

## **Heritage Statement March 2021**

### **Replacement front fence, new gates and new ground floor side window opening**

#### **Beech Hill House Broomrigg Road Fleet GU514LS**

##### **1. Introduction**

This statement is submitted because the application site lies within the North Fleet Conservation Area, which is classed as a heritage asset for planning purposes. It has been prepared in line with Hart District Council's requirements for householder planning applications. The application seeks permission to replace the front boundary fence, add new gates and to add a window opening on the south facing ground floor elevation.

##### **2. Location**

Beech Hill House is located near the bottom of Broomrigg Road, close to the point at which it joins Calthorpe Road. Both roads are unadopted and sit within Character Area 6 of the North Fleet Conservation Area. Properties are generally detached and occupy large tree-lined plots.

##### **3. Planning Framework and Description of the Heritage Asset**

The Article 4 Direction for North Fleet Conservation Area applies only to front boundaries and requires permission to be sought for the erection, alteration or removal of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure to the frontage of a dwelling. This statement evaluates the application in the context of Hart District Council's Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032: policies NBE2 and NBE8; and Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 saved policy: Gen 1 - Developments in General. It also considers the requirements of the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2032: policy 16, North Fleet Conservation Area and the recommendations in the Character Appraisal and Management Proposals 2008.

#### **4. Proposed Works**

The proposed works are:

- a) Replace the front boundary fence and add new gates. This will tidy-up the existing messy boundary appearance, improve security and deter deer and some other wildlife from accessing the property.
  - i) The existing wire mesh fence with soft wood posts has deteriorated and mostly collapsed. The intended replacement will be in the same place and will comprise softwood posts with three chestnut cleft rails at a height of about 1.2m. It will be about 15m long, fitting between one side of the entrance drive and the neighbour's stone pier on the boundary. New evergreen shrubs will be planted to fill the existing gaps along the boundary so that a line of shrubs will be able to grow through the fence.
  - ii) The existing metal posts on either side of the drive will be replaced by two new softwood posts holding two softwood 5 bar field gates, hung as a pair (each being 2.1m wide and between 1.1m - 1.2m high).
  
- b) Create a new side window opening to allow light into the lounge. This will be on the ground floor, south facing elevation. It will be of the same style, colour and size as the existing windows at the front of the house (about 1.2m x 1.2m).

#### **5. Assessment of Impact on the Heritage Asset**

Policy NBE2 requires an assessment of the impact on landscape character and visual quality proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and Policy NBE8 requires a heritage statement that is proportionate to the heritage asset and the potential impact of the proposal. As explained below, the proposed alterations are minor in scale, uncontroversial in nature and will have no adverse impact on the heritage asset.

Existing boundary treatments on Broomrigg Road vary. Fences are typically wire mesh, wooden post and rail, wooden palisade style, and wood panel. The most common type of gate is the 5 bar gate. Shrubs/hedging are also commonly incorporated and there is an abundance of trees along the verges. Opposite Beech Hill House is a wire mesh fence and 1.8m high wooden panel fence. On one side the neighbour has a 1.2m high wooden post and rail fence and a 5 bar gate hanging from stone piers; on the other side the neighbour has a wire mesh fence.

The property's existing fence has partially collapsed and some shrubs have died off leaving gaps and an unkempt look. The boundary proposal represents a sustainable improvement that is consistent with other boundary treatments in the road, noting that the chestnut rails will further enhance the woodland feel. It is in keeping with the local character by virtue of scale, design and materials and avoids any loss of amenity to adjoining uses as required by GEN1.

The boundary treatment will reflect the semi-rural nature of the Conservation Area as described in Policy 16 of the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan and the natural wooded feel noted in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals for Broomrigg Road. In particular, the choice of fence will allow shrubs to grow through it, producing a natural looking green boundary, consistent with the preference for hedges, with inconspicuous fencing behind for security. The wooden gates for the driveway will be modest as per the Policy preference. There will be no impact on trees, the verges will remain natural and the overall views will be maintained. A Tree Statement is also included with the application.

One issue with the abundance of trees in the area is a restriction of light reaching the property, even allowing for tree management. The lounge suffers, in particular, from a dark and gloomy feel at present that necessitates extended use of electric lighting during the day. A new window opening is proposed to help address this. Its position on the ground floor, south elevation should be uncontroversial. It overlooks a side boundary screened by Rhododendrons from the neighbour's garage side wall and will not be visible from the road. The same type and size of window as used at the front of the house will be fitted, which is generally in keeping with other properties in the area. It is noted that the Article 4 Direction for North Fleet does not impose planning constraints on installing windows.

## **6. Conclusion**

The application site is not identified as having any special historical or other distinctive qualities, other than being in Character Area 6 of the North Fleet Conservation Area. The proposed works will enhance the property's utility and security; they will be straight-forward and minor in scale and nature. They comply with normal development control restrictions as well as the requirements of Conservation Area Policy. They will have no adverse impact on the heritage asset and should help conserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



