

SKEET + COUTIE

ARCHITECTURE



Ash House, Holmfirth

Design & Access Statement

APRIL 2026

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Introduction

Commission

Skeet and Coutie Architecture were commissioned by Alan and Jayne Tolan to prepare and submit the planning application for Ash House, 240 Dunford Road.

Skeet and Coutie specialise in predominantly domestic residential works from their base in Sheffield. The practice has a large portfolio of innovative refurbishment, extension and new build projects to properties both within the area and further afield. A significant number of these are within designated Conservation Areas and National Parks.

Statement

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support an application for Full Planning Consent at Ash House, 240 Dunford Road, Holmfirth, HD9 2SJ.

The current scope of works relate to the remodelling of an existing two-storey Annexe, complete replacement of a rear conservatory, and a new pedestrian entrance to Dunford Road.

Architectural drawings have also been submitted as part of this application indicating the scope and material of the proposed works.

The report has been written in accordance with CABI's guide '*Design and Access Statements - How to write, read and use them*'



Context

Physical Context

Ash House is a large, detached, stone villa of mid to late Victorian origin on Dunford Road, located on the western side of the B6106 southern approach road at the edge of Holmfirth.



The property first appears on area maps of 1892, along with the Underbank Mill to the East, see OS plan, below.



The site comprises a large, mature, and somewhat formal lawned garden to the north, a smaller private garden with several paved area to the rear (South), and a sloping grassy embankment along the western boundary that overlooks the River Ribble valley.

A large, stone wall forms the Eastern boundary which retains the pedestrian pavement along Dunford Road, approximately 2m above general site levels.

Mature vegetation and trees provide extensive screening along the Eastern boundary with several areas subject to Tree Protection Orders.



Ash House itself remains largely as constructed with well-proportioned natural stone elevations and elegant window detailing to the principal elevation, shown left.

The side and rear elevations exhibit more modest stone details within similarly proportioned elevations. A tall arched window above the main stair faces Dunford Road.



A two-storey annexe adjacent to Dunford Road was constructed in the 1990's in a pastiche Victorian cottage style, faced in natural stone with ashlar details.

Whilst broadly Victorian in character, neither the form of the Annexe, nor the heavy stone details bear any relationship to the original house.

This creates an uneasy reading of the original house and detracts from the modest grandeur of the original construction.



The rear conservatory, below left, occupies a prominent position within the private garden, overlooking the valley below.

A combination of low walls of natural stone, full-width dark grey windows above, and a roof covering of mock-slate further confuse the setting, such that the main house appears as something of a backdrop to the collection of small, unrelated structures below.

Planning Context

Land Designations

- Site IS in the Green Belt
- Site IS in the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Planning Area
- Site is NOT in a conservation area
- Property NOT listed
- Property has NOT had it's 'permitted development' rights removed
- Property is NOT a designated Heritage Asset
- Site is NOT within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Site is NOT within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Site is NOT within a Mining Risk Area

Planning History

Digital records for Kirklees Council planning applications contain the following records for 240 Dunford Road:

Planning ref.	Date	Description	Decision
2017/94184	26/01/2018	Works to TPO(s) 07/80	Consent
2001/92446	27/09/2001	Change of use: Part of Dwelling to Restaurant	Refused Appeal dismissed
94/90128	06/06/1994	Erection of Extension to form Double Garage, 2 Bedrooms and Conservatory	Granted
87/02165	26/06/1987	Erection of replacement garage	Granted

A search of planning enforcement records returned no results for the Site

Green Belt



The Site lies at the edge of, and wholly within, an area of designated Green Belt land, as indicated in green, left.

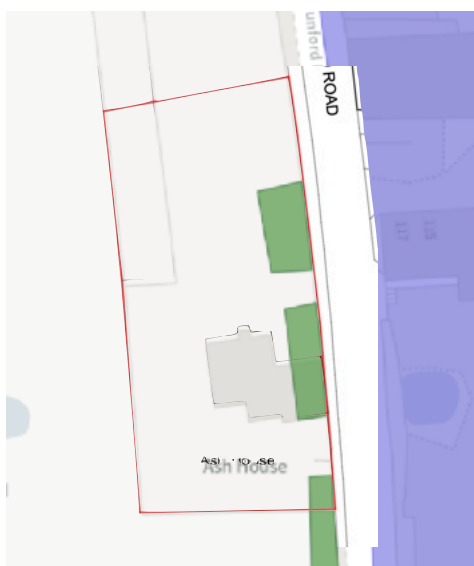
Kirklees policy LP57 states that modifying dwellings in the Green Belt is generally allowed if extensions or alterations are not "disproportionate" to the original building (as of 1948 or first construction).

Although the existing Annexe and Conservatory do not form part of the original building (as of 1948 or first construction), Kirklees recognises that the cumulative impact of previous extensions and of other associated buildings will be taken into account when considering the extension, alteration or replacement of existing buildings.

LP57 also states that while the essential characteristic of the Green Belt is its openness it follows that no harm to openness should be caused if a building that is already there is altered or replaced, provided that the new or altered building does not have a greater impact on openness than the one it is replacing.

The proposed Site is set against a backdrop of surrounding development such as the former Underbank Mill buildings and does not occupy a particularly prominent position within the Green Belt. The proposals will also not significantly increase the height or volume of the existing structures and would result in no greater impact than the existing buildings do.

The proposals will therefore have no detrimental impact on the Green Belt setting.



Tree Protection Orders

There are three protection orders placed on the site as indicated left.

These are (from north to south):

- 07/80/g11
- 07/80/g12
- 07/80/g13

The proposals do not require works to any trees on site.

Social and Economic Context

The Site occupies a desirable and sustainable location for families within walking distance of local services in Holmfirth, with good transport links and views over open countryside.

However, previous extensions and alterations have eroded the building's original domestic setting. An application for Change of Use (Restaurant) and prior use as a guest house illustrate this potential.

Continued use of the property as a single family home will not only benefit the current and future occupants of the house, but also support the commercial and residential communities of Holmfirth.

Natural England

Following the recommended enquiry process, the applicant is informed that there is 'no need to consult Natural England on the proposed development at this location.' for the following reasons:

The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

Design

Objectives

The present owners purchased the property in early 2025 for use as a family home for themselves and their adult children. Although maintenance and repair work has been periodically undertaken in the past, it has not always been to an appropriate standard of design or execution. For example, the installation of outward opening uPVC windows to the main house has significantly reduced the depth of reveal and exposed large areas of plastic framing.

The modern additions to the house have also been detrimental to the setting of the house, notably the two-storey Annexe adjacent to Dunford Road which introduces a number heavy and inappropriate decorative features which overshadow the restrained elegance of the original construction.

The recent construction also perform poorly with regards to energy conservation and internal comfort. Levels of natural light, ventilation and insulation are all inadequate for habitable accommodation and there appears to be no reliable fire escape from the first floor sleeping accommodation above the garage.

At ground floor, the two vehicle doors to the garage offer less than 2.0m clear width and are unusable for the vast majority of modern cars. This places additional pressure for on-street parking.

Furthermore, it has become apparent that much of the construction has not been executed correctly. For example, a series of temporary Acrow props were discovered, hidden behind plasterboard 'columns' that appear to support the stone roof above (below, left). Comprehensive replacement of the roof will be required to make the accommodation safe.

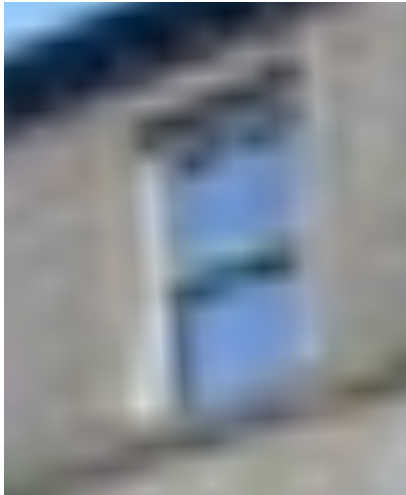


Even when resolved, the accommodation suffers from internal columns, reduced headroom, complex access, and poor levels of levels of light, ventilation and thermal comfort. This greatly reduces the usability of this accommodation as an integral part of the family home (above, right).

The Conservatory to the rear occupies a prime south-westerly aspect position, below. However, despite the later addition of a 'solid roof' this element still suffers the common issues associated with conservatories: overheating during the summer months whilst being too cold to enjoy in the winter.



It is now the applicants' intention to undertake a range of refurbishment works to address these and other issues, and for which an Full Application for Planning Consent is required.



(As part of the ongoing programme of improvements, the applicant has recently re-instated timber-framed sliding-sash double-glazed windows to the main house - produced and installed by local craftsmen to the original design)

The proposals therefore seek to carry out high-quality, robust, sustainable, and architecturally appropriate improvements to the site via comprehensive refurbishment of the Annexe, replacing the conservatory with new, thermally efficient construction, rationalising internal circulation, and creating convenient pedestrian access from Dunford Road.

Use

The refurbished ground floor of the Annexe will provide garaging to the north and domestic utility to the south of ground floor. First floor accommodation will consist of en-suite living accommodation and a self-contained artist studio / craft workshop.

The proposed rear extension will provide general amenity to the household.

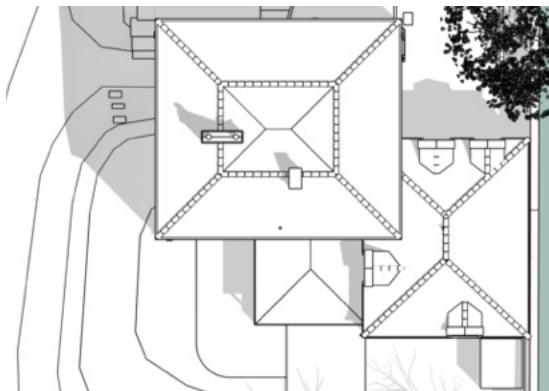
Amount

The proposals do not lead to a significant increase in external footprint, internal floor area or external volume.

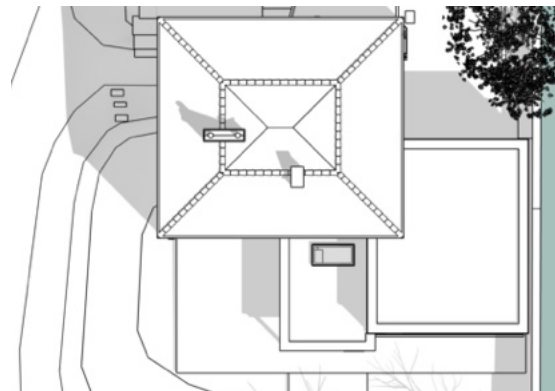
Layout

Works to the Annexe are to be wholly within the existing footprint with internal re-arrangements to improve the quality of internal spaces, general access and circulation.

The proposed rear extension will replace the existing structure with modified proportions to allow better use of the external spaces and refine the overall massing of the site.



Existing Site layout



Proposed Site layout

Scale

The scale of the proposals are as below:

Refurbished Annexe: 7.7m(w), 9.3m(l), 5.6m(h) [7.7 x 9.3 x 6.4 as existing]

Extension: 4.5m(w), 5.5m(l), 3.2m(h) [4.2 x 5.3 x 3.9 as existing]

Landscaping

The proportions and outlook of the proposed extension have been developed to provide additional shelter and privacy from the pavement of Dunford Road. The existing stone paving will be re-laid to suit the new arrangement.

Further landscaping works include the development of an indigenous planting scheme and the creation of a new 'kitchen garden' with direct access to a dedicated garden store in the Annexe.

An experienced landscape designer has been appointed to assist in the development of these proposals.

Appearance

The annexe and rear extension are to be constructed in a simple, clean contemporary style, intended to be both sympathetic and subservient to the main house, yet sufficiently distinct to facilitate a clear reading of Ash House and its development history.

Works to the Annexe propose to retain the foundations, upper floor structure, and natural stone external walls of the existing building with structural openings optimised to the proposed internal layout.

The proposed roof-form will consist of a flat roof with slim, dark grey zinc fascia.

This form allows for optimal use of the existing first floor whilst reducing the overall height of the Annexe from that of the current Annexe ridge. The new Annexe eaves would also sit below the eaves of the main house, maintaining a subservient relationship to it.

New walls to the upper storey will consist of a half-storey of tall 'Weaver's Cottage' style windows within panels of vertical timber cladding. These will sit directly above the retained natural stone of the existing facade with a lightweight appearance and a modest set back from the stone below.

The use of traditionally low-status building materials (timber and metal sheet) above a natural stone base is common in rural outbuildings and is intended to reinforce the dominant status of the the main house.



Front Elevation as proposed with vertical timber cladding over existing natural stone

A ribbon of upper storey vertical windows to the front and rear are suggestive of West Yorkshire weavers' cottages and lend further support the interpretation of buildings in service of the main house.

New windows have a vertical emphasis with similar proportions to those of the main house. Together with the vertical timber cladding and recessed panels above the windows, this lends an elegance to the overall massing and reduces the squat appearance of the existing extensions. Windows and doors are to be a thermally efficient hybrid timber system finished externally in dark grey aluminium.



Rear elevation showing distinct relationship between existing and new construction (pergola omitted for clarity)

Proposals for the rear Extension continue the above palette of materials, specifically: full-height glazing within panels of vertical timber cladding; slim, flat roof with dark grey fascia; and over-window panels. A horizontal roof-light adjacent to the existing kitchen will provide good levels of natural light and ventilation to an otherwise window-less area.



Externally, an engineered timber 'pergola' structure is proposed to the south-west of the rear extension to be planted with a suitably robust species of grape vine. This will reduce the risk of over-heating during summer whilst allowing solar gains during the winter period when the vine is dormant. Externally, the planted pergola will provide shade, shelter and visual amenity to the associated external spaces.

Access

Vehicular access

The site is currently accessed via a manually operated vehicular gate to Dunford Road. Vehicles entering or leaving the property to exit the vehicle to open the gate. This is undesirable since it risks a potentially hazardous situation to pedestrians, other road users, and the driver.



Existing entrance on Dunford Road

The inward swing of the large gates also reduces the area available for parking or manoeuvring vehicles on site.

The proposals are to replace the existing gate with a powered, sliding unit in the current location between original stone pillars. This will allow safe and convenient vehicular access at all times, whilst providing a greater area for on-site parking and manoeuvres.



Existing entrance gate

Inclusive access

New external doors to the proposed extension and rear of the Annexe will provide level, accessible and convenient access to the rear garden from the house. The internal re-arrangement of the annexe at ground floor will reduce the excessive number of internal circulation doors and internal steps.

Convenient access to the Annexe upper floor will now be provided off the main stair of the existing house. This will allow future adaptation of the upper storey into accessible accommodation within the house itself.

Under the current arrangement, all pedestrian access to site (deliveries, visitors, etc.) require that the main gates are manually unlocked and opened each time, or left unsecured during the day. The proposals aim to improve safety and access with the installation of a new, remotely operated pedestrian gate, immediately adjacent to the existing entrance.



Proposed entrance gate with new pedestrian access

Conclusion

As the above report sets out, the proposals seek to:

- make optimal use of the Site and its existing structures without the need for wasteful demolition or excessive new construction
- restore the function, setting and architectural importance of Ash House
- enable a clear reading of the original house and subservient additions
- improve the layout, comfort, and energy efficiency of the interior spaces
- provide useable, flexible and high-quality living accommodation for present and future occupants
- improve the outdoor amenity and biodiversity of the wider site
- improve pedestrian access to the house
- reduce the need for off-street parking on Dunford Road
- safeguard the future of Ash House as an important, well-loved and distinctive family home in the community of Holmfirth

The proposals have been carefully considered to make a sustainable, innovative and well-designed contribution to the site and its surroundings.

