

Your ref:

Our ref: TECB The Old Telephone Exchange, 32 A Church Road Benson Application P20/S2712/FUL

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021

*Via e-mail:*  
planningbusinessenquiries@southandvale.gov.uk

Dear Chair & Committee Members,

My client has owned the Old Telephone Exchange for a number of years, during which it has most recently been used as a builder's store. I must emphasise that the existing buildings are in private ownership and my client has no intention of converting them to a museum as suggested in the local Parish magazine.

I did attend a parish meeting to explain the proposals in detail but was not allowed to be party to any discussion or given any feedback as to their concerns at the time.

The proposals are for the two existing brick single storey buildings to be demolished and a new single dwelling built largely on their footprint re using their foundations to avoid any damage to existing tree routes.

The existing buildings are built from brickwork but have no wall or roof insulation and are not suitable for conversion.

The new property is for my client's daughter and has been designed to suit her needs as well as meeting the National Housing Standards, for a one-bedroom dwelling with a shower.

The curved roof has a ridge height no higher than the exiting buildings, with its apex further away from the tree canopies due to the arch, rather than a central ridge. This will result in no pruning or works required to the existing trees.

During the application, we have submitted reports to evidence that residential use will have limited impact on traffic safety and parking due to the existence of the dropped kerb and current parking for one vehicle in relation to its existing and potential uses.

The conservation officer has been consulted, even through the site is not within the conservation area, and limited views of the site are possible from Church Road. As a result of the consultation the external walls will be brickwork rather than render.

The inner skin will be timber studwork allowing for the walls to be insulated in a fabric first approach achieving a 65% improvement on the current regulations.

Page 1 of 2

An energy report has been submitted with the application confirming the new property will be highly thermally efficient and heated via and air source heat pump.

The external amenity provision meets the council's standards for a property of this size, and a walled external seating area has been provided, along with a bin store and cycle store.

No overlooking is possible into the adjacent dwelling at 34 Church Road either from within the property or its external amenity.

We note the following inspectors' comments from a dismissed appeal in 2008:

- The existing buildings are undistinguished and not particularly conspicuous in the street scene.
- The inspector found changes to the proposed parking and domestication of the site in keeping with the village centre setting.
- The inspector noted the site is opposite a conservation area with a wide variety of buildings sizes, types, and materials.
- They concluded that the conversion of the buildings would not harm the conservation area.
- The inspector was concerned about the accommodation on the ground floor - we can confirm this achieves 43m<sup>2</sup> above the 37m<sup>2</sup> required for a single person dwelling with a shower.
- Previous issues over outlook and privacy have been addressed by incorporating new window positions which achieve above standard levels of daylight, ventilation, and surveillance, including a West facing window from the proposed kitchen and a tall south facing window to the living area, and gable window to the bedroom.
- Employment issues are not relevant as the site cannot suitably accommodate alternative means of employment with no current running water or foul drainage. The proposals include a live / work unit with space for a workshop on the first floor.