

COMBINED DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

SINGLE STOREY OAK FRAMED SWIMMING POOL
BUILDING EXTENSION TO SIDE AT OLD RECTORY
FARMHOUSE, ALVESCOT, BAMPTON, OXFORDSHIRE



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Introduction

This combined Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Prime Oak Ltd to accompany a planning and listed building consent application for a proposed swimming pool building extension at Old Rectory Farmhouse in the village of Alvescot, located approximately six miles to the south-west of Witney.

Old Rectory Farmhouse is a listed building and lies within Alvescot Conservation Area.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings enclosed with the accompanying applications, including:

- Location Plan (drg. 45646/01);
- Proposed Block Plan (drg. 45646/02);
- Existing Ground Floor Plan & Elevations (drg. 45646/03);
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan & Elevations (drg. 45646/04).

Prime Oak Ltd will be designing and constructing the proposed extension on behalf of the applicant. Prime Oak are one of the country's leading specialists in the design and construction of oak framed buildings for all kinds of domestic and other uses, utilising traditional mortise and tenon pegged joint carpentry and construction techniques.

The Proposal

The proposal is to provide a single storey extension off the north-east side of the existing house which would accommodate an indoor swimming pool. The proposal would be oak framed with its walls largely clad in horizontal weatherboard but also with areas of full height glazing.

The main body of the extension, housing the swimming pool itself, would be separated from the existing house by a narrower link section. The link section would have a flat roof whilst the main body of the extension would have a pitched roof finished in slates.

Heritage Statement

Old Rectory Farmhouse is a grade II listed C18 house with C19 and C20 extensions. It is mainly constructed from coursed rubble stone, but has a dressed limestone frontage. Its roofs are finished in stone slates.

The property is located at the southern edge of Alvescot village, separated from the more built up part of the village to the north and north-west by a wide area of open frontage garden and adjoining fields/paddocks. With the exception of the immediately neighbouring property at Apple Meadow to the west, Old Rectory Farmhouse therefore sits separate to other buildings within Alvescott, and this is a settlement pattern typical to other parts of Alvescott Conservation Area, particularly to the north of the village. The village and Conservation Area therefore displays both a linear and dispersed development pattern, resulting from the historic abandonment of parts of the original settlement which left a number of distinctive islands of building(s) separated from the main concentrations.

Old Rectory Farmhouse was first listed Grade II on the 4th May 1989. The listing description reads as follows:

House. Early/mid C18, altered and extended C19 and C20. Dressed limestone front, remainder coursed rubble. Stone slate roof with flanking ridge chimneys rebuilt in dressed stone C20. Single range with projecting stair turret to centre rear flanked by C19 lean-to extensions. Single storey extensions to each gable end. 2 storeys and attic, 3 bays. C20 metal casements, 3-light flanking 2-light, with flat stone arches. 3 C20 gabled roof dormers with sashes. Central half-glazed door with open pediment hood of stone, on shaped stone scroll brackets. Single storey C20 extension set back to right with loggia.

Rear has central gabled stair turret with 2-light stone mullion windows below Tudor hood moulds to upper floors, and C20 flat-roofed lobby extension to ground floor. Flanking lean-to extensions have casements to ground floor and small paired sashes to first floor.

Interior: ground floor room to left has fireplace with dressed stone jambs and lintel. Later stairs.

The property has also been subject to some very recent extensions and alterations, including an oak framed orangery which replaced an existing orangery to the east side and rear of the main house (application ref. 19/01099/HHD), and an oak framed detached garage located off to the north-west of the main house (application ref. 19/01362/HHD). These new additions have resulted in the loss of a former orangery and a conservatory, both modern structures, and a former detached garage with stables to its rear previously located to the east side and rear of the main house, partly where the proposed swimming pool building would be located.

Photos of the former garage and stables are provided below.



North-west elevation of former garage to east side of main house, now demolished.



North-east elevation of former garage and stables outbuilding to east side and rear of main house, now demolished.

Old Rectory Farmhouse lies at the southern edge of the wider Alvescot Conservation Area. The Conservation Area boundary takes in the built up area along The Green and the more strung out buildings along Main Road to the north-west, as well as areas of open space including that immediately to the north of Old Rectory Farmhouse and, notably, an extensive area of open space to the north of Station Road. This gives the Conservation Area a varied but generally loose-knit development pattern.

The village historically thrived as a farming settlement, and during the C17 and C18 took on the form and built character recognisable today, with Old Rectory Farmhouse dating from that period. The Conservation Area contains a relatively high proportion of buildings of heritage significance, with Old Rectory Farmhouse being one of 26 listed structures, whilst the Council's Alvescott Conservation Area Character Appraisal identifies many more buildings of local interest.

Old Rectory Farmhouse is typical of the material and architectural vernacular of the village, where houses and cottages are generally constructed from limestone and have stone slate roofs. An unusually high proportion of older buildings also date from the C18. In addition, both the wider areas of open space and the smaller pockets of open land such as that immediately to the north of Old Rectory Farmhouse contribute significantly to the setting of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies key significant views across the open space towards Old Rectory Farmhouse from the north-west, and beyond the Conservation Area towards the south.

Being constructed to the east side of the main house the proposed swimming pool building extension would be sited in the approximate area where outbuildings have previously been located and would infill the space between the existing house and the recently constructed oak framed garage. In this location the proposal would not be prominently sited in any key views through the Conservation Area and would therefore not unduly harm its setting. This is particularly so as the proposed extension would be set well back from the lane running in front of the property to the

north and would also be partly screened behind the existing detached garage and boundary walling in views from outside the site to the north-east and east.

Furthermore the proposal would be a visually subservient structure in relation to the main house and would be of oak framed design/construction to reflect the other recent oak framed additions to this property. Although the original house is constructed from stone with a slate roof, typical of the wider village and Conservation Area, oak framed extensions and outbuildings have also now come to characterise the property.

Having regard to the above, the impact of the proposal on the character and setting of the listed building, as well as that of the Conservation Area, is discussed further in the following sections of this statement below.

Use

The use proposed is wholly domestic. This is an extension to allow for an incidental use to the existing dwelling, namely a personal swimming pool, and as such the use is entirely appropriate in principle for this existing residential property which falls within an existing residential village.

Amount

At just over 15m in length by 7.7m in width the main body of the proposed extension would be no larger than required for its intended function of housing a private swimming pool. At this size the proposal would fit comfortably between the north-east side of the existing house and the recently constructed detached garage. The extension would attach to the existing house by a narrower width flat roofed link, so that it would only cover part of the existing side elevation of the main house.

The proposed extension would be single storey with a pitched roof over the swimming pool section. That pitched roof would incorporate a 'catslide' to its north-eastern slope which would reduce the span of the roof at conventional eaves level and help to keep the overall height lower. As such the proposal would appear subservient in height and scale to the existing house with a significantly lower eaves and ridge line. Furthermore the new extension would be partly screened in views from the Conservation Area to the north by existing site boundary treatment and the existing detached garage, as well as being set well back from the lane to the north meaning that views towards it from public areas would be at a distance.

So the proposed extension would be a subservient addition to the substantially greater two storey height of the existing building, and in this respect there would be no unduly harmful impact on the setting and character of the listed building, or that of the wider Conservation Area.

This property would retain a relatively large plot and generous areas of garden would still remain surrounding the property. The more open character of this part of the Conservation Area, and the setting of this listed building adjacent to the open space to the north and west, would not alter.

Layout

The proposed extension would be sited to the north-east side of the main house, with only the link part attaching to the existing house, so that the main body of the extension would be separated from the existing. The link would also attach partly to the recently constructed rear orangery extension, so viewed from the rear the new swimming pool building would appear as a continuation of the existing orangery in terms of materials and construction style.

In this location the proposed swimming pool building would be set well back from the lane to the north by some 25m plus, and would be partly screened by the existing boundary wall and tree planting, as well as the existing oak framed garage which would sit adjacent. Therefore the proposal would not be sited prominently in any key views through the Conservation Area, including the significant views identified in the Council's Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

The new swimming pool building would be sited between the existing house and the existing oak framed garage, so that it would remain within the cluster of existing buildings on this site and would not spread out into more open areas, retaining the general pattern and layout of built development within the wider site.

There are no neighbouring properties close enough to where the proposal would be sited to suffer any loss of amenity through overshadowing or loss of privacy. More than adequate garden/amenity space would remain to serve the property.

In terms of layout, therefore, the proposal would have no unduly harmful impact on the existing appearance, character or setting of the listed building or that of the wider Conservation Area.

Access

There would be no change to the existing access arrangements to the property. Planning consent has recently been granted to reinstate a former historic vehicular access to the property from the lane to the north (application ref. 19/01225/HHD), which now provides access for cars to the new oak framed detached garage adjacent to the site of the proposed swimming pool building. The proposed swimming pool building would not interfere with the route of that new access.

Level access would be provided between the main house and the new extension. The extension would be large enough to easily accommodate wheelchair access in the future if required, particularly as the design incorporates wide opening bi-folding doors.

Scale

The proposed swimming pool building would have a smaller footprint and a lower height than the main house. The proposal would be entirely single storey and significantly lower in overall height than the larger two storey existing house, as well as being slightly lower in height than the adjacent existing detached garage. The proposal would therefore clearly appear as a subservient addition viewed against the much greater bulk and scale of the existing building.

Furthermore, the perceived bulk and scale of the new structure would be reduced by its oak framed construction and partly glazed appearance. This would give the outbuilding a perceptibly more visually lightweight appearance than a fully stone built solid structure. The proposal would have a traditional barn-like appearance appropriate to this setting, which would not dominate the appearance or character of the larger main listed house.

Appearance

The proposed swimming pool building would provide a high quality oak framed structure of traditional barn-like appearance, appropriate to this Conservation Area setting and sympathetic to the setting of the listed building which is now partly characterised by additions of a similar oak framed appearance and construction. The proposal would be constructed from English oak framing

using traditional construction and carpentry methods. The oak frame would 'silver off' over time, helping it to appear weathered-in to its surroundings.

Although constructed from traditional materials and using traditional methods, the new structure would also appear as a contemporary addition to the property linked to the existing oak framed orangery extension. This would allow successive phases of the historic evolution of the building and site to remain easily read and legible. The new extension would appear distinct and visually lightweight, providing a traditional form of structure in terms of materials and carpentry, but executed in a contemporary way that allows the existing building to remain visually dominant and historically legible.

Therefore, in terms of appearance, the proposal would not unduly harm the setting or character of the existing listed building or that of the wider Conservation Area.

Landscape

No landscaping is specifically proposed as part of this domestic householder proposal. No trees or visually significant areas of planting would have to be removed as a result of the proposal. The new extension would be constructed over an area previously used for parking, grouped closely between the other buildings on this site. Therefore there would be no harmful impact in landscape terms on the appearance, character or setting of the listed building, or that of the wider Conservation Area.

Sustainable Development

The proposed swimming pool building would be constructed of oak sourced from well managed sustainable/renewable forests. The traditional construction method would allow the structure to be more easily dismantled and the materials re-used elsewhere in the future if necessary. So the proposed construction method of the extension in itself is highly sustainable. Surface water drainage would employ sustainable methods, such as the installation of water butts.

Furthermore, the provision of this proposed extension would improve the practicality, adaptability, attractiveness and longevity of the main house, providing improved and modernised living facilities for the present and future occupiers. This will help to maintain the appeal of this listed building as desirable accommodation into the future.

Conclusions

The above assessment demonstrates that the nature of the design, layout, construction and appearance of the proposed swimming pool building extension would not harm the character, appearance or setting of this listed building, or that of the wider Alvescot Conservation Area. The proposal would be a smaller footprint and lower height than the main house, appearing as a subservient addition, the oak framed nature of which would visually lighten its appearance and reflect the appearance and style of other oak framed extensions and outbuildings at this site. The new extension would be constructed to the side of the existing house, set well back from the lane and partly screened by existing boundary treatment and an existing detached garage. As such the proposal would not be prominently sited in key views through the Conservation Area and would have no impact on neighbouring residential properties. None of the attributes which make up the distinct character of this part of the Conservation Area as described in this statement above would be harmed as a result of the proposal.