

Design & Access Statement

Site Address: The Old Post Office, The Street, Thakeham, RH20 3EP

Applicant: Mr Capon

Agent: Timber Rooms Ltd

Local Planning Authority: Horsham District Council

Designation: Grade II Listed Building

Proposal: Erection of a single-storey garden building (28.49m²) in an L-shaped layout within the garden

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement accompanies a full planning and listed building consent application for the erection of a single-storey, detached garden building within the curtilage of *The Old Post Office*, a Grade II listed dwelling situated on *The Street* in Thakeham.

The proposal has been developed with sensitivity to the setting and historic character of the host property and seeks to provide a high-quality, subservient ancillary structure that preserves the architectural and historic significance of the listed building.

2. Site Context

The Old Post Office is a Grade II listed property of 18th-century origin, displaying characteristic elements of traditional Sussex vernacular architecture, including timber framing, brick infill, and a clay-tiled roof.

The property occupies a relatively generous plot with a well-screened rear garden extending southwards from the main dwelling. The garden area is predominantly laid to lawn and enclosed by mature hedging and trees, which provide substantial visual screening from neighbouring dwellings and from *The Street*. There are no outbuildings of heritage significance within the curtilage.

3. Design Development and Planning History

Pre-application advice was previously sought and considered under application reference **PP-12563338**, which proposed a slightly larger garden building in a different orientation within the same garden area.

The current proposal represents a refined version of that design, with the following key adjustments:

- A reduction in total footprint to approximately **28.49m²**;
- Reorientation within the garden to reduce prominence from the house and boundaries;
- Minor adjustments to elevation detailing and materials to enhance visual harmony with the surroundings.

No new pre-application advice has been sought, as the revised proposal builds directly upon the principles previously discussed with Horsham District Council.

4. Design Principles

4.1 Use

The proposed building will serve as a domestic garden room ancillary to the main dwelling, used for relaxation, home working, and informal family use. It will not contain overnight accommodation or kitchen facilities.

4.2 Amount

The total internal floor area is approximately **28.49m²**, arranged in an L-shape with two boundary-facing wings. Each principal wing measures approximately 7m in length, returning 3m at either end.

4.3 Layout

The L-shaped configuration allows the building to nestle into a discreet corner of the garden, creating a defined and private courtyard area while maintaining generous open space around the structure. The orientation and siting have been carefully chosen to minimise visibility from the main house and neighbouring properties.

4.4 Scale

The structure is single-storey and of modest height, ensuring it remains clearly subservient to the principal dwelling. Its footprint and proportions are appropriate for a domestic ancillary building within the garden setting of a listed property.

4.5 Appearance

The building adopts a simple and traditional aesthetic, using natural materials to blend with the rural and historic character of the site. The specification includes:

- Timber cladding in a natural finish;
- **Dark timber effect joinery**;
- Slate effect tiles for the roof covering;
- Slimline glazing to reduce reflectivity and visual bulk.

4.6 Landscaping

No significant changes to the existing garden landscaping are proposed. The existing boundary hedging and mature planting will remain, ensuring effective screening and integration within the setting.

5. Access

Access to the proposed garden building will be via **two existing routes**:

1. A pathway to the left of the property;
2. A private access road located to the right of the neighbouring property, providing convenient access to the rear of the site.

No alterations are proposed to vehicular or pedestrian access to the main dwelling or to the site boundary. The garden surface and approach are level and suitable for safe and convenient use by all occupants.

6. Heritage and Setting Considerations

The proposal has been designed with careful regard to the special architectural and historic interest of *The Old Post Office*. Its modest scale, discreet siting, and traditional materials ensure that it:

- Does **not detract** from the listed building's form, fabric, or prominence;
- **Preserves the setting** and legibility of the principal structure;
- Causes **no harm** to the significance of the heritage asset, in accordance with *Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* and *Paragraphs 209–217 of the NPPF (2023)*.

7. Sustainability

The proposed garden building will be constructed using sustainable timber and modern insulation materials to ensure energy efficiency. Natural lighting and ventilation are maximised through appropriately sized glazing, minimising reliance on artificial lighting or mechanical ventilation.

8. Conclusion

This proposal represents a modest, well-considered, and sensitive addition to the curtilage of *The Old Post Office*.

The design reflects a refined evolution of the previously reviewed scheme and demonstrates full regard for the historic context, architectural character, and setting of the listed building.

The development is compliant with the *NPPF (2023)* and the *Horsham District Planning Framework*, in particular **Policies 33 (Development Principles)** and **34 (Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment)**.

Accordingly, the proposal should be considered acceptable in heritage, design, and planning terms.