

# Greenhayes Planning

*Planning. Heritage. Development*

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BY EMAIL

19<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Mount Pleasant Rd,  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
TN1 1RS

Dear Sir/Madam

SPELDHURST BANK, BARDEN ROAD, SPELDHURST  
OPEN FRONTED GARAGE

On behalf of our clients, Mr and Mrs. Harvey, we attach the following documentation in connection with a householder planning application to construct an open fronted garage on the existing parking area to the property.

The area subject of this application is within the curtilage of the property and has long been used for parking purposes by the applicant. The area is surrounded by evergreen hedging along the boundary with Barden Road and to the north west is Speldhurst Wood which is designated as ancient woodland, although there is an area of evergreen hedging between the parking area and this woodland. The property is a substantial property which is located within large grounds and is not currently served by any modern garage facilities.

The new garage will be an oak framed design, measuring 6m in width by 5.4m in depth and will be of a single storey scale, with a half hipped roof. The garage will be open fronted and will have a low eaves height of 2.2m rising to an overall ridge of 4.3m. The garage will be positioned adjacent to the access, leaving sufficient turning space in front of the garage which will be laid with an aggregate surface to connect to the existing hardstanding to the east. This location will enable the existing evergreen hedging to be retained which creates a buffer to the north west boundary with the ancient woodland and that with Barden Road. The garage will be clad in weatherboarding and will have a clay tiled roof to match the existing property. Due to the single storey nature of the site and the location set into the site, the garage will have a discreet location. Even if glimpsed views are gained, it would not be out of character to see similar garages to larger properties along Barden Lane and almost identical structures can be seen along the road to the north west.

In terms of planning policy and general planning considerations, it is an accepted principle that policies should support homeowners in providing new buildings and extensions to meet their needs. This is reflected in legislation, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the local development plan, including Policy H11 of the plan. Thus, the siting of a new garage in replacement of an external parking area should be considered acceptable in principle subject to other matters such as landscape, design, ecology, trees and transport matters. It is also noted that the boundary for the Metropolitan Green Belt runs through the application site, with the garage location being within the Green Belt designated land, although the property itself is not.

Turning to this point first, it is clear that Green Belt was never designed to prevent small scale domestic development such as garages and other outbuildings. Indeed, Policy MGB1 remains a saved policy and contains the local approach to Green Belt development. This sets out a range of exceptions to new development in such areas and part (2) states residential householder development is one of these exemptions subject to meeting the policy H11 of the 2006 plan. Policy HG11 states development will be permitted, including for outbuildings, subject to a designated criteria which is accessed below;

- Part 1- The dwelling was designed, constructed as a residential property.
- Part 2- The development would be modest in scale and would not visually dominate the dwelling. Indeed, a 2 bay open fronted garage would be accurately described as a modest structure, particularly when compared to the large existing dwelling and its location is also discreet in order the character of the wider site and locality are maintained.
- Part 3- The size and design of the garage does not lend itself to sub division to form a separate dwelling. Indeed, planning permission would be required for any future alteration due to the location forward of the main property.

Thus, the garage can be said to meet Policy HG11 and also Policy MGB1 on account of this modest size and location. This is assumed to also been the case for other garages that have been constructed further along Barden Lane, also within the Green Belt.

Turning to landscape and ecological matters, the garage is located nestled adjacent to domestic hedging and set back from the boundary with Barden Road and the adjacent woodland and therefore will have a discreet location. Even if a glimpsed views of the garage are gained, there are a number of similar garages along Barden Road and the surrounding planting and vegetation will remain dominant. Thus, there will be no harm to the wider character of the AONB or landscape considerations.

In terms of the ancient woodland to the north west, the area is currently used as an external parking area, with the garage to provide secure and dry parking which will contain the vehicles within the structure. Thus, the garage is considered to be a benefit to Ancient Woodland as the garage will prevent any run-off or other chemical agents running into the woodland and will contain the vehicles within the building. Furthermore, the garage is set back from the boundaries, and this includes a buffer (the existing hedging) with the ancient woodland which will be retained. On the basis of these factors, including the existing residential use, the improvement and buffer, it is considered that there will be no harm to the ancient woodland. This proportionate approach was accepted by the council under 21/00028 where a property in Furzefield Avenue (which also backs onto this same woodland) gained approval for a building and hard landscaping within close proximity of the woodland.

Thus, it is considered that the garage can be supported in planning terms, and we look forward to working with the council on the application. In order to make the application valid, I attach the following documents which make up the planning submission. The planning documents include.

- Application form
- Proposed garage plans- floorplans and elevations.
- Block and Location plan

If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Ashley Wynn  
BA(Hons) MA MRTPI