

## **1. Introduction**

This Design Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for Tipnoak Lodge, a former 1930s lodge to Gratwick Manor, located within the heart of the village of Ashurst. The proposals seek to sensitively adapt and enhance the existing dwelling to better reflect contemporary living requirements while respecting the character of the property, its setting, and the wider village context.

The intention is not to create an overbearing or incongruous development, but to provide a light, spacious and functional family home that complements surrounding dwellings and the established hamlet character of Ashurst.

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## **2. Site and Context**

Tipnoak Lodge is set within a triangular plot, with the dwelling positioned on the north-east side of the site. The property is accessed via a private driveway and is enclosed by a mixture of native hedging, providing a soft and well-integrated boundary treatment. The eastern boundary fronts School Lane, reinforcing the property's close relationship with the village street scene.

The site is characterised by mature landscaping, including a notable oak tree located at the front of the driveway, which contributes positively to the local streetscape and informs the identity and naming of the property.

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## **3. The Existing Building**

Originally constructed in the 1930s as a lodge associated with Gratwick Manor, the property has evolved incrementally over time. The existing dwelling provides four bedrooms, with two located at ground floor level and two at first floor level.

A single-storey living room extension added in 1977 is constructed in basic brickwork that does not fully reflect or complement the architectural language or material quality of the original building. As a result, this element currently appears visually disconnected from the main house.

The existing entrance is poorly defined, creating confusion upon arrival and diminishing the legibility and presence of the dwelling within its plot.

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## **4. Design Principles**

The proposals are guided by the following key principles:

- Respect for the original 1930s lodge and its village setting
- Enhancement rather than overdevelopment of the site
- Clear and legible arrival and entrance experience
- Creation of flexible, open-plan living spaces suited to modern family life
- Strong visual and functional connection between internal living spaces and the garden
- Use of high-quality, natural materials that respond to the site context

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## **5. Proposed Development**

The planning application seeks permission to reconfigure and enhance the internal and external arrangement of the dwelling to align with current living standards.

Internally, the layout will be reworked to provide open-plan main living areas that encourage shared family use and allow natural light to penetrate deep into the building. Bedrooms will be improved through the provision of ensuite facilities, enhancing comfort and long-term usability.

The principal living space will be designed to actively engage with the garden, treating it as an extension of the living environment through improved outlook, access and visual connection.

A new entrance porch is proposed to clearly define the point of arrival. This feature will provide the dwelling with a stronger sense of presence, improve wayfinding, and enhance the overall architectural composition without appearing dominant or excessive.

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## **6. Materials and Appearance**

To address the visual disconnect created by the 1977 living room extension, it is proposed to clad this element in oak. This approach will:

- Introduce warmth and texture to the elevation
- Complement the mature oak tree located in the front driveway
- Reinforce the identity and name of the property, Tipnoak Lodge
- Provide a natural material that weathers gracefully and sits comfortably within a village context

The use of oak cladding is considered an appropriate and sympathetic response that enhances architectural cohesion while remaining respectful of the original building.

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## **7. Landscape and Setting**

Existing boundary treatments, including native hedging, will be largely retained and protected. The proposals do not seek to urbanise the plot but instead reinforce its soft, landscaped character. Views from School Lane and neighbouring properties will remain largely unchanged, ensuring the development sits quietly within its surroundings.

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## **8. Access and Movement**

Vehicular and pedestrian access will continue to be taken from the existing driveway. The introduction of a clearly defined entrance porch will significantly improve pedestrian legibility and the experience of arrival without altering access arrangements or increasing activity beyond that of a typical family dwelling.

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## **9. Conclusion**

The proposed works at Tipnoak Lodge represent a considered and sensitive enhancement of a former 1930s lodge within the heart of Ashurst. By improving layout, functionality and architectural coherence, the development will create a light and spacious family home that meets modern living expectations.

The design respects the character of the existing building, complements neighbouring dwellings, and maintains the established village and hamlet character. Overall, the proposals are proportionate, contextually appropriate and will result in a positive contribution to the site and the wider village environment.