

Design & Access Statement for Revised Planning Application at:
Flagstones, North Heath Lane, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 5PQ
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Local Planning Authority: Horsham District Council
Previous Planning Application Reference: DC/22/1960
Previous Appeal Reference: APP/Z3825/W/23/3325590

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the construction of a new two-storey detached dwelling on the northern portion of the plot at Flagstones, North Heath Lane, Horsham, West Sussex. The proposal builds on and responds to formal pre-application advice received from Horsham District Council (ref: PE/24/0205) and follows the earlier application and appeal (Refs: DC/22/1960 and APP/Z3825/W/23/3325590).

The new proposal has been carefully redesigned to address concerns raised during the prior application processes and incorporates all recommendations relating to scale, siting, landscaping and the relationship to the existing non-designated heritage asset (NDHA), Flagstones.

2. Submitted Drawings and Documents

Documents:

- 01 Design & Access Statement
- 02 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Form
- 03 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
- 04 Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation
- 05 Water Neutrality Statement
- 06 Planning Application Form (submitted via Planning Portal)

Drawings:

- 01 Location Plan 1-250
- 02 Ground Level Block Plan 1-200
- 03 Roof Level Block Plan 1-200
- 04 Ground Floor Plan 1-50
- 05 First Floor Plan 1-50
- 06 Elevation A 1-50
- 07 Elevation B 1-50
- 08 Elevation C 1-50
- 09 Elevation D 1-50
- 10 Elevation A Including Existing Flagstones Building 1-200
- 11 Perspective Sketch

All drawings are to scale unless otherwise stated and are provided for planning purposes only.

3. Relevant Planning Policies

The proposal has been developed with reference to the following policies:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):

- Policy 1: Sustainable Development
- Policy 2: Strategic Development
- Policy 3: Development Hierarchy
- Policy 4: Settlement Expansion
- Policy 15: Housing Provision
- Policy 16: Meeting Local Housing Needs
- Policy 24: Environmental Protection
- Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
- Policy 32: The Quality of New Development
- Policy 33: Development Principles
- Policy 34: Cultural and Heritage Assets
- Policy 35: Climate Change
- Policy 36: Appropriate Energy Use

Policy 37:	Sustainable Construction
Policy 39:	Infrastructure Provision
Policy 40:	Sustainable Transport
Policy 41:	Parking

A planning policy statement was submitted as part of pre-application advice, requesting feedback on compliance with each of the above policies. All feedback received from the LPA has been incorporated into the new proposal.

4. Site Context and Background

Flagstones is a detached dwelling located within a suburban area of Horsham. The property is recognised as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) included in the Horsham Town Local List. The site is located within the built-up area boundary of Horsham, a sustainable location for residential infill development. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of residential properties, varying in style, age, and size, reflecting the area's gradual development over time.

The plot proposed for the new dwelling is at the northern part of the Flagstones site. It currently contains a garage and part of the garden.

A previous planning application sought permission for the construction of a new two-storey detached house on the northern part of the Flagstones site (Ref: DC/22/1960). This application was refused by the Local Planning Authority, and the subsequent appeal was dismissed (Ref: APP/Z3825/W/23/3325590). The appeal was dismissed for a single reason, relating to the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the street scene. A revised proposal was produced to address the specific concerns raised and submitted for pre-application advice (Ref: PE/24/0205). Specific recommendations were received by Horsham District Council relating to scale, siting, landscaping and the relationship to Flagstones. The new proposal has been adjusted to reflect each piece of feedback provided.

5. Design Rationale and Response to Pre-Application Advice

5.1 Principle of Development

The principle of a new dwelling on the site was accepted by both the Local Planning Authority and the Planning Inspectorate, provided that the design and relationship to the existing dwelling are appropriate.

5.2 Heritage Considerations

Flagstones is locally recognised as a non-designated heritage asset, listed in the Horsham Town Local List from 2011. It stands as one of the few older buildings in a predominantly modern housing area. The Planning Inspector considered its architectural and historic significance to be of limited weight due to significant alterations made to the building and the evolved character of its surroundings. Nevertheless, the revised proposal has been designed to recognise the NDHA designation of Flagstone. The new design is more subservient to the existing building, respecting its character through simplified massing, use of traditional materials and sensitive siting.

- **Preservation of Character:** The new dwelling has been designed to defer to the existing property, both in terms of scale and design. The materials and architectural details have been chosen to complement rather than pose any risk of competing with Flagstones.
- **Setting and Views:** The proposal ensures that key views of Flagstones from North Heath Lane are preserved, with the new dwelling positioned to respect the historic property's presence on the site.

5.3 Design and Appearance

The LPA and Planning Inspectorate raised concerns regarding the design of the original proposal, which was seen as juxtaposed to Flagstones and the surrounding area, due to the modern design and the choice of materials. The revised proposal addresses these concerns. The more traditional approach and simplified form and palette were positively noted in pre-application advice feedback.

The new dwelling now adopts:

- **Simplified Design and Traditional Architectural Forms:** The design has been simplified to create a more cohesive and sympathetic relationship with Flagstones. The revised dwelling now features traditional architectural forms and a reduced footprint that better aligns with the scale and character of the existing property. The pitched roof design has been carefully considered to reduce the overall height and bulk, ensuring that the new dwelling does not overwhelm Flagstones. The removal of skewed rooflines and street-facing roof lights has also eliminated elements that were previously seen as discordant, resulting in a more harmonious roofscape that complements Flagstones.
- **Material Selection:** In response to concerns about the contemporary materials originally proposed, the revised design now adopts a more traditional palette that aligns with the materials used in Flagstones and the surrounding area. The new dwelling will feature brickwork facades at ground floor level, with tile hung gables at both the front and rear of the first floor, echoing the tile-hung elements of Flagstones. The pitched roof will be finished with tiles similar to those of Flagstones, ensuring visual harmony between the two buildings. This choice of external materials creates a cohesive relationship between the existing and new dwellings, providing visual continuity while addressing the feedback regarding the previously complex and contrasting materials.
- **Street Scene and Visual Impact:** The revised design has been tailored to ensure that the new dwelling sits more comfortably within the street scene. The scale and massing have been reduced to avoid an overbearing presence on the site, and the materials and design elements have been selected to complement the prevailing character of the area. This also responds to the observation that the previous design's visual impact on the street scene was not in keeping with the area's character. During the pre-application review, the Local Planning Authority acknowledged that the revised scheme represents a marked improvement in both design quality and material compatibility compared with the previous submission. The simplified form, traditional palette, and coherent relationship with Flagstones were noted as positive developments that address earlier concerns raised at appeal.
- **A more compact footprint:** In response to a recommendation at pre-application advice, the footprint of the dwelling has been further reduced, creating more garden space, creating additional opportunities for landscaping and reducing any potential level of harm on the setting of the locally listed building and wider street scene.

5.4 Overdevelopment and Landscaping

The revised proposal has been carefully scaled back to reduce the perception of overdevelopment. The new dwelling has been repositioned and its footprint adjusted to improve the spatial relationship with Flagstones. The overall bulk and massing have been significantly reduced, which, combined with the simplified design, contributes to a less crowded and more balanced site layout. The garden area, although modest, is now better integrated with the overall design, contributing to a more cohesive and less congested layout.

Pre-application advice recommended that consideration be given to reducing the footprint of the proposed development to allow more garden space at the front and rear of the site, and to create additional opportunity for landscaping. In response to this, the overall footprint of the dwelling has been further reduced as part of the revised design, the garden space at the front and rear of the site has been increased and further landscaping has been added to the plans. In addition, the existing hardstanding at Flagstones has been reviewed and further opportunities to replace

sections with planting to the front of Flagstones have been identified, contributing to a significant overall softening of the frontage.

Compared with the scheme submitted as part of the prior planning application, the extent of soft-landscaped area within the new dwelling plot has been increased by 40% from 64m² to 90m². In addition, the curtilage of Flagstones now includes a further 15m² of additional planting through adjustments to the parking arrangement and removing sections of redundant hardstanding.

Together, these changes provide significant opportunities for frontage and boundary planting, helping to soften the site's appearance and materially reduce any perception of overdevelopment in the street scene. The green areas shown on the submitted indicative landscaping and planting plan indicate the proposed soft-landscaped zones. These will include a mix of grassed areas, low-maintenance shrubs, and native or ornamental planting, to be finalised in a detailed landscaping plan as part of a planning condition. The aim is to enhance the setting of both dwellings, soften the site boundaries, and support biodiversity.

5.5 Relationship to Flagstones and Amenity

In the response to the earlier planning applications at the site, concerns were raised regarding the impact of the new dwelling on the small north-facing window of Flagstones, which currently faces the existing garage. Though the Planning Inspectorate concluded that the prior, larger, design would not have an unacceptable impact on the occupiers of Flagstones, the window has been subsequently obscured (frosted) to maintain privacy and eliminate any possible overlooking from the new dwelling.

Pre-application advice recognised the positive improvement in siting the new dwelling parallel with Flagstones, helping to create a more appropriate relationship between the two buildings. However, it was noted that the footprint projected appreciably beyond the rear elevations of Flagstones, which has the potential to result in a greater level of harm than identified as part of the preceding appeal decision. In response to this, the extent of the rear projection has been reduced from the pre-application submission and now extends less far than the furthest extent of the original application proposal in an effort to avoid any increase in harm to Flagstones.

As recommended in the pre-application advice, a proposed block plan which includes the internal room layouts and window openings of Flagstones, as well as the siting of adjacent buildings, has been included with this application.

6. Access and Parking

The driveway and dropped kerb access currently in use for the existing house is maintained for the new house and adjusted parking provision for Flagstones. Off-street parking provision for both Flagstones and the new house is provided, compliant with Policy 41.

In response to pre-application advice, the turning provision at the front of the new dwelling has been removed to allow for more planting. West Sussex County Council Highways Department were pre-consulted on the removal of the turning provision and confirmed by email that retaining the existing arrangement without turn on-site capabilities would not create any planning concerns from their perspective.

7. Biodiversity and Water Neutrality

7.1 Water Neutrality

A water neutrality statement was provided with the original planning application and was previously accepted by the LPA and Natural England. The parameters for calculation remain unchanged from the original proposal. Hence, the water neutrality statement is resubmitted unchanged. A modest net negative water demand can be achieved at the site, meeting the requirements of water neutrality.

7.2 Biodiversity Net Gain

A professional Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) survey and Metric 4.0 assessment have been undertaken by AEWC Ltd. Given the site's constraints and the metric rules for private gardens, achieving the full 10% net gain on-site is not possible. The design therefore maximises on-site biodiversity through removal of unnecessary hardstanding, increased soft landscaping to the frontage and boundaries, and consideration of small green infrastructure features (e.g. green roofing of the new shed). The residual shortfall of 0.02 habitat units will be met via off-site units from a suitable local provider (e.g. Ilford Estate, Lewes), secured for 30 years through an appropriate legal mechanism. AEWC's full BNG report, habitat maps and metric are submitted with this application.

8. Sustainability

Alongside the biodiversity-focussed requirements, sustainability remains a core principle of the design. The new dwelling will incorporate:

- **Energy Efficiency:** High levels of insulation, energy-efficient glazing, and a focus on airtightness to reduce energy consumption.
- **Renewable Energy:** Provision for solar panels and electric vehicle charging points to support low-carbon living.
- **Bicycle Storage:** Storage for bicycles will be provided for both properties. This is particularly important given the site's close proximity to the town's amenities.
- **Water Management:** The proposal remains water neutral following the same efficiency measures proposed in the original application.

9. Conclusion

This revised proposal represents a thoughtful and considered response to earlier feedback and formal pre-application advice. The design has been carefully adjusted to respect the character and setting of the existing property while providing a high-quality, sustainable new home that meets the needs of modern living. All concerns raised through the original application and pre-application advice have been addressed.

The applicants welcome continued dialogue with the Local Planning Authority and hope that this submission demonstrates the viability of the proposed development.