

9a High Street, Kimpton, Hitchin, Herts, SG4 8RE

Design & Access Statement

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in conjunction with the following submitted drawings:

- 301/HSK/001
 - 301/HSK/010
 - 301/HSK/011
 - 301/HSK/012
 - 301/HSK/013
 - 301/HSK/100
 - 301/HSK/101
 - 301/HSK/120
 - 301/HSK/121
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Context

The property is a 19th-century semi-detached building located at the eastern end of Kimpton High Street, within the Kimpton Village Conservation Area (designated 1969, boundary amended 1990). The building has previously been extended to the rear and side, and benefits from a service area at the rear for parking and deliveries.

To the rear lies Kimpton Recreation Ground, with open countryside beyond. The adjoining neighbour, No. 7 High Street, is a residential property that has been previously extended. To the west is the Dacre Rooms, a community building, with a recent residential development behind.

The building was in use for many years as a doctor's surgery (Class E(e)). More recently, permission has been granted for the ground floor to revert to office use (Class E(g)(i)) under planning application ref: 25/00146/LDCP. The first floor remains in residential use.

The property has been vacant and poorly maintained for several years.

Relevant Planning History

- **25/00146/LDCP** – Conversion from GP Surgery (E(e)) to office space (E(g)(i)) – *Granted*.
- **89/01264/1** – Two-storey rear extension to doctor's surgery – *Conditional Permission*.
- **90/00983/1** – Temporary use of land for three portakabins (rear garden) – *Granted*.

- **91/00614/1** – Car parking arrangements – *Withdrawn*.
 - **88/00422/1** – Two-storey rear extension with two parking spaces (variation of 1/1306/87) – *Conditional Permission*.
 - **87/01306/1** – Single-storey rear extension with two parking spaces – *Conditional Permission*.
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Brief

The applicants purchased the property to:

- Operate their family-owned business from the ground floor office, maintaining their presence in the village;
 - Use the first and second floors as a long-term family home for one of the business owners, ensuring they can remain living in Kimpton.
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Design

The alterations are designed to repair existing defects and improve accommodation:

- Front elevation
 - Roof drainage installed to the front bay windows, connected to existing system.
 - Grassed area lowered below the damp-proof course to resolve damp issues, resurfaced in permeable paving to assist rainwater dispersal.
 - Front boundary wall reduced in height and vehicle access widened to accommodate deliveries (existing wall has been repeatedly damaged).
 - New timber entrance gates, set back from the pavement, in accordance with *Hertfordshire Highways' Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide (3rd Edition)*.
- Windows and doors
 - Replacement of all existing units with timber-framed sash windows, double glazed with improved U-values, in keeping with the Conservation Area.
 - Removal of poor-quality UPVC mock sash windows that were unsympathetic and allowed water ingress.
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- Loft conversion and roof alterations
 - Conversion of loft to create additional accommodation for the first-floor flat.

- Section of lower ridge roof (a later addition) raised to match the original and neighbour's ridge line, reinstating roof uniformity.
 - Roof tiled to match existing.
 - New rear-facing dormer, set in by 1.8m from both side boundaries. Its reduced bulk and high-quality metal cladding minimise visual impact while distinguishing it as a contemporary addition.
 - Rooflights added to front and rear elevations, plus a side window at second-floor level (clear and openable, overlooking a community building only).
 - Rear external works
 - New timber-framed car port (three spaces: two for the flat), with a tiled roof matching the main house.
 - Side access and rear hardstanding resurfaced in permeable paving; front driveway tarmac retained.
 - Juliette balcony to existing rear window opening.
 - External finishes
 - Existing pebble-dash repaired and repainted in white, enhancing the building's appearance.
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Materials

- Dormer: standing seam zinc, maintenance-free, colour-matched to existing roof tiles.
 - Pitched roof: tiles to match existing.
 - External walls: painted pebble-dash, matching existing.
 - Windows: timber-framed, double glazed.
 - Hardstanding: permeable tarmac or pavers for surface water management.
 - All new works to be fully insulated in line with Building Regulations.
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Planning Policy

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development

The scheme provides additional residential accommodation while retaining ground-floor office use. This sustains local employment, supports mixed-use vitality, and makes efficient use of the existing building fabric. It avoids additional land take, strengthens the local economy, and delivers high-quality living space in line with Policy SP1.

Policy SP6: Design & Landscape

The dormer and ridge adjustment are modest, subordinate, and use sympathetic materials. Proposals maintain proportion and roofscape character, with careful attention to scale, window proportions and design, ensuring integration with the High Street context.

Policy SP13 & HE1: Historic Environment / Designated Heritage Assets

The site lies in the Kimpton Conservation Area. The dormer and ridge height changes are designed to minimise visual impact, respect roof form, and preserve key views. Mixed-use retention reflects the traditional activity of the village core. The scheme therefore preserves and enhances the Conservation Area's character.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 8 – Supports proposals that deliver economic (office use), social (enhanced housing), and environmental (re-use of existing structure) benefits.

Paragraph 120(d) – Encourages the re-use of under-utilised buildings, achieved here through loft conversion.

Paragraph 126 & 130 – Good design should be attractive, sympathetic to character, and optimise site potential. The dormer and ridge alterations are well-proportioned and sympathetic in materials and design.

Paragraphs 199–202 – Great weight to conservation of heritage assets. Any harm must be justified and outweighed by benefits. Here, alterations are modest, with negligible impact on heritage significance, outweighed by public benefits of improved accommodation and maintained village employment.

Bio Diversity Net Gain.

Refer to the small sites metric which demonstrates compliance with BNG targets and trading rules. Created habitats (introduced native hedgerow, and new trees) will be managed for a minimum period of 30 years in accordance with the principles of the BNG Small Sites Metric.

Our clients have already taken measures to improve the existing rear facing hedge. Over the next 3 years the intention is to nurture, prune hard back and feed to encourage new growth which will produce yellow flowers in spring and berries in autumn. Mulch base with autumn leaf fall which will benefit hedgehogs and ground feed birds.

Syringa vulgaris (a non-native and a common Lilac) multi stemmed tree is growing along the side boundary.

It is in poor condition which could explain why it has not produced flowers. To achieve its full flowering potential, our clients are going to remove all ground base grown suckers, perform formative pruning to shape, remove all dead or crossing branches and mulch with organic matter to improve the soil and retain moisture.

5 native species trees are to be planted along the side boundary replacing non native and native planting. The existing planting and ground are in poor condition from neglect.

In addition, one of our clients Mr Neil Cain has volunteered as a Keep Britain Tidy Green Flag Judge for over 20 years. In his previous role as Operations Director for John O'Conner, Neil was responsible for the management of all North

Herts District Council Parks, Open Spaces, and Housing. Over a 12-year period he supported the council in securing several Green Flag Awards across the district.

To become a Green Flag Judge, volunteers must possess broad knowledge and experience in horticulture, demonstrate dedication, and complete a mandatory volunteer training program. In addition, have a strong understanding of managing and improving biodiversity in local authority parks, housing, countryside management, community development, environmental consultancy and conservation.

Our client Sam Cain, has served on the Young Board of Directors for the Grounds Management Association (GMA), focusing on attracting young people to the sports grounds management profession. The primary goal was to engage school-aged students in Hertfordshire and those at the start of their careers, introducing them to the world of sports and grounds management. Sam has utilised his skills and knowledge to support the Kimpton Parish Clerk with maintenance and long-term planning of their land ownership management, including sports and play areas and village events.

To the rear of the site, is the Kimpton Recreation Ground, where Sam and Neil have volunteered, designing, planting native trees, and landscaping the area adjacent to the car park. Further recreation improvements have included providing maintenance advice on tree management, football pitches, and training areas.