

Design Statement
172 Littleworth Lane, Whitley





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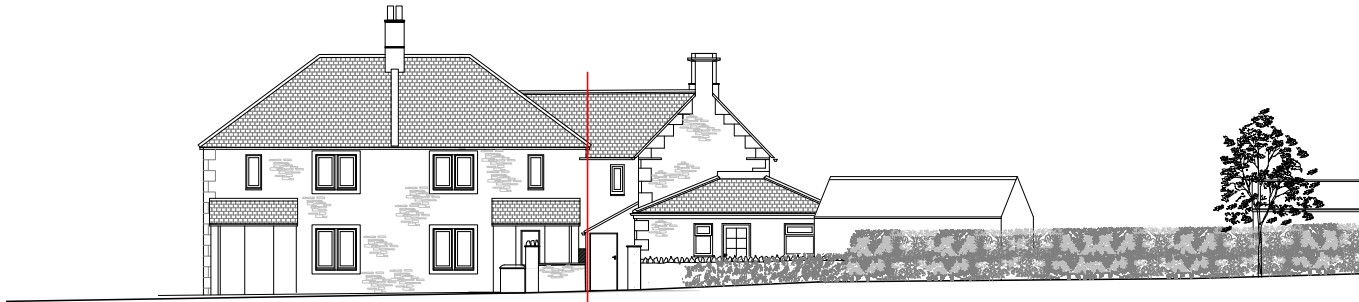
This statement explains the design rationale behind the proposed extension at 172 Littleworth Lane, Whitley, outlining how the scheme responds sensitively to the existing building, its heritage significance, and the surrounding context, while providing functional improvements for modern living.

The design has been developed collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority. An earlier iteration included a north-west facing gable that mirrored the existing stone façade; however, this form was considered overly bulky and insufficiently subservient to the host dwelling. Following discussions, a more contemporary approach was recommended, both in terms of form and materiality, to ensure that the non-designated heritage asset and neighbouring properties remain clearly legible, in line with good conservation practice and the principles of the Venice Charter and other guidance.

The current proposal adopts a simpler, restrained form, using a soft palette of natural materials. Timber cladding, designed to weather to a light grey tone, provides a subtle contrast in colour and texture with the stone façade, while maintaining a complementary relationship with the host building. The scheme incorporates a range of environmentally sensitive measures, including a green roof, improved insulation, high-quality replacement windows, and a biomass boiler, ensuring no reliance on fossil fuels and enhancing energy efficiency.

The extension is deliberately subservient in scale, set approximately 0.4m lower than the ridge of the host dwelling. This reduction in height, combined with the simplified form, ensures the original building remains dominant, particularly when viewed alongside Nos. 170 & 171. The existing incongruous single-storey hipped extension will be rationalised, with the poorly designed roof replaced by an extensive green flat roof, unifying the various elements and revealing more of the existing stone façade.





Pre-2005 Extension to no. 170 Contextual Elevation from the Public Footpath
(Assumes 170 & 171 were originally symmetrical as shown in historic aerial photographs)



Existing Contextual Elevation



Proposed Contextual Elevation

The evolution of the site provides important context. No. 170 was extended in 2005, nearly doubling the size of the house with an addition that continued the ridge and eaves of the original pair, resulting in a visually unbalanced appearance. This earlier extension is not subservient, and its form and materials obscure the legibility of the building's history. In contrast, the proposed scheme is designed to be clearly secondary, legible, and respectful of the host building's character and significance.

A contemporary approach to extending historic buildings is supported by established conservation guidance. The Venice Charter advises that new work should be distinguishable from the original fabric, avoiding pastiche while maintaining legibility. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings advocates for honesty in repair and intervention, ensuring additions respect the character of historic structures. Historic England similarly supports high-quality contemporary design that is sensitive to scale, form, and setting, while preserving or enhancing significance. The proposed extension, subservient in scale, functional in use, environmentally sensitive, and using complementary materials, aligns with these principles, enabling the building to adapt to modern needs while maintaining its historic integrity.

There are a number of strong local precedents which demonstrate that a contemporary approach to extending heritage assets can be both appropriate and successful when handled sensitively. At Corsley School in Corsley, Wiltshire, by PKA Architects, a Grade II listed former school and hall has been thoughtfully extended by echoing the existing form while reinterpreting it in a contemporary manner. The scheme incorporates modern windows with matching proportions, a green-roofed single-storey linking element, and a timber-clad gabled extension, enabling the building's conversion into a family home while preserving its historic character. Similarly, Laurel House in Brixton Deverill, Wiltshire, by CaSA Architects, adopts a clearly modern design language, combining timber cladding above a stone ground floor with a single-storey wraparound loggia and zinc roof. The use of contemporary glazing and materials allows the original historic house to remain clearly legible, with the extension reading as a distinct yet complementary addition. These examples reinforce the principle that well-designed contemporary extensions can enhance heritage assets, ensuring their continued use while respecting their significance.



Corsley School, Wiltshire by PKA Architects Limited



Laurel House, Brixton Deverill by CaSA Architects