

Dear Horsham District Council,

Demolition of the existing single-storey front extension and erection of a replacement single-storey front extension; erection of a single-storey rear extension; construction of front and rear dormer windows; fenestration alterations; installation of a rooflight; creation of a roof terrace; and associated landscaping works to facilitate the adaptation of the existing detached dwelling as an accessible family home

Introduction

The principal purpose of the development is to adapt the property to meet the significant and long-term accessibility and care requirements of the applicant's five-year-old son, who has complex disabilities arising from an extremely rare genetic mutation.

The proposal has been developed as a coordinated package of alterations intended to provide:

- a ground-floor accessible bedroom;
- a ground-floor accessible bathroom;
- wider internal circulation spaces suitable for wheelchair use and specialist equipment;
- wider door openings and sliding doors;
- an accessible entrance into the dwelling;
- improved connections between the internal accommodation and garden;
- a lift between the ground and first floors;
- safe and practical accommodation for the provision of care; and
- a flexible family home capable of responding to changing needs over the long term.

The extensions and alterations are therefore necessary accessibility adaptations rather than discretionary additions to the property.

The Application Site and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises an existing detached dwelling situated within an established residential area of Horsham. The Crescent is predominantly residential in character and contains detached dwellings of differing architectural forms, sizes and periods. Although there is a broadly consistent suburban character, the properties are not entirely uniform and a number have been extended or altered over time. The property benefits from private external amenity space and is capable of being adapted without changing its fundamental residential character or creating a separate planning unit. The property has been selected specifically because of its suitability for the applicant's family circumstances. It is located within a very short distance of the applicant's parents, whose ongoing support with the care of the applicant's son is invaluable. Their proximity enables regular childcare and practical assistance to be provided, which is particularly important given the level of care required and the applicant's work commitments.

The location also provides access to nearby parks and open spaces, offering opportunities for the applicant's son to experience the outdoors in a safe and familiar environment. The property's generous private garden can also be adapted to support his physical, recreational and sensory needs. In addition, the location enables the applicant to maintain access to London for work, allowing the family's financial and employment circumstances to be supported while retaining the established care network upon which they depend.

Personal Circumstances and Accessibility Need

The application is driven by exceptional and compelling family circumstances. The applicant's five-year-old son has complex disabilities arising from an extremely rare genetic mutation. He has significant global developmental delay, is non-verbal and is unable to stand or walk independently. His mobility and personal care requirements are substantial and are expected to increase as he grows. The existing dwelling, without adaptation, would not provide an appropriate long-term environment in which those needs could be safely and practically met. Conventional domestic circulation widths, standard door arrangements, changes in level and reliance on staircases would increasingly restrict his ability to move around the home. They would also make it more difficult for family members and carers to assist him safely.

The lift is a particularly important part of the proposal. While the ground-floor bedroom and bathroom would allow essential day-to-day care to take place at entrance level, the lift would prevent the first floor from becoming inaccessible as

the applicant's son grows. It would allow him to remain integrated into all aspects of family life rather than being confined to one part of the property. The proposal would also improve the safety and practicality of the care provided. As the applicant's son becomes older and heavier, insufficient circulation space and the need for repeated manual lifting would create increasing risks for both him and those caring for him. The extensions and internal alterations are therefore directly related to the amount of accessible space required for wheelchair movement; transfers between specialist equipment, assistance of carers, and changes in the applicant's son's physical and care needs.

The proposed development would enable him to remain living safely, comfortably and with dignity in the family home. It would support his wellbeing and independence wherever possible while ensuring that his care can be provided sustainably over the long term.

The Proposed Development

Demolition of the Existing Front Extension

The existing single-storey front extension would be demolished to enable the principal entrance and internal arrangement of the dwelling to be reconsidered comprehensively. The existing extension does not provide the dimensions, circulation space or entrance arrangement necessary to accommodate wheelchair use and the applicant's son's longer-term accessibility requirements. Its removal would allow a replacement front extension to be designed specifically around the functional requirements of the family.

Replacement Single-Storey Front Extension

A new single-storey front extension would be erected in place of the existing addition. The replacement front extension would provide a more subservient extension, with an improved relationship with the host dwelling. The replacement extension has been conceived as an integral part of the overall adaptation of the dwelling rather than as an isolated addition. Its single-storey form would ensure that it remains subordinate to the principal scale and form of the host property. The extension would also provide an opportunity to improve the appearance and architectural coherence of the front elevation. Its design, roof form, fenestration and external materials would relate appropriately to the established character of the dwelling. Horsham District Council's guidance recognises that front elevations are visually sensitive. It nevertheless indicates that single-storey front extensions may be appropriate where their scale and design respond successfully to the dwelling and street scene. The proposal would replace an existing built addition rather than introduce development onto an entirely undeveloped frontage.

Single-Storey Rear Extension

A separate single-storey rear extension is proposed to provide the additional accommodation necessary to meet the accessibility brief. The rear extension would allow the internal layout to be reorganised to provide appropriately sized, accessible and interconnected living spaces. The additional floor area is required to accommodate wheelchair circulation and specialist equipment while retaining practical family living accommodation. A conventional domestic layout would not provide sufficient room to meet these requirements within the existing footprint.

The single-storey form of the rear extension would limit its visual prominence and reduce its potential effect on neighbouring properties. It would remain domestic in scale and would relate directly to the existing dwelling and private rear garden. The extension would also provide improved access between the principal living accommodation and the garden. Wider or sliding door openings and appropriately designed thresholds would enable the external amenity space to be used more easily by the applicant's son. Horsham District Council's householder guidance advises that single-storey rear extensions to detached dwellings should be assessed with reference to their relationship with neighbouring windows and their potential effects on light, outlook and overbearing impact. The relationship of the proposed extension to surrounding properties should be read alongside the submitted plans, elevations and site sections.

The proposed roof terrace would provide an additional accessible external space directly associated with the family accommodation. The terrace would be particularly beneficial for the applicant's son, for whom access to the main garden may require assistance, use of the lift or specialist mobility equipment. It would provide opportunities to experience fresh air and the outdoors from an accessible part of the dwelling, supporting the applicant's son's physical, sensory and emotional wellbeing. With the proposed design and screening, the roof terrace would not give rise to an unacceptable loss of privacy or a level of activity materially different from the ordinary use of residential external amenity space.

Front and Rear Dormer Windows

Front and rear dormer windows are proposed to improve the usability of the first-floor and roof-level accommodation and to support the revised accessible layout. The roof alterations would make more effective use of the existing dwelling and assist in providing suitable accommodation around the internal circulation and proposed lift. The dormers have been designed as components of the altered roof rather than as separate or dominant structures. Their position, proportions, window arrangement and external treatment should be read in conjunction with the submitted elevations. The front dormer would form part of the redesigned principal elevation (enhancing the existing arrangement), while the rear dormer would be viewed primarily in the context of the private rear garden. The principal roof form would remain apparent and the dormers would continue to be read as secondary elements within it.

Planning Policy Context

Horsham District Planning Framework 2015

Policy 32: The Quality of New Development

Policy 32 requires high-quality and inclusive design based on an understanding of the local physical, social, environmental and policy context. Of particular relevance, it requires development to provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable environment. The application accords especially strongly with this policy. Accessibility, safety and adaptability are the central reasons for the development. The proposal has been designed specifically around the physical and care requirements of a disabled child and the need for the property to remain suitable as those requirements change.

Policy 33: Development Principles

The proposal would make efficient use of the existing family home and adapt it to meet an identified long-term need. The single-storey front and rear extensions would remain domestic in scale, while the dormers and other external alterations would be integrated into a coordinated redesign of the dwelling. Any potential privacy considerations associated with the roof terrace or new openings can be addressed through their detailed positioning and appropriate screening.

Horsham District Council Householder Guidance

The Council's guidance on home extensions confirms that proposals should respond to their surroundings in terms of scale, height, massing, siting, character, materials and the space between buildings. It advises that extensions should remain sympathetic to and avoid overpowering the original dwelling. In relation to front extensions, the guidance recognises the visual sensitivity of the principal elevation but identifies circumstances where appropriately scaled single-storey additions can be accommodated. In this case, an existing front extension is already present.

Emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040

The emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2023–2040 was submitted for examination in July 2024. Emerging Strategic Policy 27, **Inclusive Communities, Health and Wellbeing**, is particularly relevant. The inclusion of this policy demonstrates the Council's continuing commitment to development that supports inclusive environments, health and wellbeing and responds to the needs of people with disabilities. The current proposal reflects these objectives by adapting an existing dwelling to meet the evidenced requirements of a disabled child and his family.

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places a public sector equality duty upon public authorities. In exercising its planning functions, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, including disability. The duty does not determine the outcome of the application. However, it requires the Council to consider the consequences of its decision for the applicant's disabled son consciously and with appropriate rigour. The accessibility needs identified in this statement are directly connected to the form, amount and layout of the proposed development. They should therefore be given substantial weight in the assessment and planning balance.

Relevant Planning History and Precedents

15 The Crescent – DC/15/0626

Application DC/15/0626 at Seldwyla, 15 The Crescent, related to a two-storey rear extension, a new front porch and pitched roofs to existing front dormers. The application was initially refused by the Council but subsequently allowed on appeal. Although the scale and details of that proposal differ from the current application, the appeal establishes that alterations and extensions affecting both the front and rear of a property within The Crescent are not inherently unacceptable.

8 The Crescent – DC/24/1288

Application DC/24/1288 at 8 The Crescent sought permission for a single-storey rear extension and was granted in August 2024. This decision supports the general principle that single-storey rear extensions can be accommodated within the immediate residential context, subject to their individual design and relationship with neighbouring properties.

Roof Terrace Precedent within Horsham District

Application DC/24/1791 at 12 Thornden, Cowfold, sought permission for a single-storey rear extension with a roof terrace above and was granted in November 2024. This decision demonstrates that a roof terrace is not inherently unacceptable within a residential context where its siting, design and relationship with neighbouring properties adequately protect privacy and amenity. The weight afforded to this precedent is necessarily limited because it relates to a different site. Nevertheless, it confirms that the acceptability of a roof terrace depends on its particular design and effects rather than the principle of the feature alone.

Conclusion

The proposed development would adapt the existing property to provide a safe, accessible and future-proof family home while retaining its established residential use. The works comprise the demolition of the existing single-storey front extension and the erection of a replacement single-storey front extension, together with a separate single-storey rear

extension. The proposal also includes front and rear dormer windows, fenestration alterations, a new rooflight, a roof terrace and associated accessible landscaping.

The development would accord with the inclusive and accessible design requirements of Policy 32 of the Horsham District Planning Framework and would respond appropriately to the design and residential amenity considerations set out within Policy 33. The landscaping proposals would also support the objectives of Policy 31 by retaining and enhancing the landscaped character and biodiversity value of the site. The proposal would further support the objectives of the emerging Horsham District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly the requirement to create healthy, safe, inclusive and accessible places. It would make effective use of an existing family dwelling, retain the residential character of the property and, subject to the detailed privacy measures incorporated into the scheme, would not result in an unacceptable effect on neighbouring amenity.

The personal circumstances supporting the application are compelling and are directly related to the amount, layout and form of the proposed development. The works are necessary adaptations rather than discretionary improvements and would deliver substantial health, accessibility and wellbeing benefits. The development would enable the applicant's son to remain living safely with his family in a home designed to meet his current and future needs, while retaining access to the established family support network upon which his care depends.

Kind Regards,

Ashley Harrison
Director & Architect

PMR Architecture