

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Land at 43 Beechwood Drive, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0TX Erection of Replacement Dwelling

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the demolition of the existing bungalow at 43 Beechwood Drive and the erection of a replacement single-storey dwelling.

The purpose of this statement is to explain the design principles and concepts that have informed the proposed development, and to demonstrate how the proposal responds positively to the site, its surroundings, and relevant planning policy.

This application follows a previously refused scheme and has been carefully redesigned to address the concerns raised, particularly in relation to scale, massing, and impact on the Green Belt and landscape character.

2. Site Description

The application site is located on Beechwood Drive within the Culverstone Valley area. The site currently accommodates a modest bungalow positioned toward the rear of the plot, with a significant proportion of the land remaining open.

The surrounding area is characterised by:

- A loose and informal pattern of development
- A mix of bungalows, chalet-style dwellings and larger properties
- Generous plots with varied building positions
- A strong wooded and semi-rural character

The site lies within the Green Belt and within the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area.

3. Design Principles

3.1 Design Approach

The overarching design objective has been to create a replacement dwelling that is:

- **Subordinate in scale**
- **Visually recessive within the plot**
- **Sympathetic to the semi-rural character of the area**
- **Significantly reduced in massing compared to the previously refused scheme**

The design avoids unnecessary complexity and instead adopts a simple, domestic form that reflects the character of surrounding properties.

3.2 Scale and Massing

A key driver of the revised design has been the reduction in perceived bulk and visual impact.

The proposed dwelling is:

- Single storey
- Designed with a low ridge height (approx. 4.75m)
- Compact in footprint and internal layout

This represents a deliberate move away from the previously refused two-storey form, resulting in a building that sits comfortably within the site and does not dominate its surroundings.

3.3 Layout

The internal layout has been designed to provide a functional and efficient living arrangement while maintaining a modest overall footprint.

The dwelling comprises:

- Open-plan kitchen/living/dining area
- Three bedrooms
- Bathroom and associated facilities

The arrangement ensures that:

- Primary living spaces benefit from natural light
- Circulation space is minimised
- The building footprint remains compact

Externally, the layout ensures that a significant proportion of the site remains open, preserving the spacious character of the plot.

3.4 Appearance and Materials

The architectural approach is intentionally simple and understated.

The dwelling adopts:

- A traditional pitched roof form
- Balanced and proportionate elevations
- A domestic scale appropriate to the setting

Materials are proposed to be of a high quality and in keeping with the local vernacular, likely including:

- Brickwork
- Timber detailing where appropriate

- Roof tiles in muted tones

The palette will ensure that the building integrates visually with surrounding development and the wooded landscape.

3.5 Landscaping

Landscaping plays an important role in reinforcing the character of the site.

The proposal seeks to:

- Retain existing vegetation where possible
- Introduce additional planting to soften the development
- Reinforce the wooded character of the area

This will ensure that the development sits comfortably within its setting and maintains the semi-rural appearance of the plot.

4. Access

4.1 Vehicular Access

Access to the site will be taken from the existing access point onto Beechwood Drive.

The proposal does not alter the established access arrangements and therefore does not introduce any new highway safety concerns.

Adequate on-site parking is provided in accordance with local standards.

4.2 Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access will continue to be provided via the existing entrance. The site layout allows for safe and convenient movement between the dwelling, parking area and external spaces.

4.3 Inclusive Access

The dwelling has been designed with accessibility in mind. As a single-storey building, it provides:

- Step-free access into the property
 - Level circulation throughout
 - Accommodation suitable for a wide range of users, including those with reduced mobility
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5. Amount

The proposal consists of a single replacement dwelling, replacing an existing residential unit on a one-for-one basis.

The amount of development is therefore considered appropriate and proportionate to the site.

6. Use

The site will remain in residential use (Use Class C3). The proposal does not introduce any change of use.

7. Environmental Considerations

The design has taken into account environmental factors, including:

- Efficient use of space
- Opportunities for natural light
- Potential for energy-efficient construction

Further details of sustainability measures can be secured at detailed design stage if required.

8. Response to Previous Refusal

This revised scheme has been specifically designed to address the concerns raised in the previous refusal.

In particular:

- The building has been reduced to a single-storey form
- The overall scale and massing have been significantly reduced
- The design is now visually subordinate within the plot
- The proposal better reflects the character of the surrounding area

The result is a development that is materially different and significantly more appropriate in planning terms.

9. Conclusion

The proposed development represents a carefully considered and well-designed replacement dwelling that responds positively to its site and context.

The scheme has been specifically revised to address previous concerns and now presents a modest, well-proportioned and visually appropriate form of development that preserves the character of the area and the openness of the Green Belt. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with relevant planning policy and represents sustainable development.