

Ref: [REDACTED]

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**Planning Design and Access Statement**

**Site : New Grove, Brockridge Common, Tewkesbury GL20 6HB**

**Proposal : Proposed Erection of Garage/Workshop Outbuilding with roofspace Home Office/Domestic Store**

This report considers matters relating to the proposal to erect a Border Oak garage/workshop outbuilding with roofspace home office/domestic storage ancillary to the dwelling known as New Grove, Brockridge Common for which a planning application is lodged with Tewkesbury Borough Council for consideration.

Border Oak, an award winning company based in Herefordshire, has an established reputation for producing exceptional bespoke oak framed buildings of high quality design and construction which respond to and sit comfortably within their environment. The very nature of the oak framed buildings lends themselves to rural areas and areas within open countryside sensitive to change, including within nationally designated landscape areas.



Examples of bespoke Border Oak Garage Outbuildings

This report should be read in conjunction with the Border Oak drawings T.428.0C and T.428.1C dated June 2020.

### **The Site and its Surroundings**

New Grove lies east of the small settlement of Ripple and some 300m west of the A38 which links Tewkesbury with Worcester to the north. The site lies within the large parish of Twyning, a village to the south east of the application site identified within the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury as a Service Village.

The Parish of Twyning lies between the River Severn and River Avon and connects the Cotswold escarpment of Bredon Hill to the east and the Malvern Hills to the west. In January 2014 Twyning Parish Council was successful with its application to Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) to designate the Parish of Twyning as a Neighbourhood area and, in January 2018, The Twyning Neighbourhood Development Plan (TNDP) was adopted. This now forms part of the development plan for the designated Neighbourhood area and provides locally specific policies and site designations to complement the strategic direction provided in the JCS.

New Grove lies within a small area of dwellings, associated fields and agricultural buildings and, like much of the wider area of Twyning Parish, is rural in character. New Grove is an L-shaped bungalow style property with part of its roofspace converted to living accommodation with a first floor room with windows and a Juliet balcony in the west facing gable elevation looking over the front garden and driveway access. The property also includes a number of outbuildings including a steel framed, blockwork and corrugated steel agricultural barn and a brick/stone/timber framed residential ancillary annex building just to the north east of the dwelling along a short unmade access track off the main drive which also provides access to the adjoining fields and to smaller barn/field shelters. The outbuildings sit alongside agricultural buildings to neighbouring properties.

The applicants own a number of fields to the north and east of their dwelling running up to the A38, amounting to just over 18 acres which they use for a number of cows, two horses which are stabled alongside agricultural machinery and hay within the barn, and a pig they own. Mr and Mrs Peters also keep chickens and ducks in an enclosed area close to the dwelling, between the house and the barn and annex outbuildings, which runs alongside the drive and access track. The area includes a small pond, hen house, sheds, a well and a number of fruit trees. There was formerly a long narrow timber building along the southern boundary of this enclosed area, which is identified on the land registry title plan accompanying the application. The proposed garage outbuilding would occupy a similar position to this former structure.

Brockeridge Common, an area identified within the TNDP as being of particular nature conservation interest lies on the other side of the main road immediately to the south of the property and to the east of the nearby A38. Views east from the A38 into Brockeridge Common are identified within the TNDP as being important public views within the area. Notably no important views are identified crossing the land and fields which form part of New Grove.

The applicants purchased the property in November 2018 and enjoy rural life with their animals and livestock. They are in the process of updating and modernising the family dwelling to meet their own needs. The single garage at the northern end of the dwelling is set to be integrated into the main dwelling to provide a much needed toilet/cloakroom (easily accessible from the outside when working with the horses or on the land), improved utility and boot-room to house the boiler, white goods for washing and cleaning and to store much of the personal kit they use for working on the land and for riding their horses.

The existing small garage, limited in depth, height and door opening size doesn't in any event serve its intended purpose leaving the applicants' three main vehicles (one a large 4x4 for towing and essential farm duties) parked directly outside some of the main windows to the dwelling for reasons of vehicle security and for ease of use and manoeuvring. This is something the applicants are keen to address through the proposals which would allow secure garaging/undercover parking for all three of their vehicles alongside a workshop for Mr Peters to use to maintain the farm equipment used in the running and management of the land.

Since moving to the property Mr Peters has worked from home with his main priority being the management and upkeep of the property, the livestock and land. Mrs Peters' work has become increasingly home based over the last year, prompted in part by the Covid-19 outbreak. With new company working practices/processes in place it is likely that her employer will continue to encourage homeworking into the future. With both Mr and Mrs Peters working from home there is increased pressure for home office/work space within the property. The provision of a garage outbuilding will not only provide much needed secure car parking facilities but also offers the opportunity to adapt and design the roofspace to provide a new home office and domestic storage area thus negating the need to expend additional money extending the main building to accommodate their needs going forward.



The garden, the hen/duck enclosure with its pond and many sheds, and the barn and residential annex outbuilding form one very distinct and compact area around the main dwelling. The proposed garage outbuilding would be well contained within this same distinct area.

### The Proposed Scheme

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a Border Oak garage/workshop outbuilding with ancillary living accommodation contained wholly within the roof space to meet the home working and domestic storage needs of the applicants, Mr and Mrs Peters. The proposed site layout is shown below relative to the main house and existing outbuildings comprising agricultural barn and ancillary annex.



The proposed outbuilding is positioned close to the main dwelling and along the northern side of the existing tarmac driveway leading to the house thus allowing cars to easily manoeuvre into and out of the open fronted car parking spaces and garage utilising the existing driveway. The roofspace accommodation would be accessed by an external staircase at the eastern end of the building closest to the main dwelling for ease of use and quick and direct access from the dwelling.

The outbuilding's simple palette of materials comprising walls of feather edge weather boarded panels upon a small brickwork plinth within a traditionally jointed & pegged oak frame structure under a clay tile roof would complement existing outbuildings, adopting a similar form and using similar materials to the existing ancillary annex building which was originally stables, and ensure that it nestles comfortably within its rural surroundings.

The ridge height of the outbuilding would be consistent with the main dwelling, which itself is of a bungalow style with some roofspace accommodation, but its simple design and rustic materials ensure its visual subservience to the main dwelling. The more visible front facing roof slope would be uninterrupted save for 2no. small rooflights, again consistent with the host property, which would ensure the front elevation of the building does not appear too 'busy' and remains simple/utilitarian when viewed alongside the main dwelling. At the rear, the roofspace ancillary accommodation would be served by a number of small rooflights and a north facing window with Juliet balcony contained within a small gable feature. The window

is a design feature taken from the main dwelling and would provide a view into the chicken/duck enclosure with its pond and fruit trees and provide some necessary natural surveillance of the existing outbuildings, the barn which is used to stable the applicants' two horses and farm machinery and the ancillary residential annex which, in normal circumstances (outside a global pandemic) is used for extended visits by elderly parents. It is noted that the rear elevation would not be visible from the public realm being screened by the adjacent outbuildings and intervening landscaping.

### **Planning Policy**

The submitted application must be determined having regard to Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for the area comprises the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (JCS) which was adopted in December 2017 together with the saved policies (those not replaced by the JCS) of the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan to 2011, adopted in March 2006, and the Twyning Neighbourhood Development Plan (TNDP) adopted January 2018.

The Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Pre-Submission Version (October 2019) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 for examination. On the basis of the stage of preparation it has reached, the plan can be afforded at least moderate weight. The weight attributed to individual policies, however, is subject to the extent to which there are unresolved objections (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given) and their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (the closer the policies to those in the NPPF the greater the weight that may be given).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) first introduced in 2012 was revised on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The Framework sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England and details how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development although this presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission would not usually be granted.

It can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme satisfies both local and national planning policy.

## **Planning Considerations**

Having regard to the proposed development and the planning policy context the main planning considerations for the determination of the application relate to the acceptability of the proposed outbuilding in terms of its design, use and relationship to surroundings buildings and landscape.

It is worthy of noting that Strategic Objective 3 of the JCS's ambition for a thriving economy relates to supporting a prosperous rural economy including encouraging home working.

Strategic Objectives 4 and 5 of the JCS's ambition for a sustainable natural, built and historic environment seek to conserve and enhance the natural environment and deliver high quality design in new development.

JCS Policy SD4 sets out requirements for high quality design including the need for development to respond positively to, and respect the character of the site and its surroundings and to be of a scale, type, and materials appropriate to the site and its setting.

The proposed Border Oak garage outbuilding is excellent in its design and palette of materials and would sit comfortably alongside the existing dwelling and within its rural context. It would meet the garaging needs for the applicants' vehicles whilst providing an essential workshop space for general maintenance and repair of tools and equipment used to manage and maintain the 18 acres of land associated with the property. The provision of dedicated home office workspace would facilitate continued home working and reduce the need for the applicants to undertake car-based travel to work from this rural area.

The existing outbuildings could not accommodate the parking needs of the applicants nor sufficient workshop space for the repair and maintenance of farm machinery. The barn is fully utilised for stabling, storage of hay and farm machinery and is located at the end of a short but unmade track which whilst suitable for the 4x4 would not be suitable for use by the other two family vehicles. Whilst, the ancillary residential annex could provide short-term home office space and domestic storage it does not provide a long term solution given that, outside of any pandemic, it is regularly used for extended visits by the applicants' elderly parents.

There is thus a demonstrated functional need for the proposed outbuilding. Its scale is appropriate and proportionate to the need and the site and would not result in any adverse impact on the existing property or the wider landscape. The footprint of the proposed outbuilding is significantly smaller than the existing dwelling and comparable to other outbuildings.

Saved Local Plan Policy HOU8 provides, similarly, that development must respect the character, scale and proportion of the existing dwelling and the surrounding development.

Policy RES10 of the pre-submission TBLP to 2031 (October 2019) not yet adopted supports the erection of domestic outbuildings where they are of suitable design and scale, respecting the character and appearance of surrounding development, where they can be comfortably accommodated without resulting in a cramped/overdeveloped site, and where there is no unacceptable impact on amenity of neighbouring properties.

The well-designed outbuilding would satisfy the requirements of these policies respecting both the visual and residential amenity of the area.

The proposed building would sit on a small southern section of the chicken and duck enclosure close to the existing dwelling and on a similar site to a former structure, believed to be of timber construction, which was evidently removed sometime prior to the applicants' purchase of New Grove. Its position would not give rise to any adverse environmental or visual impact on the form, character or setting of the area and would not encroach into the surrounding countryside. Its form and location would have minimal impact on the existing site, utilising the existing access driveway and would not result in a building which would be incongruous in any way with the characteristic pattern of surrounding development.

The proposed garage outbuilding would be located between the dwelling and existing outbuildings. It sits some considerable distance from the site access off the main road and would be otherwise well screened by a number of retained fruit trees in the immediate area of the building and by trees and hedgerows around the adjacent fields. The building would not be readily visible from distances and where glimpses could be gained would be viewed against the backdrop of existing buildings associated with the property. This, in conjunction with its timber finish would ensure that the building blends positively into its setting.

The development plan also includes the Twynning Neighbourhood Development Plan (TNDP). The TNDP is generally consistent with the JCS and TBLP. The TNDP seeks to support sensitive development that protects the landscape and its built setting. The overall vision for the TNDP is to conserve the rural character evident in its settlements. High quality design, relevant to context, is the most important factor alongside the aim of protecting identified important views into and out of the Parish.

Policy GD3 – 'Development Principles' indicates the criteria against which new development will be assessed. These include the need to respect existing development patterns, character, appearance and materials within both the immediate and wider areas; to ensure new buildings do not dominate or overwhelm existing development; to ensure careful siting of buildings; and to be respectful of the rural character.

Policy GD4 – 'Landscape and Bio-Diversity' indicates that development will be assessed having regard to the need to respect local landscape quality and ensure public views are maintained and ensure that the height, massing and appearance of proposed development does not adversely affect important views.

GD5 – 'Provision for vehicles' requires adequate off-street car parking provided in a way that does not detract from the character of the area.

Policy H4 – 'Residential Extensions' requires outbuildings to be in keeping with the scale, character and appearance of the existing dwelling and its wider setting. It states that extensions or outbuildings will be supported where 'enhanced property/ies meets the requirements for parking and supports the principle of Policy GD5.'

The TNDP specifically identifies the benefits of home working and Policy E2 – 'Working from home' states 'Development that enables home-working will be supported subject to complying with other policies in the development plan.'

The proposed Border Oak outbuilding meets all the necessary requirements of TNDP policies. The high quality design would sit comfortably within its context. It respects the existing building and outbuildings and wider rural landscape and would have no impact on important views. It would provide covered and secure car parking spaces to meet the applicants' needs, workspace for both the repair and maintenance of the equipment used to manage the land and livestock, and a home office to enable home-working.

### **Considerations identified in Recent Appeal Decisions and applications relating to garage outbuildings**

It is clearly difficult to identify sites with identical characteristics and circumstances as the application site. However, appeals serve as a useful tool in understanding how similar developments are assessed even if located in other parts of the country.

One such appeal is Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/W/18/3206152 (Whitegates, Brick Hill, Chobham, Woking GU24 8TQ), determined in February 2019, the Inspector considered the impact of a proposed garage and garden shelter on the character and appearance of the area amongst other issues. As with the proposal at New Grove, the predominant facing material was timber. The area was identified as being 'a low density collection of dwellings of mixed appearance' with some dwellings close to the public roads with others, including the appeal site, set back some distance behind front boundary planting. This is a character shared by the area around New Grove. The Inspector found the timber finish to the buildings compatible with the character and appearance of the area allowing them to blend into their landscape setting. The garage, although higher and bulkier than the garden shelter under scrutiny, was considered to be of domestic scale and the containment of both structures within the site meant that they were in no way intrusive in the street scene or wider public views. Both garage and garden shelter were considered to be subservient to the main dwelling occupying a smaller footprint than the dwelling. The Inspector concluded, in respect of the impact on the character and appearance of the area, that the overall character of the area was being preserved by the outbuildings, that the rural attributes of the area had been respected and there was no harm to the character and appearance of



the area and thus no conflict with planning policy seeking to ensure that development respects and enhances the local, natural or historic character of the environment. In this particular case the appeal site was also within the Green Belt and further considerations weighed against the development.

Tewkesbury Borough Council also recently considered a proposal for a garage outbuilding at The Tallet, Oxenton under reference 20/00718/FUL. Pre-application advice was favourable in respect of a freestanding 4-bay two storey garage outbuilding of similar design to that now proposed at New Grove. Only after submission of the application did it come to light that, in that particular case, The Tallet was subject to an Agricultural Occupancy condition. It was solely as a consequence of this restriction and the need to ensure that the property and its value remained within the reach of those employed in agriculture that the development was required to be scaled down to reflect the status prior to approval of planning permission. It is clear that, had it not been for the occupancy condition attached to The Tallet, planning permission would have been granted for a 4-bay garage outbuilding in line with the pre-application advice.

Notwithstanding the above, there are similarities between the two cases:

- Both proposed garages were on the site of earlier buildings
- Both have similar facing and roofing materials;
- Both are well screened by the existing trees and hedgerow and would not be readily visible from distances;
- In both cases, any limited views gained of the garage outbuildings would be read against the backdrop of the existing buildings within the site and, as such, would ensure their positive blending into their setting;
- In both cases existing access arrangements would be retained

The design of the outbuilding at The Tallet was considered to be acceptable and in accordance with policies HOU8, SD4 and RES10 and there is every reason to conclude that the same is true for the proposed garage outbuilding at New Grove.

## **Conclusion**

It is considered that the proposal to erect a high quality Border Oak timber panelled, oak framed garage/workshop outbuilding would meet the requirements of the development plan and the NPPF.

The development can easily be accommodated without adverse impact on the existing property or the wider rural area and it would blend easily into its landscape setting. The development would allow for the applicants' cars to be relocated from immediately outside the existing dwelling and thus significantly improve their living amenities. The garage would also allow for the maintenance and repair of machinery and equipment used in the management and upkeep of the land associated with the dwelling and would provide a long term solution to the need for home-working space.