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THE BEECHES, HEYFORD ROAD, STEEPLE ASTON, OX25 4SN
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Design & Access Statement

JOB NO	PROJECT
23003	The Beeches, Heyford Road, Steeple Aston, OX25 4SN
REVISION	DATE
/	25 January 2024

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1.0 Introduction

This Design And Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Householder Planning Application submitted at The Beeches, Heyford Road, Steeple Aston. The application seeks consent for replacement single-storey rear & two-storey side extensions along with a replacement garage building with associated landscaping.

This statement is to be read in conjunction with the drawings listed below:

- Location Plan: 23003-L01
- Proposed Block Plan: 23003-L02
- Existing Site Layout: 1444-01 & 1444-02
- Existing Floor Plans: 1444-03
- Existing Elevations: 1444-04
- Proposed Site Layout: 23003-PL001
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan: 23003-PL002
- Proposed First Floor Plan: 23003-PL003
- Proposed Second Floor Plan: 23003-PL004
- Proposed Elevations: 23003-PL005
- Proposed Sections: 23003-PL006
- Proposed Garage Building: 23003-PL007

It is intended that this statement will explain the design progression that has informed the proposals and address the issues relevant to the site. It offers a background to the information assessed in considering the proposals for the site

2.0 Site Analysis

2.1. Overview

The Beeches is located to the south of Steeple Aston, on the edge of the built up settlement, on west side of Heyford Road. The property is set back from the road, and is accessed via a tree-lined driveway which leads up to entrance gates to the private driveway & parking area. The driveway is shared by a recently consented new dwelling (ref: 21/02147/OUT & 22/01613/REM) which is positioned to the north-east of The Beeches.

Steeple Aston is a rural village and civil parish located on the edge of the Cherwell Valley, in the Cherwell District of Oxfordshire. It is located circa 12 miles north of Oxford, 7 miles west of Bicester, and 10 miles south of Banbury. The village's character derives from its valley setting, with the River Cherwell running to the east of the village, with the village split either side of the valley and defined by the roads 'South Side' and 'North Side'. In recent times, the village has expanded through clusters of newer developments which have connected The Beeches with the built up settlement.

The application site is set outside of the Steeple Aston Conservation Area, however due consideration has been given to its setting throughout the design process.



2.2. Existing Buildings

The existing dwelling on the site at the Beeches is an attractive Arts & Crafts style two storey detached property constructed in the local vernacular on an extensive & well screened plot. Exact dates for the dwelling's construction are unclear, but the property is estimated to have been constructed around 1900 – The site at The Beeches appears on historical Ordnance Survey mapping between 1881-1922.



External materials of the existing dwelling consist of a red brickwork plinth with yellow painted pebbledash render above, set under a pitched clay tiled roof. Windows and doors are a combination of traditional timber joinery windows and doors and more modern timber doors and windows across the rear elevation.

The existing dwelling has been significantly altered and extended since its original construction, and a number of outbuildings constructed on the site. The extensions include a single storey rear extension along the full length of the original dwelling, along with a considerable swimming pool wing added along the north-west elevation which wraps at single storey level around the front gable of the property. The swimming pool wing, in itself not unattractive, sits rather awkwardly against the existing dwelling, and with the proximity of the existing garage building it compromises the approach to the dwelling and the parking & turning area.

The site features a number of detached outbuildings, including a timber clad triple garage at the frontage of the house, and a series of metal framed buildings which were built to service the previous owner's installation of a narrow-gauge railway.

Prior to the applicant's purchase of the property, an area of land to the north-east of the existing dwelling was sold, and a new-build property was consented under planning refs: 21/02147/OUT & 22/01613/REM. The dwelling, which is currently under construction, is of traditional oak-framed form with moderately contemporary detailing to the facades.

2.3. Local Architecture

The local architecture of Steeple Aston is predominantly of domestic scale, featuring a mix of traditionally proportioned detached and semi-detached dwellings set within modest plots, interspersed with larger dwellings set within more generous plots, often set back from the highway & public view.

The traditional architectural vernacular of Steeple Aston features a material palette of local sandstone, ironstone, and red brickwork facades set under slate & stone slate roofs. More recent developments have brought a greater number of brickwork dwellings and clay tile roofs to the character of the area.

2.4. Topography, Vegetation & Views

The topography of the application site gently rises from the access at Heyford Road to the east to the high point of the paddocks to the west. The level change from Heyford Road to the existing dwelling is approximately 5.5m, with the land rising approximately a further 7.0m to the far west side of the paddocks.

The site is characterised by the previous owner's installation of a narrow-gauge railway, known as 'The Beeches Light Railway' which ran in a figure of eight loop around the gardens and paddock land, and featured a series of buildings, including engine houses and station building.

Views stretch to the south from the existing property over the rolling countryside, and on a clear day Rousham House & Gardens can be seen. Views into the site are largely restricted from all public viewpoints owing to the site being set back from the public highway, and well screened by the mature trees on the site.

2.5. Relevant Planning History

Below is a full list of the planning history from the site at The Beeches, from Cherwell District Council's online records. The previous planning history is all prior to the applicant's purchase of the property in January 2024, and some of the recent applications for the new dwelling relate to the parcel of land to the north of the site which was sold off separately.

Reference	Application Type	Description	Decision	Decision Date
03/00075/F	Full Development	Change of use of land to garden, dining room extension, enclosed swimming pool outbuilding and construction of a narrow gauge railway.	Permitted	29/05/2003
03/01943/F	Full Development	Erection of a station pavilion and tractor shed	Permitted	31/10/2003
05/00840/F	Full Development	Single storey rear extension.	Permitted	17/06/2005
19/00457/OUT	Outline Application	Erection of up to 8 No dwellings with all matters reserved except the means of access onto Heyford Road	Application Withdrawn	09/05/2019
19/01601/OUT	Outline Application	Erection of up to 8 dwellings with all matters reserved except the means of access on to Heyford Road.	Refused	31/10/2019
20/00964/OUT	Outline Application	Erection of up to 8 dwellings with all matters reserved except the means of access on to Heyford Road	Appeal Dismissed (Against Refusal)	01/06/2020
20/02227/OUT	Outline Application	Erection of up to 10 dwellings with all matters reserved except the means of access on to Heyford Road	Refused	12/11/2020
20/02539/SO	Screening Opinion	Screening opinion to 20/02227/OUT - Erection of up to 10 dwellings with all matters reserved except the	Screening Opinion not requesting EIA	21/10/2020

		means of access on to Heyford Road		
21/02147/OUT	Outline Application	Outline:- 1 new dwelling	Permitted	17/01/2022
22/01613/REM	Matters Arising From Outline Approval	Reserved matters application to 21/02147/OUT – Details of appearance, landscaping and layout	Permitted	26/07/2022
22/03254/DISC	Discharge Of Conditions	Discharge of Conditions 2 (schedule of materials) and 3 (Landscaping Scheme) of 22/01613/REM	Permitted	05/01/2023
22/03385/DISC	Discharge Of Conditions	Discharge of Conditions 5 (specification details), 6 (surface water drainage scheme), 7 (Sustainable Construction Statement), 8 (covered cycle storage), 9 (biodiversity method statement), 10 (Construction Traffic Management Plan) and 12 (water efficiency limit) of 21/02147/OUT	Permitted	18/04/2023
23/01273/REM	Matters Arising From Outline Approval	Variation of Condition 1 (plans) of 22/01613/REM - Position of the house is amended to allow the house to be moved back towards the North edge of the plot by 1.5m to avoid the well.	Permitted	26/07/2023
23/01397/NMA	Non Material Amendments	Amendments related to two sides of the house - the North and South elevations. North elevation - there are four casement windows, each measuring 2.4m in width - to reduce each casement from a quadruple to a triple, so that each measures 1.8m in width. South elevation - to reduce one casement window on the left of the elevation to a double and remove the face glazing above (proposed as non-material amendment to 22/01613/REM)	Permitted	27/06/2023

3.0 Brief & Objectives

The applicants wish to replace the existing single storey rear extensions and the large swimming pool wing with new single storey rear extensions and new two-storey side extension. The new extensions will allow the internal layout to be modernised, and will replace the existing swimming pool wing which is surplus to requirements, and highly inefficient to run & maintain.

The applicants also wish to improve the overall appearance of the dwelling, and by replacing the incongruous swimming pool wing, they aim to re-establish & enhance the domestic appearance of the property.

As part of the works, the applicants will renovate & upgrade the building's fabric, including replacement of the existing single-glazed windows and doors, replacement of the existing pebbledash render with new external wall insulation & render system, and the thermal upgrade of existing roof insulation.

In summary, the proposal seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- To replace the outdated, inefficient & surplus extensions to create a more visually cohesive and energy efficient property, with accommodation better suited to the applicant's needs.
- To improve the overall visual appearance and energy performance of the existing dwelling.
- To replace the existing poor quality garage building with a new more vernacular garage & carport building.
- To improve the current driveway parking & turning area which has been compromised following the previous owners sale of the parcel of land to the north.

4.0 The Design

4.1. Amount

The proposals seek to replace the existing single-storey rear extensions & swimming pool wing, which total 182m² footprint area with new single storey rear & two-storey side extensions which total 150m² footprint. In addition, a new catslide roof extension to the existing utility room is proposed, with a footprint of 16m². Therefore, the proposals represent a reduction in the built footprint of the dwelling on the site, and aside from a small projection of the single storey rear extension beyond the existing, the proposals will sit wholly within previously built footprint area.

The proposals also include the remodelling of the existing front entrance gable which, following the removal of the existing wrap-around extension, will be extended to form a full gable with new entrance canopy & bay window formed to highlight the beautifully crafted original entrance door & stone quoin surround. In addition, the existing flat roof dormers to the loft space are to be replaced with larger flat roof dormer windows with traditional lead roof & lead cheeks.

The proposed two-storey side extension is designed as a subservient element to the existing main roof to reflect the utility wing to the east. The ridgeline sits approximately 0.75m below the main ridge, and will contain a new master bedroom suite at first floor level.

The existing triple garage, which is of poor construction and of low visual quality, is to be replaced by a new garage & carport structure of similar footprint, and is proposed to be situated slightly further back in the site in order to improve the available space for turning and parking of vehicles.

4.2. Layout

The proposed extensions seek to largely replace & reduce existing built footprint on the site, and combined with the replacement of the existing garage, the layout aims to improve the sense of openness and space at the property frontage and to give a better sense of arrival to the property.

The general orientation and layout of the dwelling will remain unchanged, with the new extensions creating a better visual and physical connection to the southerly orientated rear gardens & the expansive views over Rousham & the wider landscape beyond.

Given the orientation and proximity of the existing garages to the main house, the driveway & parking area feels oppressive and overshadowed, and the proposals seek to create better visual connections through to the belt of trees & the paddock areas beyond.

4.3. Scale

In terms of built footprint; as described previously, the proposals will represent a reduction in the overall built area on the site. The scale of the single-storey rear extensions are commensurate with the previous extensions they will replace.

The two-storey side extension, whilst slightly higher than the swimming pool wing it will replace, will be set back from the front elevation and therefore will be far less visually prominent than the pool wing, which projects forward of the front elevation by circa 4.6m.

The below comparison visuals demonstrate the improvement in openness and the reduction in visual scale that the proposed scheme achieves versus the existing extensions & garage building:



Above - Existing 3D view of property frontage.



Above - Proposed 3D view of property frontage.

The proposed replacement garage building will be of similar footprint to the building it will be replacing and will feature a more vernacular roof pitch, with home office space above, to match that of the main house rather than the incongruous shallow pitch of the existing building.

4.4. Appearance

The proposed extensions & alterations to The Beeches have been designed to sit subserviently and harmoniously with the original building, and will present an improvement to the overall visual appearance of the dwelling. The current extensions feature a number of awkward junctions between the new and old, which the proposed scheme seeks to resolve.

To the front of the property, the removal of the existing pool wing and the catslide roof extensions to the front will eliminate a large amount of the visual mass and bulk from the front elevation, and will allow the front gable to be remodelled into a fuller gable to give more emphasis on the arrival point to the dwelling. This, combined with the relocation of the garage building, will give the appearance of heightened openness and space on approach with greater visual permeability through the site.



Above: Proposed Front Elevation



Above: Proposed Rear Elevation

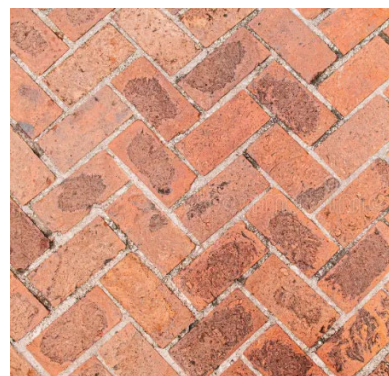
The replacement single-storey rear extension has been designed as a contemporary addition to the building, which comfortably knits together the more vernacular two-storey side extension and the catslide utility room extensions to present a more cohesive and attractive rear elevation.

4.5. Materiality

The proposals aim to utilise matching & complimentary materials in their construction in order to seamlessly knit the new additions & alterations with the original dwelling. The replacement single-storey rear extensions will be constructed in matching red brickwork with contemporary brick detailing, while the new two-storey side extension & catslide utility extension will be constructed in rendered masonry set above a red brick plinth with traditional detailing to the windows, roof and eaves to seamlessly link them with the existing Arts & Craft style.

In addition, a series of upgrades & improvement will be undertaken to the existing building fabric, including the replacement of the existing single glazed timber windows with matching

higher-performance double glazed units, and the removal of the existing yellow painted pebbledash render with a new external wall insulation & render system in a more neutral and muted off-white colour.



Above – Precedent imagery for proposed materiality (top left: off-white render & red brick detailing, top right: contemporary brickwork & sliding door extension, middle left: off-white render & red brick detailing, middle right: off-white render & red brick detailing, bottom left: roughcast render, bottom middle: render & painted timber windows, bottom right: brickwork detailing)

5.0 Environmental Considerations

In respect of sustainability and energy efficiency these are core elements of the proposed design which have been developed throughout the design process. Issues such as location, layout and materials have all been described previously, however the following section will highlight the other measures included within the scheme, that are not externally visible.

5.1. Building Fabric & Choice of Materials

In general, all materials will be selected for their appropriateness, sustainability, robustness and longevity, and where possible will be obtained locally.

The proposed extensions & accessible areas of existing structure will be highly insulated and through the upgrade of existing building fabric, and the use of modern construction methods and materials, the resulting building fabric will be extremely well insulated and air-tight to minimise heat loss.

5.2. Natural Ventilation & Daylighting

The building will be naturally ventilated with openable doors, windows, rooflights with trickle ventilation to provide background ventilation. Principal living areas will have large expanses of openable glazing to allow for rapid natural ventilation when required which, combined with the high thermal mass of the stone envelope, will mitigate the need for any mechanical cooling.

It is a key objective to maximise the use of natural light and form links to the outside. This is achieved in the new additions through large areas of glazing to living areas, and through the careful orientation and positioning of new windows and doors. The large south facing doors and windows to the reconfigured kitchen, living & dining space will draw natural light deep into the ground floor area and, by virtue of their southerly orientation, will be conducive to high levels of solar heat gain.

5.3. Building Services & Sustainability

A key aspect of the design will be to achieve a better performing property that is able to demonstrate a reduction in energy use over its lifecycle. As part of the works, the existing building services (heating & hot water, and ventilation) will be upgraded in line with current Building Regulations standards. This will include the provision of photovoltaic panels (PV) connecting to extensive battery storage, air source heat pump (ASHP) technology, and modern building management systems (BMS).

5.4. Ecology & Planting

The existing site is heavily populated with various species-rich planting & various native & non native trees & hedges. The proposals seek to retain the existing levels of trees and planting across the site.

As part of this application, a full Preliminary Ecological Survey, including an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) has been prepared by Windrush Ecology Ltd and will be submitted under separate cover.

6.0 The Access Component

In line with the requirements the following access component of this statement relates only to "access to the development" and therefore does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings

- General access to the site will remain as existing, via the shared private driveway from Heyford Road.
- Access for emergency vehicles will remain as existing, via the shared private driveway from Heyford Road.
- Access for refuse vehicles will remain as existing, via the shared private driveway from Heyford Road.

7.0 Conclusion

The property at The Beeches, provides an excellent opportunity to extend, re-model, and re-landscape the existing property and by virtue of doing so enhance both the immediate and neighbouring context by removing some of the existing inefficient, poor quality, and awkward additions and providing replacement high-quality, vernacular, and well-balanced extensions and alterations. Following a thorough site appraisal and careful design process, the designs have adopted a sensitive and appropriate approach towards the proposed extensions and alterations.

Fundamental to the design philosophy has been the need to upgrade and enhance the original property and for any additions to be carefully considered in terms of scale, appearance and materiality. The resultant scheme demonstrates a sensitive handling of the application site's quality and also that of the wider context. Furthermore, the application seeks to improve upon and reduce the scale and amount of previous additions to the property, and consolidate them into a far more cohesive, attractive, and energy efficient overall scheme.

We would therefore conclude that we are proposing a carefully considered scheme that is in keeping with its surroundings and would enhance the existing building, bring the internal spaces up to the standards required of modern family living, and provide an improvement architecturally to the wider context.

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