

14/062

**PROPOSED NEW DWELLING – THE LONG HOUSE AT THE SMALL HOUSE, SIBFORD FERRIS
OCTOBER 2015**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Introduction

The Small House is located off Main Street in Sibford Ferris in North Oxfordshire. The house is a well proportioned building originally constructed as a gate-lodge to serve a much larger house on the site that was never built. This explains the rather grand entrance and peculiar setting out of the house relative to the overall plot.

We understand the Small House is not listed but it does sit within the Sibford Ferris Conservation Area.

The proposed site cannot be seen from Main Street due to its raised elevation and dense planting to the north boundary (adjacent to the road).

Accompanying drawing 14/062-01A indicates the overall site plan outlined in blue (0.71 hectares) and the specific site area relative to this application in red (0.0975 hectares).

The proposal is to erect a new single dwelling in the natural clearing between trees on the western half of the site. The principle of this development has already been approved under planning application 14/02155/OUT.

The dwelling will be accessed via a new drive off Small House Lane, with The Small House retaining the existing access. This approach has already been approved under planning application 14/02155/OUT.

When subdivided, the resulting plot sizes to both The Small House and the new dwelling (now referred to as The Long House) will be commensurate to surrounding properties.



Photo 1 – View from site looking south



Photo 3 – View from site looking north

Planning History and Pre-Application Discussions

Outline planning permission 14/02155/OUT was granted on 30th April 2015 and included the approval of access and siting. There were nineteen conditions attached to the consent, which include the approval of reserved matters (scale, landscaping and appearance) and a request for further information on trees, access details, and ecology.

Following the granting of approval 14/02155/OUT, the Practice has engaged with Cherwell DC for pre-application advice on the detailed design of the new dwelling and landscaping. This resulted in a meeting on site with planning officer Emily Shaw and Tree Officer Patrick Prendergast on 14th August 2015 and a written response dated 28th August 2015. A copy of this response is included in Appendix A of this document.

Alongside the discussion on design of the dwelling, we also highlighted the issue that there was a discrepancy on the approved drawings and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. Tree T30 was shown as being retained and T31 felled, whereas the opposite is necessary to achieve the approved red line site area. This amendment was agreed in principle with Patrick Prendergast on site and we were advised that a Section 73 Planning Application is made to vary the appropriate condition. Accompanying drawing 14-026-08A and Bosky Trees Arboricultural Impact Assessment now indicate this change.

Emily Shaw has since suggested that a new full application could be made rather than separate applications for the approval of reserved matters and the Section 73. On this basis, we have submitted a full application to cover all aspects of the detailed design and to address the conditions in 14/02155/OUT. This application also seeks consent for aspects of the scheme previously permitted including siting and access.

For the avoidance of doubt, the outline planning consent has established the following:

- The principle of a new dwelling
- The access both from Main Street on to Small House Lane, and from Small House Lane in to the site
- The removal of identified trees within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment

The Proposals

The proposed dwelling is to be located at the south end of the site within the natural clearing between trees. It will be in excess of 60m away from listed properties on the north side of Main Street, and visually separated by the existing tree bank from Small House. The open meadow between trees is to be retained on the north side of the new dwelling.

It was established in the Pre-Application Report that 'there will be little or no opportunity to introduce privacy issues' to the dwellings on Main Street. Emily Shaw added that 'I am content that the proposal would not adversely harm residential amenity'.

The new house has been designed to respond specifically to site context, aspect, levels, sustainability and our client's specific requirements. Accompanying drawings 14-062-07B, 09 and 10 illustrate the proposals.

The existing site levels slope down from south to north and as a consequence, the building is set over a metre into the ground at its deepest point to reduce overall height and impact. This lowered ground storey means that an 'upside down' arrangement can be incorporated where the living accommodation is at first floor and bedroom/ancillary spaces at ground floor.

The building plan follows a simple L-shaped form with the predominant two and a half storey, gable structure running north to south. The roof is steeply pitched with a rounded ridge and eaves detail to echo the local thatched roof vernacular (actual thatch would be inappropriate so close to trees).

The perpendicular attached wing running east to west has a shallower roof beneath an exposed timber framed construction. A query was raised in the Pre-Application Report about the steepness of this roof with the suggestion that the pitch should be increased. This has been considered but discounted following further three-dimensional studies. The shallower roof to the snug responds to the specific requirements of the space and the contrast emphasises the predominance of the principle north/south gable.

At first floor, the principle living accommodation is open plan and has oblique focussed views out over the woodland copse to the east and school fields to the south, as well as views to the north over the woodland meadow and at high-level over trees towards Birdrop.

The first floor includes the large family kitchen and snug areas, as well as the master bedroom, which accesses a dressing room, ensuite and study within the roofspace over.

At ground floor, bedrooms are private and located away from the more public spaces but all have direct access out on to the south side.

The greenhouse and exercise-pool room share a space, from which heat will be recovered and circulated around the house.

To the east elevation, the façade is purposefully simple to minimise any overlooking towards the Small House. Window openings are angled and focussed southwards and the timber façade cladding is designed to weather naturally when seen through the tree bank.

To the west elevation, the facades closest to the boundary are more transparent and designed to benefit from evening sun.

The pallet of materials has been drawn from the local vernacular and includes natural stone, rough-textured render and untreated timber weatherboard facings beneath a simple standing-seam zinc roof.

Accessibility

This building has been designed specifically to address the needs of our client for their lifetime.

A lift is provided to connect the ground and first floors and to ensure full accessibility in and around the building.

Level thresholds will be provided at all key junctions between inside and outside.

Highways

The new domestic access and improvements to the visibility splay of Small House Lane on to Main Street has been approved in principle under 14/02155/OUT. Accordingly, there is no change to access in this application from the permitted scheme.

Condition 7 states that the improvements should be carried out prior to the construction of the dwelling. This work is scheduled to start imminently together with the cutting back of the hedge/shrubbery on the north boundary (to Main Street).

Sustainability

We are currently developing a number of green technologies to incorporate in to the building construction and services, with a view to establishing the lowest viable carbon footprint. It is likely that some form of heat pump will be used alongside a whole-house ventilation system, control of solar heat gains, high levels of insulation, and 'smart' building management systems, to exceed the requirements of the Building Regulations.

The incorporation of solar PV panels will not be possible in this case, given the shaded woodland location.

Rainwater collected from the roof and surface water gullies will be recycled for grey-water and garden use.

Planning Policy

The principle of establishing a new dwelling on this site has been accepted under 14/02155/OUT.

The detailed design of the new dwelling has been developed in accordance with Policy ESD16 of The Cherwell Local Plan Submission January 2014, which states that new developments should:

'Reflect or in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette.'

There are various policies contained within the adopted Cherwell Local Plan, which seek to preserve the character and appearance of villages, their context and valuable open spaces within them. The proposals seek to respond to this through good quality design and appropriate materials/detailing.

Trees and Landscaping

I have already discussed the proposed amendment to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment with the retention of tree T30 and felling of T31, which has been agreed in principle with tree officer Patrick Prendergast.

This application is accompanied with a revised Bosky Trees Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan (dated 07.09.15). The revisions include further works agreed with Patrick Prendergast on site as part of a long-term tree management strategy and planting plan.

Bosky Trees' drawings TR-1 and TPP-1 define the works alongside the Tree Works Schedule.

It was noted in the Pre-application Report that the approved site area defined by the red line will cut through the root protection zone of retained tree T30. As a consequence the red line has been adjusted and the new building moved approximately 1.5m westwards.

Furthermore, this application is accompanied with an outline landscape scheme prepared by LDA Design (refer to drawings 4870_001 and 4870_002). This scheme serves to compliment the new dwelling design and provide a low-impact solution to the immediate surroundings.

Hard materials in keeping with the local vernacular are proposed. Blue engineering brick with a patterned finish is suggested for the drive entrance from Small House Lane, and resin bonded gravel in grey or buff tones is proposed for the building forecourt/ parking area. Reinforced grass has been selected for the drive with the intention of creating an uninterrupted green lawn to the southern side of the site.

Contemporary large format flag paving set in gravel is proposed to the curtilage of Long House. This paving is also suggested for the southern terrace, but here set in lawn, creeping thyme or sedum.

The woodland setting of the house will be celebrated with a woodland carpet created where light levels can be increased. Existing areas of tree planting will be supplemented with understorey planting and bulbs to create a woodland glade character. Species will be selected according to soil types, aspect, levels of sunlight and exposure, but are likely to include: foxgloves, woodland anemone, fritillaria, cyclamen, snow drops, daffodils, wild garlic, geraniums and ferns.

Whips and feathers will be planted, along with a couple of semi-mature trees to provide instant impact, to increase and enrich the variety of tree species found on the site. Larch, Scots Pine, Small and Large Leaved Limes, Birch and Hazel are

suggested and would enhance the woodland character of the site and help to increase the site's habitat offer.

A contemporary interpretation of a prairie or grassland meadow is the inspiration for the planting to the northern side of the house. Plant species tolerant of drought will be used where possible to limit the need for irrigation, with a mix of ornamental grasses and herbaceous plants proposed.

A hornbeam hedge is proposed to frame the entrance from Small House Lane, provide a degree of privacy and reinforce the boundary. The existing hedge to the southern side of Long House will be reinforced with holly, field maples and hornbeam.

Ecological Impact

Conditions 15 and 16 of 14/02155/OUT called for a walkover badger survey and details to be submitted for bat and bird box provisions.

This application is accompanied by a Badger Survey Report prepared by Turnstone Ecology.

Fee

An application fee of £385 has been submitted with this application in accordance with advice given in the Pre-Application Report.

Conclusion

This is a special site, which has provided a unique opportunity to design a contextually appropriate dwelling of high architectural merit. All elements of the design are bespoke and borne from a careful analysis of the site, surrounding buildings and materiality, and client requirements.

Form and materials draw on local distinctiveness and a traditional palette with consideration given to proportion, function, detail and how the building weathers over time.

The Pre-Application Report concluded that 'the design and scale of the proposed dwelling is considered appropriate for the site and the surroundings', subject to clarification of specific queries, which have been addressed in this document.

A full planning application is being made to include matters already approved under 14/02155/OUT (siting and access) with the only change being the minor adjustment of the red line to accommodate the agreed update to the tree plan.

Lastly, it should be noted that this Practice will be responsible for the detailed design and procurement of the works on site and therefore the highest standards of workmanship will be required in all areas.

Hayward Smart architects
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