

Design & Access Statement

Proposed Single-Storey Side Extension (Sun Lounge) and Demolition of Existing Conservatory and Sandstone Chimney Seathwaite, High House Road, St Bees St Bees Conservation Area

1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement accompanies a planning application for the construction of a new single-storey side extension to form a sun lounge at Seathwaite, High House Road, St Bees. The proposal includes the demolition of an existing uPVC conservatory and the removal of a redundant sandstone chimney. The property lies within the St Bees Conservation Area, and the design has been carefully developed to respect the character, appearance, and historic significance of its setting.

2. Site and Context

- **Location:** Seathwaite is a detached dwelling situated on High House Road, within the designated St Bees Conservation Area.
- **Character:** The area is defined by traditional sandstone buildings, slate roofs, mature landscaping, and a strong vernacular identity.
- **Existing Structures:**
 - A modern uPVC conservatory sits on the side elevation. It is visually incongruous with the host dwelling and the wider conservation area.
 - A sandstone chimney on the same elevation is no longer functional and is structurally deteriorated.

The site is not listed, but its position within the conservation area requires sensitive design and material choices.

3. Design Principles and Rationale

3.1 Overall Approach

The design aims to:

- Replace an outdated and visually intrusive conservatory with a high-quality, permanent structure.
- Enhance the architectural coherence of the dwelling.
- Improve energy efficiency and year-round usability.
- Ensure the extension sits comfortably within the conservation area context.

3.2 Scale, Massing and Footprint

- The extension is **single storey**, maintaining a modest scale.
- **The proposed extension covers the existing footprint of the conservatory**, ensuring no increase in ground coverage or encroachment into the garden.

- The roof form is designed to sit below the main eaves line, ensuring subservience to the host building.

3.3 Materials

Materials have been selected to complement the conservation area and the existing dwelling:

- **Walls:** Natural or reclaimed sandstone to match the existing façade.
- **Roof:** Natural slate to match the main roof.
- **Openings:** Timber or aluminium-clad timber windows/doors in a simple, traditional style.
- **Rainwater goods:** Black metal to reflect local vernacular.

These choices ensure the extension integrates seamlessly with the historic character of the area.

3.4 Demolition of Existing Structures

- The **uPVC conservatory** is of no architectural merit and detracts from the character of the conservation area. Its removal is considered an enhancement.
- The **sandstone chimney** is structurally unsound and no longer serves a functional purpose. Its removal allows for the extension's construction and does not harm the significance of the conservation area.

4. Impact on the Conservation Area

The proposal has been designed to preserve and enhance the character of the St Bees Conservation Area by:

- Removing an inappropriate modern conservatory.
- Introducing a well-proportioned, sensitively designed extension using traditional materials.
- Retaining the existing footprint, ensuring no additional visual or spatial impact.
- Maintaining the building's overall form, scale, and relationship with the street scene.

The development will not adversely affect key views, historic features, or the wider setting.

5. Access Statement

5.1 Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

- Existing access arrangements remain unchanged.
- No alterations are proposed to the driveway, parking, or pedestrian routes.

5.2 Internal Access

- The extension provides level access from the main dwelling.
- Door widths and circulation space will comply with current Building Regulations.

- The design improves accessibility by replacing a thermally inefficient conservatory with a usable, comfortable space.

6. Sustainability Considerations

- High-performance glazing and insulation will significantly improve thermal efficiency compared to the existing conservatory.
- Materials are chosen for durability and low maintenance.
- Construction will follow modern energy-efficient standards.

7. Conclusion

The proposed single-storey side extension represents a positive enhancement to the property and the St Bees Conservation Area. By **covering the existing footprint** and using traditional materials, the development replaces an unsuitable modern conservatory with a sensitively designed, high-quality structure that respects local character, improves the building's appearance, and provides a functional, energy-efficient living space.