

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**Proposed Single Storey Extension & Internal Alterations
to a single block of two apartments at
73a Whitehill Road, Gravesend Kent, DA12 5PF**

1st July 2026



As Existing

No 73a is a single attached two storey building. It was once a single dwelling house but was converted many years ago into two one bedroom flats, one on the ground floor and a second one at first floor level. The two flats share the original front entrance portico but inside the portico two very narrow ply faced front doors have been squeezed in to access each of the flats.

What appears to be the original staircase then provides access to the first floor flat whilst a very narrow corridor provides access to the ground floor flat. The first floor flat has a layout which is considered to present hazards in terms of emergency escape with the two first floor bedrooms accessed directly off the living/dining room. Attempts have been made to improve emergency escape by means of an external metal staircase on the rear of the building.

The living areas are located in the centre of the plans making them rather dark without a proper outlook over the communal rear garden area, which as a result is less secure and less well used.

As Proposed

This planning application seeks permission to construct a small single storey rear extension and to make internal alterations in order to address the problems with the layout. The extension is proposed to create a better placed living room for the ground floor flat. This has made it possible to re-locate the front entrance door to a more convenient location enabling full width front doors to be provided for both flats.

The external metal staircase will be removed and fire resisting internal partitions constructed within the flats to ensure a safe means of emergency escape. Occupants will no longer have to travel through one habitable room in order to access another one.

The proposed rear extension involves digging up a small part of the existing lawn but this is somewhat less than the 25 square metre threshold for BNG.

The extension is also within the protection root protection area of an evergreen tree growing on a neighbouring property. A Development Tree Survey was carried out and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement prepared all of which form part of this planning application.

Conclusion

This is a modest proposal which will significantly improve the safety and the living conditions of the occupants of these two flats.