

A N D R E W  W E L L S

Architectural Planning & Design

Design & Access Statement

In support of the proposed Section 73 Application at:

Hendry House

1 Oakhill Road,

Sevenoaks

Kent TN13 1NY

PL / 634 / 05

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Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been produced to accompany a Section 73 application to vary Condition 2 (approved drawings) of permission reference SE/15/02686/FUL dated 2nd November 2015 for the *“Demolition of the existing office building and store/outbuilding. Erection of a new two storey office building to include roof lights and solar panels. Erection of a detached garage accessed from Oakhill Road. Landscaping and associated works.”* This full plans planning permission was implemented in September 2017, with the demolition of the store / outbuilding and the erection of the new garage.

This Design & Access Statement should be read in conjunction with drawing numbers PL/634/01 and PL/634/02, which form part of the Section 73 application, to vary condition 2 of approval reference SE/15/02686/FUL, by substituting approved drawings for alternative drawings, in order to amend the design and internal layout of the office building. The applicant is seeking to amend the design of the building, in order to better adapt it to the current, difficult economic climate.

Site Assessment

The application site is located within the built confines of Sevenoaks, on a private road, within a residential area. It is situated at the Northern end of Oakhill Road, towards London Road. Buildmart House, an office building, lies to the North of the site, Sevenoaks Railway Station to the East and residential dwellings to the South and West. The site occupies an area of approximately 1,183m² and is best described as being irregular in shape, relatively level towards the boundary with Oakhill Road and steeply sloping to the East. An area of mature trees, which is protected by a Woodland Tree Preservation Order, covers the North-East section of the site. Externally Hendry House assumes the appearance of a domestic bungalow, however, it is in use as a commercial building and has been for several years, with the applicant operating a building contractor business from the premises. The site is accessed from Oakhill Road, via its own private access, with off-street parking being available in the form of four parking spaces, plus an additional space within the garage. The surrounding residential properties on Oakhill Road are predominantly individually designed 2 – 3 storey homes, set back from the road, within large plots. The nearest dwelling houses to Hendry House are 2 Oakhill Road, to the South-West and 14 Courtwood Drive, to the West, both of which are situated approximately 28m away, whilst the office building, known as Buildmart House, to the North, is situated approximately 17m away. Hendry House sits at an elevated level to Buildmart House, due to the sloping nature of Oakhill Road. There are no properties directly to the South of the application site. Sevenoaks Railway Station lies to the East of the site, however, the expanse of mature trees, within the site curtilage, provides a natural form of screening from the railway line.

Relevant Planning History

Several applications have previously been submitted on the site, however, this application is concerned with approval reference SE/15/02686/FUL, dated 2nd November 2015, for the *“Demolition of the existing office building and store/outbuilding. Erection of a new two storey office building to include roof lights and solar panels. Erection of a detached garage accessed from Oakhill Road. Landscaping and associated works.”*

With this Section 73 application, the applicant is seeking to vary condition 2 (approved drawings) of permission reference SE/15/02686/FUL, by substituting previously approved drawings for revised drawings, in order to allow a redesign of the office building. The drawings to be substituted are as follows:-

- Approved drawing no. 4376-PD1-001 – Site Plan. Location Plan & Site Section A-A to be substituted with drawing no. PL/634/01 – Proposed Site Plan, Site Section and Site Location Plan;
- Approved drawing no. 4376-PD1-002 – Plans Elevations & Sections to be substituted with drawing no. PL/634/02 – Plans & Elevations.

Description of Proposal

The proposals, submitted under this Section 73 application, seek to alter the design of the approved office building, which is very modern and contemporary, with a curved, metal seam roof, aluminium aerofoil eaves and a combination of cladding materials to the elevations. Due to the curved nature of the roof, the second floor layout is very restrictive in terms of head room and offers limited additional office space. The applicant has carried out a costing exercise to build the office, as approved, however, this has proved to be uneconomical. Given the current, very difficult economic situation, a more cost-effective solution is required and this can be achieved through a traditionally designed building. The internal layout alterations proposed will provide better flexibility for the applicant, either to expand his business, or for the space to be subdivided, should the need arise in the future, as the second floor head room is not restricted and provides a much more useable floor area.

The proposed building, although quite different in appearance to that approved under the 2015 permission, maintains the same siting within the plot, set further back from Oakhill Road than the existing building, to minimise its impact on the street scene, and is of a similar scale. It is not, therefore, believed that the proposals will have any adverse or detrimental effect on either the neighbouring properties, nor on the character of the area and the existing street scene. It is felt that a more traditionally designed building would actually enhance the area and sit more comfortably within the street scene than the more modern, contemporary building that was approved. Due to the large separation distances between the site and the nearest neighbouring buildings, there will be no issues of overlooking, overshadowing or loss of amenity for the existing properties. As such, the proposals comply with Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (Design of New Development & Conservation), which states that *“all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated.”*

Hendry House has a long-established commercial use and approval reference SE/15/02686/FUL relates to the continued commercial use of the site. The current application is not seeking any alterations to this use class, it is simply seeking to ensure the building's future adaptability and to provide a more cost-effective build solution in difficult economic circumstances. It is, therefore, believed that the proposals accord with Policy L02 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (Development in Sevenoaks Urban Area), which states that *“existing suitable employment sites will be retained with the opportunity for regeneration and redevelopment to better meet the needs of business.”*

Amount

The 2015 planning permission allows for the demolition of the existing office building and the erection of one, new two storey building. The current proposals, submitted under this Section 73 application, do not seek any alterations to the number of buildings being proposed.

Layout and Density

The proposed office building will be sited in the same location, as previously approved and occupy a similar footprint to the buildings approved under SE/15/02686/FUL and SE/11/01662/FUL. As previously mentioned, the storage/outbuilding that existed on the site has already been demolished, under approval SE/15/02686/FUL and replaced with a new garage, which was also permitted under the same application.

Scale

The proposed office will be a two storey building, which is in keeping with the proposals approved under the previous application, SE/15/02686/FUL. It also complies with Policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan (Design Principles), which states that: *“the form of the proposed development would respond to the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the area.”*

Appearance & Design

The proposed design of the building, as shown on drawing number PL/634/02, indicates a more traditional 2 storey building. The traditional pitched roof style, as opposed to the approved curved style, will enable more useable office spaces and storage areas to be created on the second floor. The office building will be constructed from yellow stock bricks, with yellow stock brick soldier coursing below the windows and a natural slate roof. Windows will be double-glazed with grey frames. The building will, therefore, assume a much more residential appearance, which will be in keeping with the surrounding properties on Oakhill Road and will allow the office to blend in more seamlessly with the existing dwellings to the West and South West of the site. All materials to be used on the build will be high quality, sustainable materials, chosen to improve the thermal efficiency of the building, in order to minimise the impact of the new building on the environment. The proposals therefore accord with Policy SP1 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy and Policy EN1 of the Allocations and Development Management Plan.

Landscaping

A scheme of landscaping was approved under application reference: SE/15/02686/FUL and it is not proposed to make any alterations to this scheme.

Use

The continued commercial use of the site has previously been established under approval reference SE/15/02686/FUL and this Section 73 application is not seeking to alter the use class in any way.

Conclusion

In summary and, as demonstrated throughout this document, this Section 73 application is seeking to vary condition 2 of approval reference SE/15/02686/FUL by substituting approved drawings for alternate drawings. By so doing, the proposed amendments to the design and internal layout of the office building will ensure the construction process is much more cost effective, as well as providing a more flexible internal layout, which can better accommodate the future needs of the applicant's business.

On the basis that the proposed scheme is considered to be entirely appropriate in design and access terms, as demonstrated throughout this statement, the proposal is fully in accordance with both local and national planning policy. We would, therefore, respectfully request that the application be supported by Sevenoaks District Council.