

Design Justification Statement – 48 Station Road, Port Talbot

1. Introduction

This Design Justification Statement sets out the rationale behind the proposed development at 48 Station Road, Port Talbot, with particular emphasis on the evolution of the design and the treatment of the existing single-storey flat-roofed rear extensions. The proposal has been informed by the need to preserve the significance of the original building, respect the character of the surrounding street scene and accord with established conservation principles.

The design approach seeks to maintain the legibility of the original structure, improve the architectural quality of later additions and provide a clear distinction between historic fabric and contemporary development. In doing so, the proposal avoids pastiche design and instead promotes a high quality contemporary intervention that complements the character of the existing building.

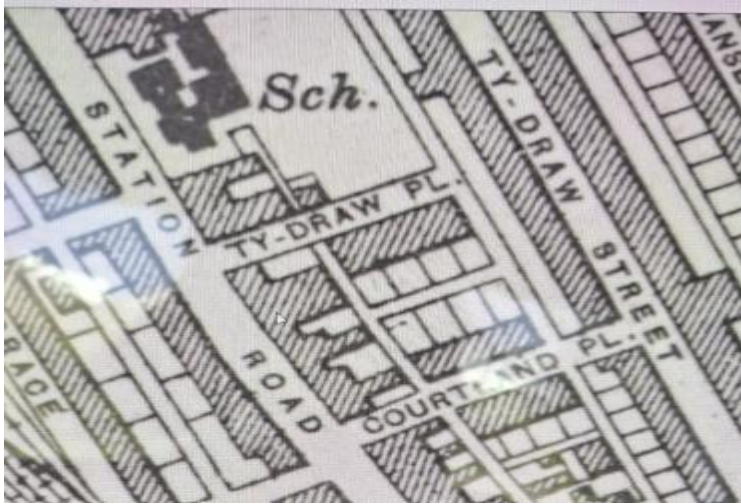
2. Evolution of the Building

48 Station Road has undergone a number of alterations and additions over time, reflecting changing functional requirements rather than a single coherent architectural vision.

- The principal historic form of the building remains readily identifiable within the existing structure and continues to retain many of its original proportions, materials and architectural characteristics.
- Subsequent alterations, most notably the single-storey rear extensions, represent later phases of development that are clearly distinguishable from the original building. These additions exhibit poor quality brickwork and detailing and adopt a pastiche approach that unsuccessfully attempts to replicate traditional architectural features.
- It is evident from the building's form and construction that the rear extensions are later additions and do not form part of the original design of the building (see Figure 1).
- The existing single storey extensions create a confused relationship between old and new, lacking authenticity.

As a consequence, the current arrangement diminishes the clarity, architectural quality and heritage value of the host building. This is particularly relevant given its recognition within the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to Buildings of Local Importance.

Figure 1 – Original building



3. Assessment of the Existing Rear Extension

The existing single-storey rear extension is considered to be of limited architectural and historic merit for the following reasons:

- It does not form part of the original building and does not represent a significant phase in the building's historic development.
- Its design adopts a pastiche approach, replicating traditional architectural elements without authenticity or accurate reference to the original building.
- The extension fails to provide a clear distinction between historic fabric and later additions, contrary to accepted conservation principles.
- The form, materials and detailing detract from the legibility of the original building and dilute its architectural significance.
- The extension does little to enhance the overall appearance of the site and contributes negatively to the composition of the building as a whole.

This approach conflicts with recognised conservation best practice, which promotes either the accurate restoration of historic elements or the introduction of high quality contemporary additions that are honest in their design and expression.

4. Design Evolution of the Proposed Scheme

The proposed scheme has evolved significantly throughout the design process in response to the site's context, conservation considerations and feedback received during Pre-Application Consultation discussions.

a. Removal of Pastiche Elements

A key objective of the proposal has been the removal or substantial alteration of elements that currently detract from the character and integrity of the building. The scheme seeks to replace these incongruous additions with a more coherent architectural solution that enhances the significance of the original structure.

b. Reinforcing Architectural Legibility

The proposal gives priority to the retention and clear expression of the original building form, ensuring that the historic fabric remains dominant and easily understood.

Whilst adopting a contemporary architectural language, the design draws inspiration from key features of the original building, including:

- Horizontal stone banding;
- Window proportions and alignment;
- Established patterns of fenestration; and
- The vertical hierarchy present within the existing elevations.

This approach allows the extension to acknowledge the architectural character of the original building without resorting to direct replication.

c. Honest and High-Quality Design

Rather than attempting to imitate historic detailing, the proposed extension adopts a contemporary design approach that is:

- Subservient in scale and massing to the original building;
- Clearly identifiable as a modern intervention;
- Respectful of the character and significance of the host building;
- Constructed using a carefully selected palette of complementary materials; and
- Designed to improve the overall architectural quality of the site.

d. Design Evolution

The original proposal (Figure 2) involved a larger extension that required the removal of part of the original building at 48 Station Road. The design incorporated coloured render, facing brickwork at ground-floor level and slate cladding at upper levels.

Figure 2 – Original Proposal



Following feedback received during the Pre-Application Consultation process, the scheme evolved substantially to ensure that the important rear element of the original building could be retained (Figure 3).

The revised scheme:

- Retains the historic rear section of the original building;
- Introduces two additional window openings within the retained structure;
- Incorporates windows that reflect the proportions and appearance of the original fenestration;
- Creates a more sympathetic and recessive relationship with the original building.
- The revised design also introduced a brick façade incorporating both facing brickwork and engineering brick detailing to improve architectural quality and longevity.

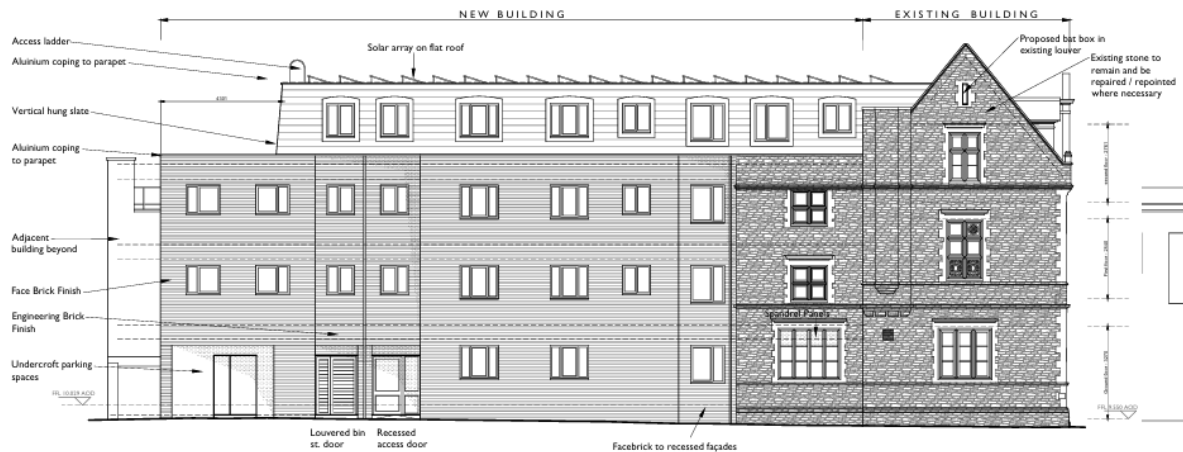
In term of scale, the property immediately north of the application site occupies a prominent corner position and is a substantial building of comparable scale. Whilst some aspects of its design and materials are considered less successful, its scale and roof form sit comfortably within the urban context owing to its corner plot location.

Accordingly, similar principles relating to scale, massing and roof form have informed the proposed development, which is also on a corner plot, whilst seeking to achieve a significantly higher standard of architectural design and material quality.

The wider area to the north-east comprises a diverse mixture of traditional terraced housing, modern detached and semi-detached dwellings and a flat-roofed apartment building. The scale of the proposed extension has therefore been carefully developed in response to this varied urban context.

The proposed mansard roof form reduces the perceived scale of the development and ensures the extension remains visually subordinate to the original building. The building also steps down towards the adjoining residential properties through the introduction of a lower green roof element, further reducing visual impact and providing a softer transition between built forms.

Figure 3 – Revised Proposal



Station Road is characterised by a varied and eclectic mix of buildings differing in age, scale, design and architectural style. Whilst some buildings make a positive contribution to the streetscape, others detract from its character.

In recognition of the significance of 48 Station Road, the original proposal was amended to retain the original building substantially intact whilst accommodating a contemporary extension to the rear that clearly distinguishes between the historic and modern elements.

Following further discussions with the Case Officer during the determination of the application, the design was refined again to incorporate additional contemporary detailing that reflects architectural features visible on the principal Station Road elevation. **These contemporary references to the architectural features being the provision of horizontal banding, window arrangements and banding and the introduction of vertical slate hung bands.**

e. Alignment with Conservation Best Practice

The proposal accords with recognised conservation principles through:

- The avoidance of pastiche design;
- The retention and enhancement of a Building of Local Importance;
- The clear distinction between historic fabric and contemporary intervention;
- The preservation of the building's architectural legibility and hierarchy;
- The sensitive reuse of salvaged historic materials; and

- The incorporation of alterations that are, where practicable, reversible.

f. Response to the Street Scene and Materials

The design has been informed by the varied architectural character of Station Road and incorporates a palette of high-quality materials that respond positively to the surrounding built environment.

The proposed brickwork, glazing and metal elements provide a contemporary architectural expression whilst remaining complementary to the traditional materials found throughout the street. The development therefore contributes positively to the evolving character of the area whilst maintaining respect for the historic significance of the original building.

To reflect the colour of the original building, the brickwork will be buff colour similar to that as shown in the figure below, however finer material details could form part of a condition to be agreed.

Figure 4.



The mansard roof will be hung in slate as will the vertical bands proposed, which will add detail to the side elevation adding interest and reflecting the appearance of local materials on that side elevation.

Figure 5. Final Proposal



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION

Scale: 1:100

g. Bin Store

A dedicated bin storage area is incorporated within the scheme to ensure refuse and recycling facilities are appropriately accommodated. The bin store has been carefully positioned to minimise visual impact and maintain the quality of the public realm whilst providing practical servicing arrangements for future occupiers.

5. Conclusion

The existing single-storey rear extensions at 48 Station Road are non-original additions of limited architectural merit that detract from the character, legibility and significance of the host building.

The proposed development has evolved substantially throughout the design process and seeks to address these shortcomings by:

- Removing or significantly reworking incongruous later additions;
- Retaining and reinforcing the primacy of the original building;
- Introducing a high-quality contemporary extension, providing much needed affordable housing, that clearly distinguishes between old and new;
- Enhancing architectural quality and visual coherence; and
- Respecting established conservation principles.

The proposal therefore represents a carefully considered and sympathetic design solution that will enhance the long-term appearance and significance of the building whilst delivering much-needed affordable housing and retaining commercial floorspace that contributes to the vitality and viability of Station Road and the wider town centre.