

Heritage, Design, Access and Planning Statement

Proposed: Two storey south side extension

Location: The Garden House, Putteridge Park, Near Luton, Hertfordshire, LU2 8LD

Date: 1st November 2024



Introduction

The Garden House is a residential property, set within the grounds of Putteridge Park and adjoining the historic walled garden of Putteridge Bury.

The house is not listed, but is attached to the Grade II listed garden wall that surrounds the historic garden. The site falls within the Green Belt.

Since purchasing The Garden House in 1999, the owner occupiers have undertaken renovations and improvements to the then near derelict house to convert it into a sound and pragmatic home that is congruent and fits in well with both the immediate area and the wider Putteridge Park.

This Heritage, Design, Access and Planning (HDAP) Statement in relation to the proposal is supported by an online planning application and accompanying drawings, elevations and location plan.

Proposal

In December 2023, the existing dining room was converted into a downstairs disabled bedroom (including a hospital supplied bed) to accommodate a frail elderly relative who is now living with the owner occupiers in the property.

The proposed work (totalling a GIFA of 8.5m²) consists of a two storey south extension to provide a shower ensuite for the converted downstairs disabled bedroom plus a shower ensuite in the above bedroom for carers or visitors.

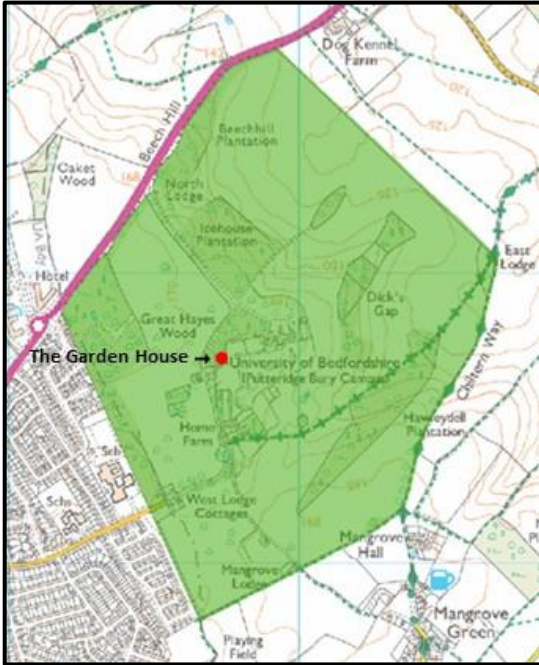
The proposed downstairs shower ensuite would significantly enhance the safety, wellbeing, convenience, dignity and quality of life of the said frail relative.

In addition, another occupant of the property has medical conditions that are making the use of the stairs increasingly difficult, for whom downstairs bedroom facilities may prove helpful in the future.

Location

As shown (below left), the property (indicated by a red dot) is located in Putteridge Park (indicated in green), approximately 4kms north east of Luton town centre.

To the north west, the circa 420 acre Park is bounded by the A505 dual carriageway to Hitchin, to the south west by the housing development of the Luton suburb of Putteridge and, on the other boundaries, by open agricultural land.



As shown (above right), the circa 2.5 acre property (indicated by the red line) is located on a private road, backs on to Putteridge Bury (owned by the University of Bedfordshire) on the east side, abuts a care home called Luke's Place on the south side and, on the other boundaries, faces open agricultural land. The site entrance from the private lane is in the bottom left-hand corner of the above picture.

Heritage

The site is located within a Conservation Area and, while the house itself is not listed, the wall that the house is attached to is listed Grade II.

The proposed construction and design maintains the open character of Putteridge Park and is compatible with the architecture and construction of similar pitched roof structures in the area.

The proposal would be finished and detailed in a way that reflects the setting of the building and would be sympathetic to the existing house in terms of height, form, proportions, window details and materials.

The proposed materials would be sympathetic to the local environment, utilising rendered brickwork, slate roof tiles and window designs that match the existing surrounding buildings on the site and locally.

The proposal would not have a significant impact on the area, would be in keeping with existing building in terms of size, scale, and design, and does not give the effect or impression of being a new dwelling.

The proposal would be in character with the site buildings, neighbouring properties, and the wider Putteridge Park, is appropriate in the context of the Green Belt and would not result in a negative visual or aesthetic impact.

The proposal would not adversely impact the 'setting or special character any historic towns' given the relatively isolated position and separateness of the site.

The approach taken is considered to lessen any potential harm that could be conceived to the wider setting of Putteridge Bury and indeed, given the proposal's minimal visual interaction with the Grade II listed garden wall, to the close relationship with the park and gardens.

None of the proposed windows: overlook the nearest neighbouring property; or overlook other adjoining properties; or overlook the historic gardens, thus ensuring that there are no neighbouring light or privacy issues.

Glare and reflection from the glass in the two small windows (totalling circa 0.8 m²) would not cause harm to the significance of the parkland or reduce the rural character of the area as it is sympathetic to the style of the house and the neighbouring properties and, therefore, would not cause demonstrable harm.

The proposal would protrude from the south side of the building by circa 1.8m, so would have little or no impact. The proposal would not affect views across the historic pleasure park, but is in view of the parkland agricultural fields.

For these above reasons, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area, including Putteridge Bury historic park and gardens. The proposal presents a continuation of the Heritage Impact and would not be incongruous to the setting.

Design

The proposal is well related in terms of the direction the house faces, levels of adjoining properties, distance to neighbouring windows, and would not dominate the neighbouring or adjoining properties.

The proposal is modest in relation to the circa 2.5 acre site and can easily be accommodated in the garden grounds.

The proposal is commensurate with the size of the existing property and of a style, appearance and design that is very similar to other properties on Putteridge Park.

The material choices proposed seek to match and complement the existing external rendered walls, matching windows and roof materials and are intended to minimise the visual impact, particularly when seen from afar.

The proposal would provide a high quality of design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers.

Access

Vehicular access - the proposal would have no impact on the current vehicular access arrangements and would not create any deficiency or worsening of off-street parking. The bin store would remain unchanged and the refuse collection arrangements would remain unchanged.

Inclusiveness - the proposal would improve the level of access afforded to disabled users of the building. Specifically, it would provide an easily accessible downstairs bedroom and shower ensuite for frail and/or disabled occupants.

The proposal would not result in conditions prejudicial to highway safety and sufficient provision exists for on-site parking.

The proposal would have minimal effect on the current landscaping, replacing an existing shingle area.

The indicative flood map of the Environment Agency identifies the property as being within Flood Zone1 and, therefore, at no or low risk of flooding.

Planning

The construction of new building is appropriate in the Green Belt where the extension or alteration of a building does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

The original house GIFA was circa 170m², the current GIFA is circa 335m² and the GIFA including the proposal would be circa 343.5m². The proposal is modest in relation to both the original GIFA and current GIFA and can be easily accommodated within the circa 2.5 acre plot.

Key factors such as size, volume, prominence and overall scale render the proposal appropriate, however, the owner occupiers recognise that, if the proposal is approved, then the house would have reached its maximum developable potential as the proposal would take the total GIFA to just over double the size of the original house.

When considering any planning application, substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances would not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The underlying reason for the proposal is the exceptional, important and very special circumstance of ensuring that the house provides the facilities needed for the current frail/disabled occupant and for future occupants who may need ground floor disabled/wheelchair bedroom facilities. If these said very special circumstances had not arisen then the proposal would not have been needed or submitted.

The proposal would be a minimum of 5 metres from the south (side) boundary, a minimum of 65 metres from the west (front) boundary.

In relation to the effect on the openness of the Green Belt, the proposal would have no impact on the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of the small footprint, location and being well screened by a brick boundary wall and foliage.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposal

- Would not harm the character and appearance of the area, including Putteridge Bury historic park and gardens and would not be incongruous to the setting.
- Would have no significant impact on, or cause any harm to, the openness of the Green Belt or the character or appearance of the area or the registered park and garden.
- Would satisfy the very special circumstance in relation to the Green Belt of providing facilities for frail/disabled current/future occupant(s).
- Does not represent a disproportionate addition to the existing house, albeit it would result in the house reaching its maximum developable potential.
- Is compatible in relation to the existing buildings on the site and locally and would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the locality.
- Would use traditional construction and methods including rendered brick walls, pitched roofs, matching external render, slate/ridge roof tiles soffits, fascia boards and double-glazed windows.

It is hoped that the information provided in this HDAP Statement, in conjunction with the accompanying planning application, drawings, elevations and location plan will enable you to grant planning permission to facilitate the resolution of the above very special circumstances.