



Established Experts in Veterinary and Animal
Welfare Design and Building Management

Design and Access Statement

Project: Proposed redevelopment of existing
veterinary practice

Client: Skylark Vets



For: Charlotte Hussey

Site Address: Skylark Vets, Skinners Lane, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6LW

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

ACD Projects have been appointed by Charlotte Hussey, director of Skylark Vets ('the Vets'), to design the renovation of their existing practice. This application therefore seeks for permission to knock down the existing converted garage, and replace it with a slightly larger purpose-built structure.

1.2. Skylark Vets

The practice is owned and run by vets only, i.e. they have no corporate ties. This allows them to invest in the practice to provide the care that they know is in the best interests of their patients. Hence this decision to renovate the existing practice is one that they are certain will improve the service they offer their clients and the local community.

The independent veterinary practice has been operating out of their existing building since the 14 January 2021 and the premises was taken over by the current owners in December 2020. The practice is currently formed from a converted garage, attached to a residential bungalow which Charlotte lives in. The 'garage/vets' part of the building however has no foundations and as such, parts of it are falling away leaving the building in disrepair.

Charlotte and her team offer a friendly and compassionate service to their clients. They love working with a wide variety of species, be they feathered, scaly or hairy! In addition to their static clinic based in Edenbridge, they also have a mobile veterinary clinic equipped with both diagnostic and surgical facilities. This enables them to provide premium care at their client's houses when necessary.

1.3. Design consultants

ACD Projects has been appointed by the practice to design this extension as they specialise in, and have a proven track record of, designing veterinary and animal welfare facilities that are fit for purpose and sympathetic to the local environment. For more information on ACD Projects' experience in this area, please see www.acdprojects.com.

2. Brief

- 2.1. As noted above, the practice is currently in a state of disrepair as the original structure was not built on proper foundations. It is therefore essential for the vets to redevelop this site.
- 2.2. Whilst doing so, it also makes sense to improve the flow and size of the practice to provide a building that is more 'fit for purpose' and suitable to their needs.
- 2.3. The vets would therefore like to split out the cat, dog and exotic wards as opposed to the current combined wards which is not best practice and has been proved to add to increased stress levels for the animals.
- 2.4. The addition of a nurse's room will allow them to carry out minor treatments here, such as nail clipping and anal glands, freeing up the theatre for the more complex cases.
- 2.5. Furthermore, the vets also need a separate lab, laundry, staff area, and x-ray room as these rooms are currently combined with others, making them inefficient and impractical.

3. Site Context

3.1. Site Location

Skylark Vets, Skinners Lane, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6LW

3.2. Site Description

The location of the existing practice is indicated in figure 1. It can be seen from the figure that the vets is located outside of Edenbridge in Kent and is largely set within fields and rural surroundings.



Figure 1: Site location (Google Maps)

Figures 2 – 6 below show some of the site photos.

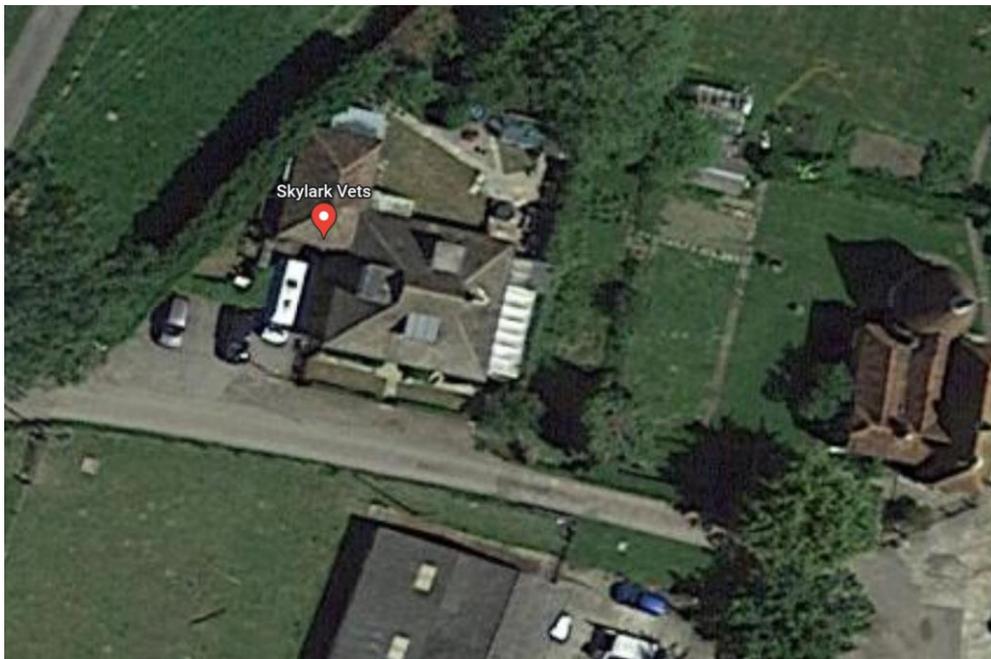


Figure 2: Aerial view of the bungalow and Skylark Vets (Google Maps)



Figure 3: Picture showing the bungalow to the right-hand side and the Vets practice (converted garage) behind the van.



Figure 4: Showing the rear of the vets practice from the residential garden.



Figure 5: Showing the rear of the vets practice.



Figure 6: Showing the car parking area to the front of the practice.

4. Design

4.1. Use

The proposed development will continue be used for veterinary purposes to provide an exceptional level of care for sick animals, focusing on the health, welfare and comfort of the animals and clients.

Skylark Vets currently employs 3 full time staff as well as 2 part time staff members and 1 part-time locum, and staffing levels will remain as they are. Consultations are split between the mobile clinic and the premises.

The practice has prior approval to operate from 08:00 – 19:00 on weekdays, from 08:00 – 13:00 on Saturdays.

4.2. Extent of the Built Development

As noted in section 2.0, the proposals involve the demolition of the existing practice and a single-story new-build replacement structure. To allow for the required facilities to be provided, the proposals request for a slightly larger extension to be built in its place.

The new development would not come any further forward (into the driveway), but instead would be 'squared-off' to the rear of the bungalow. As noted in Sevenoaks Conservation Area Design Guidance, extensions to the rear of the existing building help to minimise any impact on the built character of the area. Although a slightly larger structure, this development should instead improve the 'built character' as the current structure is in a state of disrepair.

This proposed development would also create a more definitive differentiation between the residential side and the commercial side of the building. A fenced grassed/dog walking area at the front of the practice will also mean that dogs can be taken out for toilet breaks to the front of the practice, and not encroach into Charlotte's private garden, as they currently do.

The height of the building will not change, however the proposed new roof layout will allow for additional storage space for the business' requirements.

The building itself will be built to meet or exceed current Building Regulations and therefore the energy efficiency of the building will be much improved compared to the current structure.



4.3. Layout

The flow of a veterinary practice is key to its efficient and practical operation.

This layout can be seen in proposed plans (drawing number 1379/0300/P1).

4.4. Appearance

The designs have taken consideration to Sevenoaks Conservation Area Design Guidance and, as noted on the application form, the proposals include to replicate the existing materials and finishes. Therefore, responding positively to the character and integrity of the original building.

5. Access

This access statement sets out to address both the issues of 'access' as part of the planning application design and access statement, as well as forming the full 'access statement' to address the obligations of reasonableness introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act.

This Statement therefore addresses the following issues:

- Consider the needs of all potential users;
- Identify the type and appropriateness of good practice guidance used, and meets the overall objectives of "reasonableness".

Generally, this Statement is required to and takes into consideration the following legislation:

- Part M of the Building Regulations
- British Standard 8300:2009
- Equality Act 2010
- The Sign Design Code
- The Code for Lighting
- DRC Codes of Practice
- Other relevant sections of the Building Regulations, including Part B: Fire Safety and Part K: Protection from Falling, Collision and Impact
- Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963

This Access Statement is not an exhaustive list but offers an opportunity to improve the building and spaces by considering (at the very initial stages of the project and throughout the project), the proposed use of the building and how it will be managed in terms of the needs of the users. The Statement endeavours to achieve the highest quality outcome to ensure inclusive access for all regardless of age, disability, ethnicity or social grouping.

5.1. Means of Site Access and Traffic Flow

All clients and staff will continue to enter through the existing main entrance at the front. Entry from the side of the building (through from the bungalow) will be reserved for Charlotte only. The existing side door (currently sited in the prep room) will remain as access from the new dog ward. This will allow staff to take dogs out for toilet breaks directly outside, rather than having to walk them through the practice as they do at present.

5.2. Car Parking and Deliveries

There are currently 6 car parking spaces to the front of the building. As the redevelopment is intended to enable the improvement of facilities only, there is no requirement for additional parking spaces. Therefore, parking arrangements will remain as is.

Arrangements for waste collection and deliveries will also continue as per current practice.



5.3. Site Wide Circulation

Levels around the perimeter of the building already enable level access into the building.

5.4. Horizontal Circulation

Horizontal circulation has been considered for both public and staff. Clear level routes are provided to all areas with adequate corridor widths, decoration providing adequate visual contrast and suitable seating provision. Doors will have a minimum clear opening width of 800mm, fitted with vision panels in accordance with the recommendations of Building Regulations.

5.5. Vertical Circulation

The practice will remain as a single-storey building.

5.6. Means of Escape

Means of escape is in accordance with BS5588/2004 and BS9999/2015.

The means of escape, in case of fire, has been designed in accordance with the Building Regulations and would be to the approval of the Building Control Officer and Fire Officer. The actual provisions of means of escape strategy for disabled people will be addressed by Skylark Vets following their Risk Assessment and fire precautions work place regulations.

Fire escape doors will be fitted with appropriate egress ironmongery (openable without the use of a key, as per Building Regulations). Fire escapes and door widths have been sized accordingly

5.7. Toilet Facilities

The existing unisex toilet will be moved to the side of the staff room. Clients can be accompanied /directed to use this toilet also if necessary.

5.8. Evacuation

In an emergency, visitors will evacuate through the designated emergency exit doors, highlighted via standard statutory signage and emergency lighting. Staff will undergo basic training in evacuation procedures and will be responsible for getting visitors out of the building; however, alarms will be installed in accordance with L1.



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