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Design and Access Statement

for a New Access and Gates

at

**Birch Corner
Seale Lane
Seale
Surrey
GU10 1LD**

September 2023

Our Ref: 1782



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement accompanies the submission of a Householder Application for a new access and gates at Birch Corner, Seale Lane, Seale, Surrey, GU10 1LD.
- 1.2 This Design and Access Statement will demonstrate that the proposal provides a well-designed and appropriate scheme which fits in well with the general pattern of development in the area.

2.0 Assessment of the Site

2.1 Physical Context of the Site:

- 2.2 The site is located along the south side of Seale Lane, and to the west of Seale. The property currently has an access located off an access lane off of Seale Lane. This access lane is shared with Alan Bettin Swimming Pools to access their working yard, store and office and for deliveries required for their business.
- 2.3 The application site is located within the AGLV, AONB and the Green Belt.
- 2.4 The speed limit along this part of Seale Lane is 30mph, although approximately 60m to the east of the site, the speed limit changes to 40mph. Approximately 65m to the south of the site are junctions with Seale Lane and Wood Lane and a tight left-hand bend.
- 2.5 The application site is outlined in red as shown on the ordnance survey extract below:

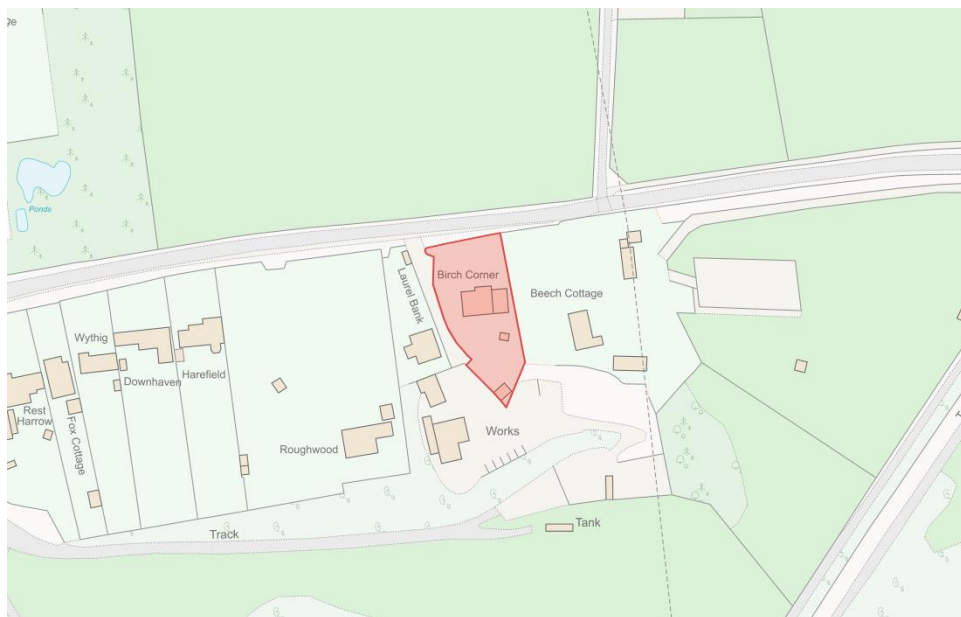


Fig.1 – OS Extract

2.6 Social Context of the Site:

The site has established residential use.

2.7 Community Involvement:

The neighbours will be consulted as part of the application process.

Initial discussions have been held with Bettin Pools, who are supportive given the safety improvement to their access as a result of the works.

2.8 **Evaluation of Opportunities and Constraints:**

The opportunity will be taken to improve the safety of access to the dwelling without any negative effect on views into the site.

3.0 **Proposed Design**

3.1 Birch Corner currently utilises an access off an access lane shared with Alan Bettin Swimming Pools. As discussed, the access lane is used to access the working yard, for the receipt of deliveries, for those working on site and for customers visiting the store/office. There are a lot of large vehicles using such a narrow access and the sightlines from Birch Corner onto the access are very limited. The applicant therefore wishes to form a new access from Seale Lane, providing Alan Bettin Swimming Pools with sole access to their property, and the applicants with uninterrupted access to Birch Corner. Gates are also proposed for security reasons.

3.2 Photographs of the existing access lane and views from Seale Lane are shown below:



Fig. 2 – Access Lane to Birch Corner access and Alan Bettin Swimming Pools



Fig. 3 - View looking west along Seale Lane with location of proposed access indicated



Fig. 4 - View looking east along Seale Lane with location of proposed access indicated

- 3.3 As illustrated above, either side of the proposed access good sightlines exist. To the east, visibility is clear up to a slight bend in the road, over 200m away. To the west, visibility is clear up to a bend in the road, over 180m away.
- 3.4 To create the access, a 7m wide gap will be created in the existing hedgerow. Additional hedge planting will be added to blend the existing hedge into the access. Other than the trimming back of vegetation along the highway, there will be no additional impact on trees or hedgerows on the site.
- 3.5 The existing access will be closed up and new hedging/planting will be planted to mitigate the loss of hedging to the front of the dwelling. There will be a gain in the extent of the hedging as a result of the proposals.
- 3.6 The proposed gates are of an attractive design that will improve the appearance of the street scene. The proposed gates will add security and privacy to the existing dwelling and gardens to optimise the enjoyment of the gardens for the applicants and their family.
- 3.7 The new access will also reduce/remove the possibility of parking along Seale Lane to the front of Birch Corner. This parking creates a dangerous situation for passing vehicle due to the narrowness of Seale Lane. Extracts from Google Street View are shown below, showing parked vehicles in the position of the proposed access.



Fig. 5 – Google Street View Extract (August 2021) - View looking west along Seale Lane



Fig. 6 – Google Street View Extract (May 2009) - View looking west along Seale Lane

4.0 Relevant National and Local Plan Policies

The relevant planning policy is comprised of national planning policy guidance documents and the statutory development plans.

4.1 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

4.2 The NPPF has replaced most previous planning legislation. The NPPF is supportive of these proposals in that it requires good design. Great care has been taken to design an access in a manner that is sympathetic to the host dwelling and the character of the area and, as such, complies with the full thrust of the bulletin points noted under

paragraph 58 of the NPPF:

“Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- i) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development,*
- ii) *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit,*
- iii) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks,*
- iv) *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation,*
- v) *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- vi) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.*

4.3 As demonstrated within the 'Proposed Design' section the new access improves the functionality of the dwelling and will reduce street parking so that the streetscene is improved. The proposals create a safe and accessible environment.

4.4 Paragraph 146 of the NPPF 2019 notes:

“Certain other forms of development are not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

*...
b) engineering operations.....”*

4.5 The provision of an access driveway would constitute engineering operations in association with the residential property. It is for planning officers to consider how this would preserve the openness of the land. In this case, although there will be a loss of hedging to the front of the property, this will be offset by introducing new planting/hedging in the location of the existing access, of an amount greater than that lost. The proposals will therefore preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

4.6 A “fallback” position exists in that the applicant could erect gates in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A, if the formation of the new access were to be approved. As such, the proposed gates have been designed in accordance with the conditions listed. The proposed gates and piers do not exceed 2m above ground level.

4.7 Given the modest scale of the proposals, the “fallback” position and the reasonable want for an applicant to seek such development, it should be considered that there are very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.

4.8 **Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (Saved Policies)**

4.9 Policy NE5: Development Affecting Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

The proposed hedging to be removed is unattractive and of no ecological merit. Its loss will be offset by the increase in planting elsewhere in the site. The proposed gate piers will not harm any existing planting or trees.

4.10 **Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and sites 2015-2034**

4.11 Policy P1 – Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value

4.12 The proposals will conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities of the area the site is located in. It will result in a reduction in vehicles that are visible from any point of public amenity. The proposals are of the appropriate scale, form and design for this policy zone. The proposals will also result in a net gain in hedging and a reduction in hardstanding and walling.

4.13 Policy D1 – Place Shaping

“All new developments will be required to achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character (including landscape character) of the area in which it is set. Essential elements of place making include creating economically and socially successful new places with a clear identity that promote healthy living; they should be easy to navigate, provide natural security through layout and design with attractive, well enclosed, and overlooked streets, roads and spaces with clear thought given to the interrelationship of land use to external space.-“

The proposal sits comfortably in the street scene and enhances it through the removal of parked cars. The proposed access will have no effect on the distinctiveness of the area. The proposal has no impact on overlooking, loss of daylight or is overbearing. There are no dwellings opposite the proposed driveway access and therefore no residents will be affected by the headlights of vehicles entering or leaving the site. The proposed gates will be of an attractive design that fits in with the character of the area.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The proposal provides a safer access to the site.

5.2 The proposal will reduce/remove the possibility of dangerous parking along Seale Lane.

5.3 The proposals comply with all local and national planning policies.

5.4 The proposal has no adverse impact on the amenity or privacy enjoyed by any neighbouring properties.

For the reasons set out above, we commend this application to you for approval.

Michael Conoley Associates