

Design, access and heritage statement

July 2023

Sunray, Chatter Alley, Dogmersfield, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8SS



Introduction

The preparation of this statement meets the statutory requirement as supporting documentation for the Householder planning application submitted to Hart District Council for the proposed extension and conversion works combined internal alterations and fenestration changes.

The document aims to set down our design philosophy, detailing the urban design, architectural approach and access principles for this application plus describe the way in which the property form and its open space areas provide a legible and positive experience of the development; enhanced by a consistent architectural style and materials palette, in keeping with the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area, of which it is an integral part thereof.

It assesses the character and immediate appearance of the location plus offers an insight into the evolution of the proposal from the initial concept to the accompanying principals; all which when combined have significant bearing. The proposed development can be summarised by the following characteristics:

- development supports and complies with current local planning policies
- existing brownfield site, located within identified residential settlement boundary
- located within the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area
- extension works follow the removal of the existing entrance storm porch
- full conversion of existing detached double garage
- single storey extension linking the house to the aforementioned garage and front infill extension below existing roofscape
- overall application site area approximate 0.065 hectares
- more efficient, effective use of land in sought after location
- improved private family home to maximise its only garden area the property enjoys to its frontage
- no alteration to the existing vehicular access from Chatter Alley
- sufficient parking levels remain for a four bedroom property as no increase in the number of bedrooms
- fully wooded location with no overlooking issues
- proposals require the removal of one minor tree with no further pruning work to facilitate the development
- remaining trees are afforded appropriate protection to adhere to accompanying arboricultural report
- all works designed to adhere to recommendations of the accompanying bat scoping report
- designed to adopt traditional, local building materials to blend in with immediate vernacular of the host dwelling
- opportunity to further enhance a beautiful, sustainable residential environment
- no disturbance to the surrounding properties
- opportunity to improve thermal performance and energy efficiency of dwelling

Development content

The application site is in Dogmersfield, a small rural village in north east Hampshire, close to the border with Surrey and located in a beautiful, established and matured residential area south west of the Fleet town centre. Fleet itself is some 41 miles from London, 16 miles from Guildford, 11 miles from Basingstoke and 8 miles from Camberley, all easily served by the excellent road network leading to the M3 or A3 or Southwest train services from Fleet, Farnham or Basingstoke.

As part of a countryside setting, it is a developed domestic property within identified residential settlement boundary where expansion and alteration is deemed acceptable. The current property on the outskirts of Dogmersfield and is located within the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area as the canal runs parallel to the western boundary.

Chatter Alley is a tree lined, winding road meandering quietly through open farmland and countryside accessed from the Church Lane/Pilcott Road junction in leading from Crookham Village to the East and Pale Lane/The Hurst junction approaching Winchfield to the north west.

Sunay is central to Chatter Alley on the western side, separating the canal from the road, where properties vary in age, character and size but generally large, detached family houses set in spacious plots surrounded by trees. Much alteration of the properties has taken place over the years but distinctly they remain two storey detached houses with a mix detached or integral garages set in a variety of sized plots with no specific pattern or height but all adopt a traditional, rural architectural style.

The application site is occupied by a two storey, detached dwelling with detached double garage immediately to the southern boundary. It is surrounded by garden area laid to grass fronting the road with mature planting areas, mixed hedging and trees screening each boundary from neighbouring properties. Due to its orientation however, there is limited space to the rear due the proximity of the canal embankment which lies at a higher level than the property.



The dwelling is set back from the highway, separated by its only garden space plus a long, gravel finished driveway with single width access from Chatter Alley to the south east corner offering suitable levels of parking but no turning facility. With an external footprint including the detached garage of 139m² and a gross internal habitable area of 181.6m² (1955 sq. ft) over the two floors, the overall built form equates to 21.4% of the application site, suggesting potential capacity for cautious enlargement.

The 4 bedroom detached dwelling is a traditionally designed, two storey red brick property with contrasting waney edge, horizontal timber boarding elements to the upper floor level. The mansard styled roof is laid to small, plain concrete roof tiles and half round matching ridge tiles, interrupted by red brick chimneys and flat roof projecting front facing dormer. The catslide roof drops down over the Kitchen doors, extending out to form a covered porch area sat on timber post.

The feature outshot with stunning gable looks out across the front garden and further towards the open fields on the opposite side of the road. A projecting flat roof splayed bay at ground floor level is complimented by a matching white painted timber splayed bay window above with decorative timber corbels. Previous extension works to the rear looked to embrace the style of the house with views across the canal primarily at first floor level given the topographical land levels.

The property adopts white upvc casement windows with mock glazing bars and similar, fully glazed French casement doors, partially glazed side doors and garage personnel door. The extension used varying white upvc arched windows to the side and inclined timber rooflight above in the limited areas where this was possible to the sloping ceilings to offer additional daylight to the additional space.

The welcome to the home is via a small, side facing red brick storm porch with gabled, plain tiled roof which blends to match the host dwelling with white upvc window and green painted, partially glazed timber front door.

The layout follows a traditional form with individual, equally sized rooms surrounding the central Hall with front facing Living Room and Kitchen each enjoying a stunning fireplace then a rear facing Dining Room with access to the rear terrace area. The remainder of the layout perhaps doesn't maximise the potential space with large Utility Room accessing a further Boot Room with integral Shower Room with then further access into a Play Room, again with access to each side amenity area.

The central staircase leads to the first floor with a spacious Landing surrounded by four equally sized Bedrooms and Family Bathroom overlooking the Garage. The rear facing Master has stunning views along the bend of the canal with an Ensuite and Closet. The second rear facing Bedroom has a characteristic vaulted ceiling and French casement doors to maximise the views. Two further front facing Bedrooms have storage facility, a fireplace from the main chimney that runs through each and enviable views once moor of the countryside opposite.

The detached double garage, set at an angle to the house due to the adjacent boundary line is approx. 3.6m from the entrance porch and has a more formal appearance with red brick facing, simple plain tiled gabled roof and waney edge timber boarding to the front facing gable which all tends to match Sunray. White coated, partially glazed pressed metal Garage vehicular entrance doors face the driveway with white upvc casement window and half glazed white upvc personnel door each facing the house.

In short, the location is characterised by a mix of detached residential dwellings in an informal pattern, set in irregular plots of similar size, consisting of a diversity of architectural styles but no particular design consistency

As the application site is situated within identified settlement, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development provided proposals are in compliance with development plan policies and that no unacceptable harm to residential amenity, the natural environment and wildlife, the Conservation Area vernacular, matured trees, highway safety or any other material planning considerations arise.

Application site assessment

The site is largely rectangular in shape with boundaries a maximum 34m long and 24m wide with an area totalling approx. 650m² (0.065 hectares). The dwelling footprint does not follow the same shape as its boundaries nor is it central to the overall plot.

The front of dwelling is set a minimum 10m from the front boundary to the east and just 2m from the rear boundary to the west, which it shares with the towpath of the Basingstoke Canal, completely screened by a dense belt of trees and wild scrub. The house is a minimum 8m from the side boundary shared with Pippins to the south, though this is separated by the detached garage which is only approx. 0.5m from the boundary line. To the northern side boundary, there is a distance of approx. 3m from Sunray to the neighbouring Towpath Cottage boundary line.



The dwelling is separated from Chatter Alley by its own gravel driveway and adjacent private garden area laid to lawn, surrounded by matured boundary hedging and sapling trees. Immediately from the front facing Kitchen doors is a raised paved patio area and low level planting.

The remainder of the property is laid mainly to gravel paths leading around the house and between the house and garage with a small, walled gravel terrace area to the rear with access via a path leading up to the canal towpath. Low level planting areas are dwarfed by large overhanging trees between the property and canal plus mixed hedging to the remaining boundaries which help to offer a secluded, mainly private garden environment.

The overhanging trees are found beyond the rear boundary but do impact on the level of natural daylight the rear facing rooms of Sunray can enjoy. Only a number of small trees are located in the property itself which predominantly line the driveway as it leads from the access. All have been carefully considered and reference is made to the Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement accompanying the application.

The topographical levels are generally consistent across site with the property set at a similar level to the adjacent access road. detached and garage. There is a significant rise in ground levels beyond the rear boundary leading toward the towpath of the canal though such land is beyond the ownership of the applicants therefore it can be concluded that current ground levels will not unduly influence design proposals.



All existing boundary fencing, planting and hedging are will be retained as will the driveway access. The manner of the proposals means the same degree of space separation from the neighbouring properties will remain, with spacious gardens and boundaries well screened.

The primary consideration will be the protection and preservation of bats which have been encountered using the property envelope. However, given the nature of the alterations, it has been established by our consultant ecologists that such works will not interfere with the bats species as all works can be constructed and completed without impacting on their existing habitat or flight lines. Reference is made to the Bat Scoping Report accompanying the application.

Therefore the site is full of opportunity as there is little physical constraint to restrict design other than the size/location of the trees, the relationship with the boundaries, local parking standards/vehicular movement and the prerequisite consideration of the neighbouring property's amenity.

The application site is within the Dogmersfield Neighbourhood Plan Area but other than this, not identified in the development plan as having any special historical, townscape, environmental or other distinctive quality other than its Conservation Area setting. It is outside Article 4 designation or a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) but is with 5km of a Special Protection Area (SPA).

There are no additional restrictions other than normal development control aspects to unduly influence design with every consideration given to the status of the setting, to those who enjoy and preserve the canal and to the neighbouring households

The Planning Act 1990 explains that the council should '*determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character of appearance of which it is desired to preserve or enhance*'.

The NPPF sets out that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

Given this and the otherwise unconstrained location, the general characteristics of the site and the prevailing pattern of the surrounding established built environment, it is reasonable to pursue a proposal for extension and conversion works to the property as long as they remain in accordance with the relevant Planning Policies and ensures the immediate area is unharmed and indeed enhanced.

Relevant planning history

To justify this application, it is essential that the planning history of the site is fully assessed and it provides a useful chronology through time of how the site and more recent schemes have been assessed by the local planning authority since the present house was introduced. A number of applications are listed within the historical records relating to land adjoining or south of Sunray though these are not included below:

ref: 18/01812/CA	validated description decision	7 August 2018 Fell Hazel approved 5 September 2018
ref: 09/00953/CA	validated description decision	24 April 2009 Maple: requires reduction in height as it is leaning against ridge and roof of garage, with potential for structural damage. approved 5 June 2009
ref: 05/02097/FUL	validated description decision	12 October 2005 Erection of two storey rear extension and first floor rear extension approved 1 December 2005
ref: 87/15994/FUL	validated description decision	10 November 1987 Detached double garage approved 31 December 1987
ref: 82/09311/HD	validated description decision	1 January 1982 2 storey extensions and porch approved 19 May 1982

Design solution

Planning is sought for the erection of a single storey side extension linking the house to the detached garage which will in turn be fully converted, combined with internal layout alterations, fenestration changes and ground floor front infill extension following removal of the entrance storm porch to form additional habitable accommodation to the detached residential dwelling.

At ground floor level, the intention is to convert the current double Garage then link this to the host dwelling via a single storey extension. Options at the design concept varied between the removal of the Garage and its integration into the house via new build extension or its retention and subsequent conversion. Following advice from the ecology consultants and given the close proximity to the trees behind and side boundary line, the decision was made retain the structure in its current condition and convert internally and this would have minimal impact on those material consideration.



Following removal of the current storm porch, the flat roof link extension will introduce a spacious, open plan Kitchen/Dining/Everyday Living Area overlooking the driveway and front of the property via new bi-fold doors and full height windows introduced in place of the garage entrance doors. The new Kitchen will accommodate integrated appliances to improve facilities and match the demand for modern dining, lifestyle and collective family living both internally and help celebrate the outside environment.

A flat roof design has been adopted rather than a pitched roof for a number of reasons. These include to lessen the impact on the existing external envelope of the garage with the protection of the bats a priority, to prevent the loss of the first floor side windows serving the Family Bathroom, Ensuite and Master Bedroom this ensuring natural daylight and ventilation remains in these rooms and to minimise the perceived bulk of the link extension from a street scene perspective, enabling views of the trees beyond to be maintained.

Its size is solely dictated by the position of the Garage from the house and only takes up space formerly as gravel path between the two building. As no alteration to the external envelope of the garage is possible and due consideration given to the rear boundary line to maintain access, the shape follows the present orientation between the two which adds to the individual character of the home. Following the existing lines also means that there will be no encroachment on the neighbour properties or the built form closer to the canal.

A red brick facing with detail soldier coursing to the window and doors heads matches the host dwelling with stone coping to the head of parapet walls. White powder coated aluminium windows and bi-fold doors blend into the current window style with high level picture windows to the rear to frame the stunning views up to the canal without restricting the Kitchen design. Low level, flat skylights and included to flood the Kitchen with natural daylight in an otherwise dark corner of the property due to the size of trees behind. These skylight will incorporate integral, automated black-out blinds on timers to ensure the flight path of the bats are not affected by artificial light pollution.

Internal alterations open up the existing ground floor layout with an enlarged Entrance Hall welcoming you into a central area leading into the replacement Kitchen that also links the expanded front facing Sitting Room and Dining Room. Access through to a dedicated Utility Room and Shower Room remains with three exterior doors either enclosed by the extension works or replaced with windows to offer greater flexibility.

With the Kitchen now being repositioned, the covered access to the garden area will now be incorporated into the house by extending out below the existing roof structure and new doors to match the extension added. This will enable the current Living Room and Kitchen to be opened up to form a stunning Sitting Room that circles the twin faced fireplace, maximising the views across the beautiful garden and patio area.

This front extension will maintain the existing roof structure and finish to avoid excessive disruption and finished if facing quality red brickwork to match the existing to offer a seamless addition with no impact of the external environment or neighbouring property.



In lieu of the entrance porch being removed, a timber porch canopy on gallows brackets is introduced to the front door which will offer a connection to the retained timber cladding and with future planting, could add a very attractive vista from the large bi-fold doors from the Kitchen.

With no alteration at first floor level, there is no change to neighbouring properties in respect of overlooking or even visual perspective when viewed from their own gardens space.

The proposed extension works are not trying to reinvent the property; they simply look to complement the existing in terms of material use with an appearance to match the present and minimise impact on the character of the property. The applicants have expressed their desire to respect and preserve the immediate style of the location in their choice of external materials rather than employing a style that offers contrast or diversity.

The height of the proposals are appropriate when considering the location, its setting and relationship with the neighbouring properties. They remain sensitive and offer a form of development that reinforces special characteristics without affecting privacy or the natural screen that surrounds Sunray. They are scaled to respect the constraints within the location with an improved land use and successful integration without adversely impacting the street scene.

There is real responsibility to deliver a richer, improved version of the current dwelling that the location deserves. It is thought that the relationship between the new and extended design enhances the property in terms of external appearance and blends to offer a balanced mix of material palette and visual articulation.

The accompanying photographs establish the visual context of the current location and the drawings, which incorporate the design philosophy, illustrate the style of the proposals. It is trusted that the design helps complement the context of the property and provide a harmonious relationship to ensure neighbours suffer no adverse material impact.

It is hoped the use of locally sourced building materials that match those of the dwelling will justify a proposal that is easily absorbed with negligible impact on the surrounding built and natural environment, embracing and enhancing the incumbent style of Chatter Alley and the wider Dogmersfield community.

The remodelled house intends to reflect the immediate vernacular in terms of external material use, demonstrating a positive, well modelled contribution to the location which respects the narrative of its surroundings in line with local plan policies.

Designed solely for the current household to meet their specific needs; it affords the chance for an improved standard of living, space separation and amenity space and provides an opportunity for wider energy conservation in the use of modern construction technique.



The extended property increases the gross internal habitable floor area of the dwelling to 249.7m² (2688 sq. ft) over the two floors with an external footprint including the converted garage of 181.7m², equating to an overall built environment of 28% of the application site area, an increase of just 6.6% over largely underused paths and therefore surely, a far more appropriate use of valuable residential land resource in such an impressive, sought after location.

The built environment makes a vital contribution to supporting biodiversity with both gardens and buildings supporting a range of plants, invertebrates, birds and mammals. Development offers an opportunity to create habitats and to incorporate beneficial biodiversity features as part of good design and appropriate planting. By increasing the levels of soft landscaping it allows for new or replacement native varieties therefore enhancing biodiversity.

Given the nature and position of the redevelopment, it is trusted there would be no adverse impact on the setting of any built heritage asset that is found within a potential zone of influence of the development or not harm the character of the street scene.

When considering the potential impact (in heritage terms), the NPPF states that *'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'*.

The NPPF goes on to set out the tests for substantial harm and less than substantial harm. Relating to this proposal, the development is unlikely to result in any harm to the heritage asset. However, if the Council consider that the development is going to result in harm, this should be considered as 'less than substantial harm',

It continues *'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'*.

In this case, reflecting on the overall plot size, the only demolition being that of the small entrance porch and that most soft landscaping will remain, the development proposals will not be harmful in any form.

Likewise, given where the dwelling sits in terms of its juxtaposition with neighbouring buildings and its soft landscaping, the proposed extension works would not result in any demonstrable harm to the character or visual amenity of the area.

Access

The proposals have no effect on vehicular access when entering the property or approaching directly toward the dwelling as the single width gravel access driveway will be left untouched by the proposals. The current driveway configuration means that there is no turning facility due to the orientation of the house in relation to the detached garage, mature boundary hedging and limited private amenity garden space which is found only to the front of the house.

As there is no rear garden space due to the closeness of the rear boundary running parallel with the canal, it is imperative that no valuable garden area is lost to additional driveway to account for the conversion of the garage. The garage itself, as is common these days is used solely for the storage of garden furniture/tools and motorised household goods etc as well as cycle parking.



Once the garage is converted, these goods can continue to be easily stored behind the dwelling in potentially a replacement garden shed following the dismantling of the existing Summer House and log store.

As the proposals do not include an additional Bedroom, it is felt the current vehicular parking provision will remain acceptable given there will be a slight increase in driveway area immediately outside the front of the dwelling following removal of the existing entrance storm porch, Prunus tree (T1) and small area of planting below this.

The planned works look to enhance the lifestyle arrangements of the incumbent family (applicants) for their young family and therefore, as they will remain at the property there will be no net increase in the current traffic movements.

The nature of the application site also allows for ample parking for both residents and workmen throughout the duration of the alterations with the storage of materials and plant etc easily attainable within its boundaries, without impacting on the safe traffic movement to or from the property, its neighbours or traffic using Chatter Alley.

Conclusion

The proposal assists in the Council's target of accommodating currently developed land in order to maximise residential development, ease residential housing pressures and secure regeneration opportunities which contribute to the local economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

In light of these conditions and general characteristics of the site, the proposals accord reasonably with the implementation of national and local Development Plan policy objectives in seeking a more sustainable, efficiently performing property embodying the Governments objective of encouraging development which reduces its impact on natural resources.