

PLANNING SUBMISSION

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Like-for-like replacement dwelling • reorientation within the plot

Site	43 Beechwood Drive, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0TX
Proposal	Demolition of the existing bungalow and erection of a like-for-like replacement dwelling, reoriented within the plot
Applicant	Mr Patrick Maughan
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THE CENTRAL POINT

The replacement is not materially larger than the building it replaces. The established residential use, footprint and single-storey scale are retained; the building is simply reoriented to achieve a more coherent relationship with the plot.

1. Purpose of the statement

This Design and Access Statement explains the design rationale for the revised replacement dwelling at 43 Beechwood Drive. It should be read with the existing and proposed drawings, Planning Statement, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment.

The scheme has been deliberately simplified following the previous refusals. It does not seek a larger house. It retains the established residential use, existing built footprint and single-storey scale, while reorienting the footprint to provide a coherent relationship between the home, access and garden.

2. Site context

Beechwood Drive comprises detached homes of varied age, appearance, orientation and footprint, generally set within generous landscaped plots. No single architectural form dominates. The application site shares that spacious, verdant character and contains a modest detached bungalow set behind the highway frontage.

The site is within the Green Belt and Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. The design response therefore prioritises restraint: one home for one home, low height, no expansion of footprint, no detached garage, retention of open garden and retention of the principal vegetated boundaries.

3. Design evolution

The refused proposals were assessed as materially larger than the existing bungalow. The present design returns to the lawful building as the controlling baseline. The replacement follows the same footprint and remains single storey. The only substantive spatial design change is its orientation within the plot.

This approach directly reduces perceived and actual development compared with the refused schemes. It avoids additional bulk, preserves the dominance of landscape over built form and creates a clear, defensible like-for-like relationship with the existing dwelling.

4. Design principles

- Like-for-like footprint: the replacement is not materially larger than the existing bungalow.
- Low profile: the single-storey form limits visibility and protects neighbouring amenity.
- Landscape-led setting: the majority of the site remains open garden, with existing mature boundary features retained.
- Simple reorientation: the building is turned to organise arrival, parking and garden use without increasing built form.
- Residential continuity: there is no change of use, subdivision or additional dwelling.
- Ecological restraint: no mature tree or western hedgerow removal is proposed, with precautionary working methods and bat surveys to be followed.

5. Amount and use

The proposal provides one replacement dwelling in place of one existing dwelling. The use remains Class C3 residential. There is no increase in the number of homes and no detached garage. The footprint is retained like-for-like; consequently the proposal does not introduce materially greater built coverage into the site.

6. Layout and orientation

The bungalow remains positioned well within the established plot, separate from neighbouring dwellings and surrounded by substantial garden land. Reorientation allows the principal living accommodation, entrance approach and private garden to work together more successfully. A pedestrian route links the dwelling to the parking and access area.

The existing vehicular access from Beechwood Drive is retained. Parking and turning remain concentrated toward the front/eastern part of the plot, avoiding unnecessary vehicle movement around the dwelling. Refuse storage is positioned close to the site entrance for convenient collection while remaining capable of enclosure and screening.

7. Scale, massing and appearance

The replacement remains a single-storey bungalow. Its massing is therefore inherently modest and subordinate to the generous plot. The like-for-like footprint means that reorientation does not produce additional building bulk; it redistributes the same low built form.

Final external materials should be high-quality, recessive and appropriate to the varied rural-residential character of Beechwood Drive. A restrained palette of facing brick or muted render, plain roof tiles, and dark-toned window and rainwater goods would reduce visual prominence. Exact materials can appropriately be secured by condition.

8. Landscaping and character

The site's spacious, wooded character remains the principal visual feature. The replacement occupies only a small proportion of the plot and does not require removal of the western hedgerow, mature oak or other established trees identified by the ecology appraisal. Existing vegetation will continue to filter views from Beechwood Drive and neighbouring land.

Any supplementary planting should use locally appropriate native species and reinforce existing boundaries rather than create suburban ornamental enclosure. Hard surfacing should be limited to the access, parking, turning and pedestrian route and should use permeable construction where ground conditions allow.

9. Residential amenity

The single-storey form, generous plot width and established boundary separation prevent unacceptable overlooking or dominance. The reorientation does not materially worsen the relationship with Nos. 42 or 44 Beechwood Drive. The retained garden provides ample private amenity space for future occupants and maintains the low-density rhythm of development.

10. Access, parking and inclusive design

Vehicular access remains from Beechwood Drive using the established entrance. The proposed arrangement provides on-site parking and turning so vehicles can enter and leave safely. The entrance-to-dwelling route should be firm, even, adequately lit and as gently graded as practicable.

A single-storey home offers an inherently accessible form of accommodation. The detailed design should provide a level or gently ramped threshold, appropriately wide entrance and internal doors, circulation space suitable for everyday mobility needs and an accessible WC/bathroom arrangement, consistent with the applicable Building Regulations.

11. Refuse, cycles, drainage and servicing

A bin-storage point is shown near the site entrance, reducing collection distance. It can be enclosed with a simple, screened store. Secure and weatherproof cycle storage can be provided within the curtilage. The existing access enables normal domestic servicing without any new highway connection.

Surface-water drainage should follow the drainage hierarchy, prioritising infiltration where site testing confirms it to be feasible. Permeable hardstanding and controlled runoff will minimise surface-water effects. Final drainage details can be secured by condition.

12. Ecology and lighting

The PEA identifies the affected scrub/ruderal habitat as low ecological value and recommends a precautionary two-stage cut under ecological supervision. Vegetation clearance and demolition will avoid the bird-nesting season unless preceded by an appropriate check.

The revised PRA assesses the bungalow as having low suitability for roosting bats. The apparent openings are exposed and draughty, provide limited shelter and were not associated with droppings, staining, feeding remains or other evidence of use. One dusk emergence survey is recommended during the appropriate May-August survey period before demolition, with any resulting mitigation or licensing requirements to be followed. External lighting will be low-level, warm-toned, downward-directed and designed to avoid illuminating retained boundary vegetation, potential flight routes and any bat enhancement features.

Biodiversity enhancements can include integrated bat and bird boxes, native planting and habitat piles in quiet garden areas, with final locations informed by the ecologist.

13. Safety and security

The layout provides a legible route from the access and parking area to the dwelling. Principal entrances should be clearly visible, robustly lit without ecological spill, and fitted with secure doors and windows. Boundary treatment should retain natural surveillance while maintaining the established green character.

14. Conclusion

The revised scheme is a restrained, context-led response to the previous decisions. It retains the footprint and low scale of the existing bungalow and changes only its orientation. The resulting dwelling remains subordinate to the spacious, wooded plot, protects neighbour amenity, uses the existing access and embeds clear ecological safeguards.

The proposal therefore achieves a practical modern home without introducing a materially larger building or eroding the defining character of this part of Beechwood Drive. It represents appropriate, high-quality design for a like-for-like replacement dwelling.