

Statement to accompany householder application

Mrs A Howarth – 2 The Dene, Hurst Green, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 9QF

This Householder Application comprises works to remove the existing front timber handrail and glass safety panels from the existing subject structure. These will be replaced further back at a new position in order to reduce visual impact. Also sought is the retention the existing secure garden storage and steps. The extended structure is an addition to the original frontage of the established garden structure (pre 2018) which has an approved lawful use. The replacement handrail will safeguard young children from both risk of fall and access to steep land.

For external readers this application relates to the 2018 extension structure only (shown edged red on Plan 2). The existing original lawful structures present are adjacent to the east side. The original structures erected prior to 2018, which have an approved lawful use, will be retained. This application is on land within the garden area which has an approved lawful use. The proposed change to the new structures is the repositioned handrail to provide for the safety of children.

The landscaping/planting plan is designed to screen the frontage and sides of the timber clad storage structure. The landscaping plan shows higher planting and maintained height along the whole of the exposed south side to reduce the risk of overlooking. A temporary timber fence will be kept in place for a period of five years while the proposed planting is established to a similar height.

Summary of proposed works and existing structures

The main change is above the storage to move back the existing handrail and glass panels from the west side. This application also seeks to retain the secure garden storage (11.2m x 4.75m and 1.4/1.5m high on the frontage only) which is finished in timber. A planting scheme of small trees and shrubs submitted in the landscaping plan, to be agreed with the local authority, will be undertaken in the next planting season. The new handrail, moved back, on the garden storage will also serve the original garden structures and provide a reasonable degree of safety.

Design

Proposed is the replacement of the handrail at a new position to the east. The existing garden storage is of timber construction with a vertical timber boarded finish to the three external walls and door. The east side adjoins the approved original existing lawful structure. Within the storage space an element of space for installation of water tanks is possible. Such installation will provide year round storage of rainwater from the downpipes of the existing summer house and other outbuildings. The stored water will be used for irrigating the proposed planting plan and garden on the seasonally very dry soils. This sustainable investment is to be commended as a positive benefit.

We all have those awkward items often left out in the open and unsightly. Long ladders, brightly coloured bags of compost, fencing materials, plastic flowerpots, garden canes, clear plastic forcing covers and children's toys can litter most gardens from time to time. The combined effect of these items may be considered by some to be an eyesore particularly in villages. This proposal provides storage of these items out of sight.

Access

The proposal does not seek to alter or create any new vehicular or pedestrian right of way either public or private. The proposal does not seek to divert a public footpath. The proposal is accessible from all areas of the garden and benefits from the existing private rights of way serving the property. By providing garden storage in the centre of an area of the garden this will assist in keeping the area tidy, well managed, and a better level of planting to assist maintaining varied levels of plant and tree cover. There will be some benefit to a number of adjoining residents and users of the public footpaths as typical garden items/materials not in use can be stored out of sight. Litter originating from the public footpath has been collected by the applicant and disposed of in the correct manner. Tree and shrub planting comprised in the landscaping plan aims to provide screening of the 2018 timber structure from the footpath below.

Appearance

The existing garden storage was constructed in 2018 of timber with a vertical timber board finish. The original established structures also have a timber finish so the west aspect is in fact similar to the historical appearance. The tantalised timber is a typical garden storage construction material. Such a material would not be considered to be out of keeping in gardens, village conservation areas and is regularly approved in this area of the AONB on a regular basis.

The applicant had planned to carry out planting to screen the timber walls on the south, west and north sides following completion of the storage in 2018. However as we are all aware last summer was one of the driest on record. The lack of significant rainfall until more recently has kept the elevated soil conditions unsuitable for successful planting and establishment. The applicant has to date followed the advice of his advisors and suppliers.

While the applicant has been keen to get on with this, a planting plan to be agreed with the local authority for the next planting season is most appropriate and will be conditioned in the event of an approval. The aim of the planting plan will be to screen the storage from the closest property and very limited winter views from the public footpath below and the very long distance (150m) winter glimpses from the public footpath further to the west. The mix includes native species trees/bushes/shrubs also suitable trees/garden shrubs. More mature trees/plants could be bought in and then watered until well established. This will speed up the screening effect.

The planting to form screening of the timber clad sides is between the points indicated A – E on Plan 4. The temporary fencing is indicated D2 – E. The existing orchard planting is to be retained together with the temporary protection fence F – I.

Appraising the context

The proposal to retain the existing garden storage would appear reasonable when considered in the context of maintaining the existing extensive garden on the difficult topography. The addition of the planting scheme, getting this well established in year one and well managed in years two to five will be key to enhancing the appearance of the garden and mitigating some of the limited views which have been referred to.

The applicant via his agent has discussed with the tree officer a planting plan for approval and for inclusion in a suitable planning condition. Such a planting proposal is considered to be a positive step and have potential benefits for both landscaping and bank stabilisation if approved.

As already referred to above, with the benefit of the planting scheme, there are no adverse effects on users of the two public footpaths which are within the AONB. There are no long distance views of the site from other areas within the AONB. Overall there is no adverse impact of the proposal on the setting, landscape, rights of way or public places within the AONB.

The cottages known as Quality Row are not listed or referred to in text of unlisted properties worthy of note. The nearest listed property is the Bakers Arms and is completely screened from the subject site by three modern and much extended houses. There are not any other listed properties close to or in sight of this proposal. The proposal is situated within the approved lawful garden area and also within the extended conservation area.

The original structures and garden area have a certificate of lawful use the effects of which have been acknowledged. In such a setting the proposed retention of the secure garden storage with a suitable planting scheme does not unduly affect the residential amenity of any of the surrounding properties. Two properties to the east have hedges at an elevated level so living rooms and gardens are not overlooked. While views are generally not protected in planning, both properties by virtue of their elevated position and recent extensions enjoy uninterrupted views.

Properties situate to the north west may benefit from the proposed planting scheme which aims to screen what very limited views there may be in winter of the garden storage. The added benefit could be, although not required, to provide some additional screening where opinion might be voiced regarding the lawful use of the original lawful garden structures. Again a similar situation applies to the remaining property to the south. Both the retention and management of the existing boundary hedgerow established after purchase of the particular property and the applicants proposed temporary fence panels and planting plan will completely screen the south side of the timber garden storage and 0.8m above the existing south handrail. The net result is that there is no further overlooking of this property beyond that of the lawful uses of the land.

Conclusions

Retention of the existing garden storage, moving the west handrail back, together with a suitable temporary screen and planting plan may be considered a reasonable form of development in the established and lawful domestic garden area.

The applicant has demonstrated that a garden can be kept tidy with minimal impact on the local environment subject to providing an enhancing/screening planting scheme and showing the benefits of a sustainable rainwater storage system to serve the existing garden and the new planting scheme.

This statement sets out the overall benefits and negligible effect on the immediate surroundings including the conservation area, AONB and adjoining properties.