

Planning Statement

14 Nicholas Avenue, Whitburn

Project No: 308



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Introduction

PR Design has been appointed to prepare this document and the relevant drawings in support of the planning application submission.

Location and description of the Site

14 Nicholas Avenue is situated in Whitburn close to the coast. The property is a 2 storey 3 bedroom semi-detached house with a single storey garage/WC area to the north and rear conservatory. The property has a driveway, garden space to the front side and rear and is within a residential area.



Photo 1 East Elevation



Photo 2 Rear Elevation

Previous planning applications

ST/0087/02//DM - Proposed first floor bedroom extension above existing garage and lobby
Permission Granted

Proposed works

The Proposed works include the extension and refurbishment of the property. The property is dated and in need of refurbishment. The applicant is proposing the following works plus extensive thermal renovations to meet the client's needs and improve the property.

- Demolition of existing rear conservatory and single storey garage/WC.
- Single storey rear extension to form open plan living/dining/kitchen area.
- Two storey side extension to form new garage and downstairs Shower room. Snug and office to the first floor. This two storey extension will extend slightly to the front to form porch area.
- Loft conversion to form a Master suite complete with Bedroom, Dressing room and bathroom. This includes Rooflights and Velux Terrace to the rear.
- Removal of existing bay windows and new Square Bay windows installed.
- New Air source heat pump to side elevation.
- New fence to North boundary to match the height of the neighbours. The applicant's fence is approximately 2m in height whereas the neighbours' fence is 2.3m approximately due to the change in level.

The materials proposed are as follows:

- Walls to be finished with self-coloured render.
- New aluminium windows.
- Roof tiles to match existing.
- Single ply membrane to single storey flat roof.
- Velux rooflights to loft conversion.

The design approach has been guided by an understanding of the setting, meeting the client's needs while balancing the privacy of neighbours. This material palette is in line with other recent domestic development in the area. Properties have been refurbished to be more contemporary improving the area from the dated housing that can be found. The size of the development is also comparable to many other properties in the vicinity.

Pre-application advice.

Pre-application advice was sought from the local authority on the proposals and further clarification was sought following additional evidence/justification was provided. The design has been altered partly in consideration of the comments received and the clients own ideas. The front gable has been removed and a simple flat roof is included. This allows all for an increase in solar panels to be included on the design.

Justification in response to Pre-application comments.

The principal of development was welcomed by the local Authority with only some concern raised. The following justification ensures the design complies with planning policy and the local area. The following is to be read in conjunction with appendix A.

1. LOCAL CHARACTER IS HIGHLY ECLECTIC – NOT UNIFORM OR SUBSERVIENT

The evidence shows that Nicholas Avenue, Markham Avenue, and Newark Drive exhibit **substantial architectural variation**, including:

- Full-height two-storey side extensions
- No first-floor set-backs
- Matching ridge heights

- Prominent gables and front projections
- Widespread use of render

Examples provided in the evidence include:

- 5 & 7 Markham Avenue – large, full-height extensions and altered roof profiles
- 11 & 13 Markham Avenue – two-storey front/side extensions with roof terrace and bay windows
- 10, 12, 18, and 20 Newark Drive – full-height side extensions without any subservient set-back

Past planning officer reports have described the area as “**an eclectic collection**... of differently designed two-storey properties... many of which have been substantially enlarged,” further reinforce this position.

It is clear from the evidence that these streets – Nicholas Avenue, Markham Avenue, and Newark Drive – **do not display a uniform architectural style or strict adherence to a single design principle**. Instead, they are characterised by a rich mixture of building styles and forms, resulting from various extensions and alterations carried out over the years.

The specific examples cited – such as 5 & 7 Markham Avenue with their substantial extensions and altered rooflines, 11 & 13 Markham Avenue featuring roof terraces and bay windows, and the properties at Newark Drive with full-height side extensions and no set-back – collectively illustrate the established pattern of development. These precedents show that the **area’s character is shaped by adaptation and variety**, not by adherence to a single architectural template.

The evidence demonstrates that the prevailing architectural character of the area is **highly varied and non-uniform**. Extensions, alterations and new builds have resulted in a patchwork of styles, heights, and materials, reflecting the evolving needs and tastes of residents. As such, the proposed development should be judged on its ability to integrate with this context, rather than on strict compliance with subservience requirements that are not representative of the locale

Given the diversity of forms, a strict application of SPD9’s subservience requirements is not reflective of the actual character of the locale, nor aligned with the NPPF’s instruction to **respond to local context**, not prescriptive design rules. Importantly, previous planning officer reports have recognised this eclecticism, noting that many properties have been significantly enlarged and redesigned. This acknowledgement supports the argument that the **local context is defined by diversity**, and any new proposals should respond to this reality. Therefore, imposing SPD9’s requirement for subservience – such as demanding set-backs or reduced ridge heights – would not only be inconsistent with the neighbourhood’s established character, but also contrary to the principles set out in the NPPF, which prioritises context-driven design over rigid, prescriptive rules.

2. RIDGE HEIGHT & FIRST FLOOR ALIGNMENT

The evidence demonstrates that the requirement for subservience is **not characteristic of the area** and therefore should **not be rigidly applied** in this context. SPD9 must be interpreted proportionately and about what is *actually built*, not what may be theoretically desirable in uniform estates.

Across Nicholas Avenue, Markham Avenue, and Newark Drive, the evidence identifies multiple examples of two-storey side extensions constructed without any upper-floor set-back, including several that rise to a full matching ridge height with the host dwelling. These include, but are not limited to, the extensions at 5 Markham Avenue, 7 Markham Avenue, 11 Markham Avenue, and 20 Newark Drive — each demonstrating a **clear precedent for full-height additions** integrated harmoniously into their streets.

Furthermore, the purpose of a set-back in SPD9 is typically to:

- Reduce perceived bulk

- Maintain legibility of the original dwelling
- Avoid terracing effects

However, in this case:

- The streetscape already displays considerable variation in form, massing, and frontages
- There is no continuous repeating pattern of stepped-back first-floor elements in the area
- The proposed extension sits within a street where irregularity is already the defining character, not uniformity

In addition, a set-back at first floor level would introduce awkward junctions, disrupt the geometry of the proposed extension, and result in a poorer-quality design relative to the clean, coherent form currently proposed. The NPPF encourages **good design and coherent form**, not forced subservience where it would undermine design quality or conflict with local context.

In this case, the evidence clearly shows that matching the ridge height and continuing/projecting the front wall line of the upper floor is the approach most in keeping with the prevailing character. The absence of a set-back should therefore be considered appropriate, consistent with local precedent, and visually compatible with the surrounding built environment.

3. MATERIALITY (RENDER) – CONSISTENT & FUNCTIONAL

Render will be applied to existing and proposed walls which is inline with other properties

The evidence demonstrates that render is an established and characteristic material in the surrounding area, appearing in multiple semi-detached pairs and detached properties across Nicholas Avenue, Markham Avenue, and Newark Drive.

The evidence includes numerous examples of dwellings finished wholly or partially in render — in white, cream, and yellow tones — creating a material palette across the neighbourhood that is visually diverse rather than uniform. This includes properties such as 3 Markham Avenue (white), 5 Markham Avenue (yellow), 11 Markham Avenue (cream), and several properties along Newark Drive. In many of these instances, render covers significant areas of visible elevation, illustrating its long-standing acceptance within the local street scene. It's important to note that 1&3 Markham Avenue and 11&13 Markham Avenue are 2 pairs of semi-detached properties where 1 side is render and the other isn't, emphasizing that the visual diversity includes directly attached properties.

Importantly, the adjoining and nearby streets do not display a consistent brick-only character, nor is there a dominant frontage rhythm that relies on exposed brickwork. As a result, insisting on strict brick-matching would be inconsistent with the reality of the built environment.

In addition to being contextually appropriate, render provides several functional and technical advantages that directly support good design and sustainability outcomes:

1. Enhanced thermal performance

Modern render systems can substantially improve the building's thermal envelope, reduce heat loss and contribute to lower energy consumption. This aligns with the NPPF's core sustainability objective to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon impact through fabric-first measures.

2. Weather and moisture protection

Whitburn's coastal exposure subject's properties to wind-driven rain, salt, and moisture ingress. Render acts as a protective barrier, improving long-term durability and reducing maintenance burden.

3. Treatment of aging or defective brickwork

The evidence notes that portions of the existing brickwork at No.14 are poor in quality. Applying render provides a coherent façade treatment, avoids patch-repair mismatching, and visually enhances the existing dwelling — a design-led improvement consistent with national and local design policy.

4. Visual coherence and integration with proposed extensions

A rendered treatment often provides a more unified finish than attempts to match new brickwork with older, weathered brick. As the evidence demonstrates, existing houses across the street have successfully used render to visually integrate older structures with newer additions. The proposed use of render would achieve the same principle, maintain design coherence and improve aesthetic consistency. It is important to note that a match to the existing brickwork would be difficult to achieve.

5. Precedent-based justification

Render is not only present but commonplace in the immediate area. This makes it a materially correct response to the neighbourhood's established architectural language. The aim of good design is to respond to place-specific context, and in this case the context is already defined by significant render use and a mix of finishes.

When considering:

- The widespread use of render identified in the evidence,
- The significant technical and environmental benefits,
- The mixed, eclectic material palette of the surrounding context, and
- The positive visual impact of a unified, durable façade treatment,

...the proposed use of render should be considered wholly appropriate, visually compatible, and consistent with both policy and local precedent.

4. FRONT GABLE FEATURE

The original proposal included a front gable which has now been removed following the Pre-application comments. Although this removes floor space the benefit is an increase to the number of Solar PV Cells that can be installed to the roof. It's important to note that a lack of set-back also ensures the panels are not shaded by the stepped roofline and maximises the surface area available for Solar PV Cells.

5. FRONT BUILDING LINE

The relationship between the application site and 12a Nicholas Avenue is already defined by a pronounced offset, as No.12a sits noticeably forward of both the applicant's property and No.16. Crucially, the **front rendered gable at No.12a projects approximately 2.8 metres** beyond the east elevation of the applicant's dwelling and sits **around 3 metres from the pedestrian highway**.

By comparison, the proposal at No.14 introduces a **modest 1-metre forward projection**, meaning the new extension would remain **significantly recessed**—approximately **1.8 metres behind the forward-most point of No.12a**. This ensures the proposal does **not encroach upon**, disrupt, or challenge the established building line. Instead, it **preserves the stepped pattern** already present along this section of the street.

Accordingly, the proposed forward projection is **measured, proportionate, and visually harmonious**, integrating comfortably with the existing rhythm and character of Nicholas Avenue.

Conclusion.

Considering:

- The diverse and eclectic local character
- The many full-height, non-subservient extensions in the immediate area
- The widespread presence of render
- The modest and contextually appropriate front projection
- The strong precedent base
- The sustainability benefits of the proposal

...it is believed that the design is appropriate, policy-compliant, and respectful of the true architectural character of the neighbourhood.

With the changes proposed from the original Pre-application to this full application, plus the sustainability aspect of the project, increase insulation, air source heat pump and inclusion of Solar PV cells to the roof it is believed that the proposal is acceptable in terms of planning policy and the surrounding area.

Appendix A



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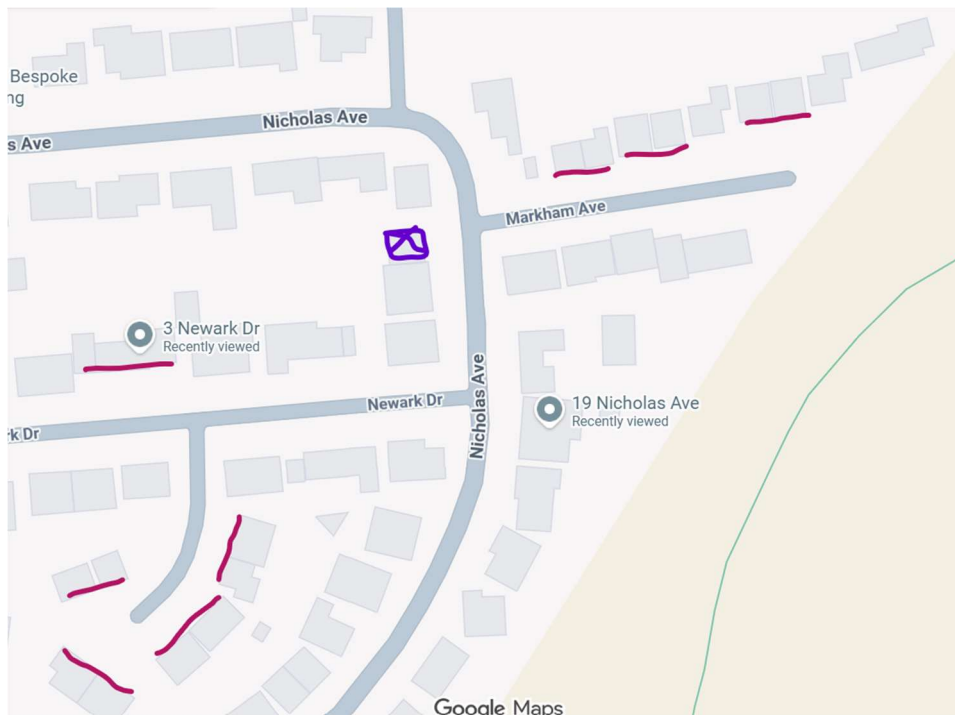
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Appendix A

Semi-pair	Address	Extension details	Rendered	Roof	Year of approval
1	1 Markham Avenue	No records	None	Hip	N/A
	3 Markham Avenue	Garage extended forward + above garage extension. Gable converted to hip above garage.	White	Gable	Pre-1990.
2	5 Markham Avenue	(1) Above garage extension (2) Roof extended hip to hip over above garage extension.	Yellow	Hip	1) pre-1990. 2) Roof extended as part of 2007 rear extension plans.
	7 Markham Avenue	1) Above garage extension 2) Converted garage to room. Extension of roof over extension.	White	Hip	1) Pre-1990 2) 2023
3	11 Markham Avenue	1) Extension over garage 2) Replacement roof over extension	Cream	Gable	1) 1992 2) 2014
	13 Markham Avenue	1) First floor side extension 2) 2 storey front extension including roof terrace from bedroom, new 'bay' windows	None	Gable	1) 2010 & 2012 (same plans?) 2) 2017
4	3 Newark Drive	No plans	Cream	Gable	No plans
	5 Newark Drive	Garage demolition and 2 storey side extension	Cream	Gable	2008
5	22 Newark Drive	Front porch extension	None	Hip	2016
	24 Newark Drive	No relevant planning	None	Gable	N/A
6	18 Newark Drive	Two storey side extension	None	Hip	2003
	20 Newark Drive	Two story front & side extension	None	Gable	2009
7	14 Newark Drive	Extension over garage and construction of new garage	None	Gable	1993
	16 Newark Drive	No over garage/extension planning?	None	Gable	??
8	12 Newark Drive	Two storey side extension	None	Gable	2007
	10 Newark Drive	Two storey side extension – garage, porch, bedroom	None	Gable	1985

Appendix A

Map of locations (purple = 14 Nicholas Avenue, pink lines = semi-detached property)



Pair 1 – 1 & 3 Markham Avenue (Below)



Appendix A

Pair 2 – 5 & 7 Markham Avenue (Note: 7 Markham has been updated since google maps drive by below)



Pair 3 - 11 & 13 Markham Avenue (Below)



Appendix A

Pair 4 – 5 & 3 Newark Drive (Below)



Pair 5 – 22 & 24 Newark Drive (Below)



Pair 6 – 20 & 18 Newark Drive (Below)



Appendix A

Pair 7 – 12 & 14 Newark Drive (Below)



Pair 8 – 10 & 12 Newark Drive (Below)



Officers Reports references

- (1) 24 Nicholas Avenue: Officers report (2023) for 2 storey extension – detached property
Planning Ref: ST/0923/22/HFUL
 - “on the west side of Nicholas Avenue, with a rather eclectic collection of differently designed two-storey properties on the eastern side of Nicholas Avenue, many of which have been extended or re-built over the years.” “Considering the eclectic character of the street scene as a whole, it is considered that the proposals would convey sensitive consideration of the surroundings”
 - The statement also expands of the suitability of bringing forward the elevation to the front.

(2) 23 Nicholas Avenue: Officers report (2017) for first floor front/side extension – detached property
Planning Ref: ST/1009/17/HFUL

- “The application site is located on Nicholas Avenue, a residential area of mixed character, displaying a variation in the scale of dwellings, and a range of architectural styles. The existing properties within the street scene are a mixture of bungalows and two-storey dwellings.”
- “Sizeable extensions have also been granted planning permission at 19 Nicholas Avenue, 2 Markham Avenue and 6 Markham Avenue to the north, all of which are within close proximity to of the application site.”
- “The largest, and most visible part of the application proposals from the public realm is the extension to the front. This would be a dual pitched roof extension, which would be added at first floor, above the existing flat-roofed garage, and would extend back to be level with the existing main rear wall of the property. This would be just over half the width of the property, and would have a maximum ridge height of 8 metres above ground floor level.”
- The design of this extension and the suite of alterations across the property would complement the existing eclectic mix and, would in particular demonstrate similarities in the design approach demonstrated at 21 and 25 Nicholas Avenue. It is considered that the development would make a positive contribution to the street scene, particularly as the existing dwelling currently appears to be in a poor state of repair.

(3) 35 Nicholas Avenue officers report – rebuild of house
Planning Ref: ST/1032/22/VC

- Nicholas Avenue comprises a variety of property types which include bungalows, dormer bungalows and two storey properties in both traditional and contemporary styles. Many dwellings in the locality have been substantially enlarged in size by extensions and there have been several applications approved in recent years for the replacement of original dwellings with larger ones.