 24 Downs Hill does not fall within a floodplain and is more than 500 metres from the nearest floodplain. The land is in an area which falls outside the extent of a floodplain, at the time of the Environment Agency's assessment of the likelihood of flooding. Generally, this means that the chance of either pluvial or fluvial flooding each year from rivers or run-off is 0.1 percent (1 in 1,000 or less).

## **7.0 Sustainability Appraisal**

It is proposed that as part of the proposed works an efficient gas central heating system and a low energy lighting system will be installed together with high levels of insulation to all walls, including in the roof. The applicants are very keen to create the most sustainable home practical and to this end they are exploring modern options that may be included into the construction. These include, photovoltaic roof tiles that can blend with the conservation area setting, a green roof, and water efficiency and recycling options. These sustainability features will be reviewed with the planning authority as the application progresses to ensure that the LPA's sustainability checklist is met.



## **8.0 Drainage Strategy**

Where practical, rainwater will be reused within the development and drained naturally into local aquifers using green roofs and garden soakaways. The foul drainage systems will discharge to existing sewers as required by building control.

## **9.0 Refuse Disposal Details**

The proposal shows sufficient refuse and recycling storage and disposal arrangements required by local policy.

## **10.0 Other issues**

The following reports and considerations are not deemed relevant given the nature of the proposed works and the specific application site factors:

- Landscaping comments
- Geotechnical Report
- Utilities Statement
- Air quality Assessment
- Sound Insulation Assessment
- Lighting Assessment
- Energy Statement
- Nature Conservation and Ecological Assessment
- Historical and Archaeological Assessment
- Transport and Highways Assessment
- Noise assessment

## **11.0 Conclusion**

**11.1** This design and Access Statement has been prepared by Indigo Blue Works Ltd on behalf of William and Nicola Bloomer, who are the freehold owners of the subject property, to support and explain the contents of the revised application for the redevelopment of 24 Downs Hill to include the demolition of the existing two-storey building and redevelopment to construct a two-storey, residential dwellinghouse, with second-floor accommodation in the roof space; to contain six bedrooms, two reception rooms and guest room, with associated refuse storage, secure bicycle store, existing front and rear gardens, amenity space and off-street parking spaces.

**11.2** This statement has examined the design and access aspects of the revised scheme and concluded that it is an appropriate form of redevelopment in this location and should be supported.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE**

PLEASE DO NOT REFUSE THIS APPLICATION. Should anything other than permission be considered, please allow us notice of any issues or objections prior to the eventual decision date and we will endeavour to review the current proposals further in discussion with the planning department, or withdraw the application if this is not considered an option.