

Location: 1 Parsons Croft, Rectory Lane, Hever, TN8 7LH

Proposal: Replacement Garage and Garden Store

The existing house is a two storey semi-detached building with garage located in the corner plot at the end of a series of six semi-detached dwellings. Uckfield Lane runs along the western boundary of the plot, from which the property has a vehicular access onto. There is an agricultural field along the southern boundary of the plot. The existing garage is situated in south-west corner of the plot adjacent to the access onto Uckfield Lane, approximately 20m from the main house. At the front of the house is a small front garden through which a gate provides access to a pedestrian footpath.

Our application seeks to acquire permission to demolish the existing garage building and replace with a new garage and garden store.

The current garage building was granted permission in May 1962 and subsequently constructed. The structure is too small for a modern car and is also in a poor state of repair due to age.

We intend to replace the existing structure with a single-story garage and garden store with a floorspace of approximately 38sqm. The structure will be a timber framed, square form building clad in featheredge boarding with a pitched roof of shingle tiles. The design and materials we are proposing are to ensure that the building is in keeping with the surrounding area and is sympathetic to both the existing house and of a similar appearance to other local outbuildings. The proposed structure is in keeping with the general character and architecture of the surrounding area.

The proposed structure will sit approximately 3m back from Uckfield Lane as shown on the proposed plans. We have already planted a traditional English hedge along boundary to ensure that the building will be shielded from the road. All existing tree and shrub cover will be maintained as per the existing situation. The garage is not overlooked.

Due to the topography of the site, the garage sits below the main house. This ensures that the garage will appear subservient to the main dwelling. The proposed pitched roof, and square form of the garage is indicative of a rural outbuilding and will not dominate the main building.

The garage is in close proximity to two mature oak trees. To ensure that the replacement garage will not have any detrimental impact on them we will be demolishing and removing the existing concrete slab. In addition to this we will not be opting for a traditional trench foundation instead we will be using screw piles as they are a far less intrusive foundation system. A screw pile consists of a slender, hollow steel shaft with a small number of steel helices (or screw threads) welded to it.

Installing screw piles is a smooth and steady process whereby screw piles are rotated into the ground using a handheld or excavator mounted torque head. Installation occurs at a constant speed, inducing no vibration and requiring no pre-auguring.

A screw pile displaces a comparatively small amount of soil & tree roots compared to a traditional micro pile. The helices attached to the screw pile shaft are deliberately made from thin steel plate, with a blunt protruding edge to ensure that where possible, roots are moved out of the way during installation rather than severing them. The pile shaft is considerable smaller than that of a micro pile so again, displacement of soil and tree roots is minimised.

The use of screw piles will mean that the floor is suspended above the ground allowing for improved water flow and infiltration to the tree roots. We also intend for the gutters to discharge under the garage to ensure that the tree gets as much water from the surrounding soil as possible. An additional benefit of the suspended floor is that there is increased capacity for gaseous exchange between the roots and the surrounding air which is not currently possible due to the existing concrete slab (which will be removed).

In conclusion the proposed garage is a replacement of the existing structure and will have a positive impact on the wider plot and is in keeping with other local outbuildings.