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Subject: Design and Access Statement.
Date: 24 February 2021 at 14:52
To: [REDACTED]



Design and Access Statement.

Oak House (Woodland Cottage)
Westhorpe
Southwell
NG25 0NE

See Pre App ref. Pre App00095/20

Proposed Replacement Dwelling

Advice has been sought from the following organisations:

NSDC: Pre-Application advice: ref: Pre App 00095/20

NSDC: Planning Dept: Tree Works Application: ref: 21/00001/TPO

Tim Farr: Chairman of Southwell Flood Forum.

Austin Brady: Former employee of the Woodland Trust and latterly the Forestry Commission.

Mark Speck: Notts Wildlife Trust.

AT2 Tree Services.

North Point Surveys. Land surveyors.

Peter Haynes: Environment Agency.

Barry Collins: BJ Collins Ecologist.

Community consultation has taken place to raise awareness and inform local people and obtain advice and opinions.

Assessment

Westhorpe lies to the west of the town of Southwell. Southwell is primarily a Georgian town with many listed buildings and the Minister Cathedral is at its heart. The Southwell Conservation Area is subdivided into a number of character areas as defined in the Southwell Conservation Area Appraisal adopted July 2005. Westhorpe is the most western of these character areas, based around the road of Westhorpe that runs East / West.

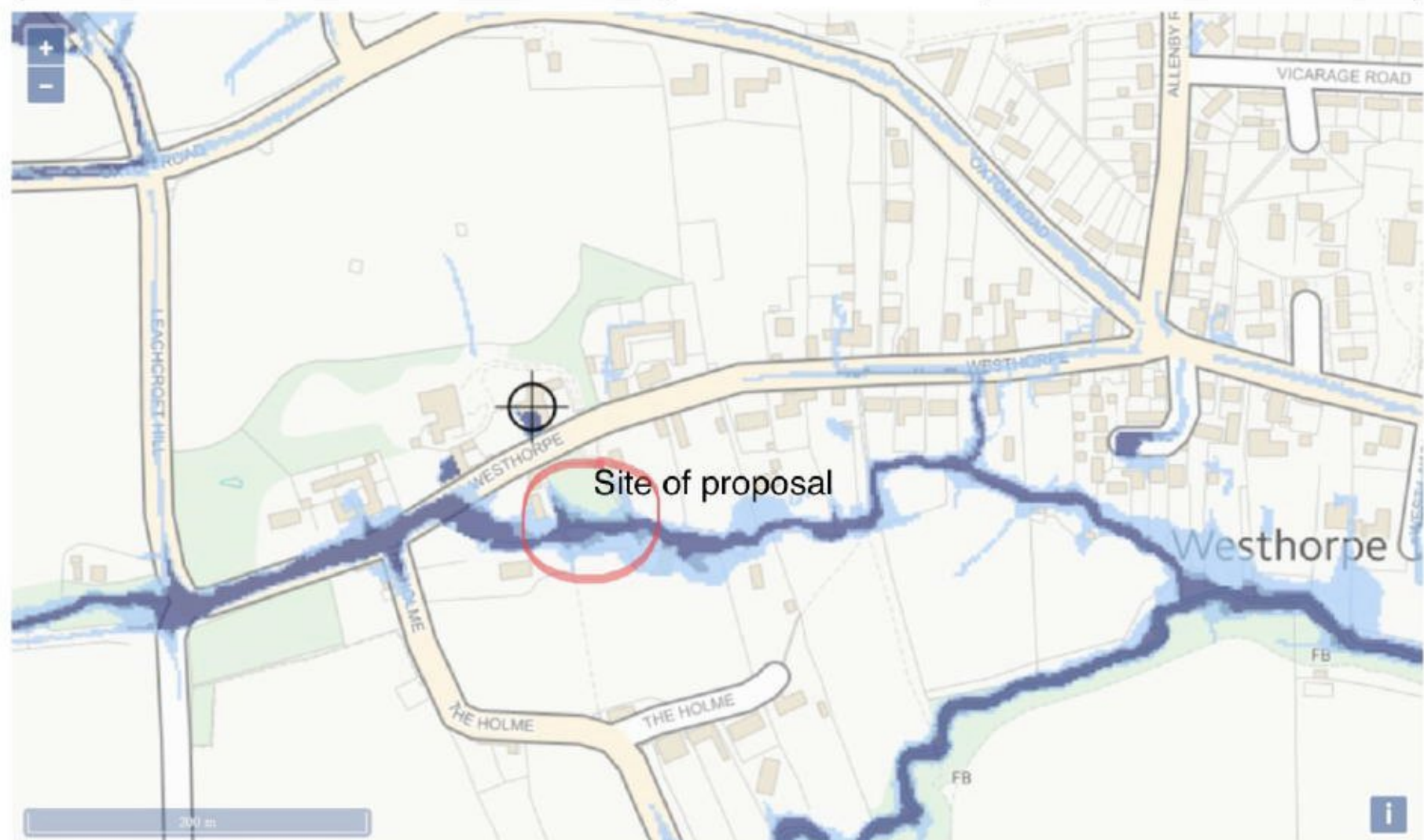
The proposal site is located to the south side of Westhorpe and is currently occupied by a four bedroomed house: Woodland Cottage. The house is the lowest lying of any of the houses in Westhorpe and is located within the flood zone identified by the Environment Agency.

Flood risk

Extent of flooding

Location

Enter a place or postcode



Extent of flooding from surface water

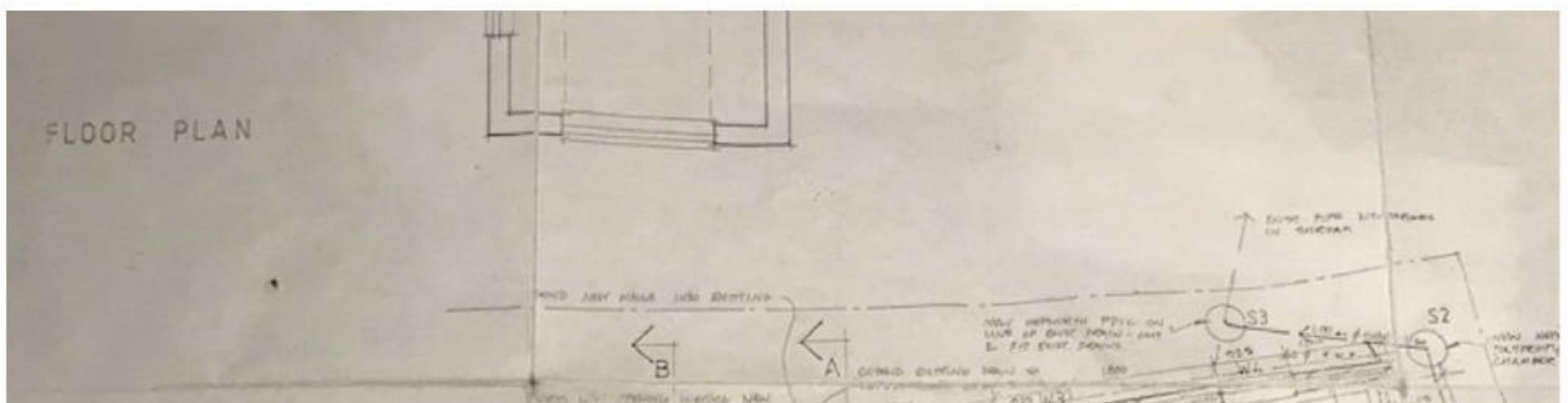
● High ● Medium ● Low ○ Very low ⊕ Location you selected

Woodland Cottage has suffered extensive flooding in the past and the applicants have been denied Insurance Buildings Cover on the basis of the flooding history of the property.

The existing house is accessed down a secluded drive off Westhorpe and is at the far side of a water course.

To the northwest of the house is a neglected wooded area made up of mostly self set Sycamores. This area has a Tree Preservation order on it (TPO) ref: 11/00086/TPO dating back to 1983. The area has not been managed for over 40 years. In the 1940's the area, now overgrown, was used as an orchard and piggery.

Early maps show that a dwelling has existed on the site for over 100 years. However the current building is largely less than 30 years old, having been extensively rebuilt in the 1990's, as can be seen from the attached plans from that period.





Use

The piece of land on which the proposed new development is sited is made up from the plot which includes Woodland Cottage and its garden and the small adjacent piece of neglected woodland. The development is to be used as an energy-efficient, contemporary, residential property which would replace Woodland Cottage as a residential property. The new house is to be set in a landscape which will be designed and planted with native species to enhance its biodiversity. Woodland Cottage is to be partially demolished and the remaining buildings used as outbuildings.

Amount

The site amounts to approximately 1 acre in total. The new development is made up of intersecting one and two storey elements to create a two bedroomed house occupying a footprint of 179m². The woodland is to be planted with over 120 new native tree saplings and there is to be a wildlife pond excavated adjacent to the paddock to the south of the new house.

Layout

The proposal seeks to build a replacement dwelling which is out of the flood risk area; on higher ground than Woodland Cottage, (43.3 AOD as opposed to 42.66).

Both the new house and the treatment to the landscape are designed to actively enhance the distinctive, surrounding environment and build on the existing amenity value of the area.

The neighbouring property to the west is The Elms; a Grade 2 listed Georgian house and to the south of the site lies the Holme where there are a mixture of houses, some of which have been built in the last ten years, and with a variety of architectural styles. The mixture of house styles contribute to a quasi village green quality, especially when viewed from the footpath that crosses the field to the south of the application site.

Below is the view directly opposite the site of the new house:





Below; The Elms; sitting forward but directly next door to the site.



The new dwelling, (which is orientated to face south to optimise the solar gain) wildlife pond and landscaping proposal would reinforce this sense of place. 'The Elms' remains as the dominant country house in this landscape by virtue of its scale, position and stature.

The layout of the house is made up principally of a reception area combining living/dining/ kitchen space and snug with ground floor bathroom for disabled accessibility. A plant room and a utility area completes the ground floor. The upper floor has two bedrooms, a bathroom and a sewing room.

The site for the dwelling is chosen in order to be completely screened from the road (Westhorpe) by the woodland to the northwest. The drive winds through the woodland and the front door on the north side creates a feeling of arrival and mystery.

The new dwelling will form a secluded cobbled courtyard with the retained parts of the former Woodland Cottage. These parts will be used for a domestic workshop, garaging of two vintage cars, a carport for an electric vehicle and a home office accessed by an external staircase. Techniques will be incorporated to eliminate the risks associated with another flood, such as raising the

electrical wiring.

Alteration to the levels surrounding the original house will direct water draining from the field into the newly formed wildlife pond. This will slow the flow of rain water run-off directly into the water course and have a small but improved effect on the flood risk downstream.

The layout of the pond is set on the south side of the house to add to the spirit of the 'village green' and there would be glimpses of the open water and wildlife from the surrounding houses and public footpath ensuring that the special amenity value of this area is impacted positively for the existing occupiers and passers by.

The woodland, which will be bolstered by further planting along the public footpath to the west of the site, and along Westhorpe, will enhance the amenity value of the site.

Construction techniques incorporated in the build to reduce the environmental impact

This two bedroom house is to be built to a higher thermal standard than current Building Regulations. The house incorporates passive and active solar energies. The site will also be designed to increase biodiversity through the inclusion of the wildlife pond, green roofs, and the planting of more than 120 native tree species creating a large variety of different habitats.

The main windows and openings of the new build are facing south to maximise solar gain and minimize thermal loss. The intention is to use the thermal mass of the construction materials to store any thermal gain achieved through passive solar means. Specifically, the design includes a trombe wall. The property will also be fitted with photo voltaic panels to generate electricity and will not be connected to a gas main. This will allow for the property to be entirely run from renewable energy sources. Heating will be through a ground source heat pump, which has an efficiency ratio of 3 :1. and a heat recovery system will be installed. All rain water will be harvested.

Scale

The scale of the new house will be domestic and in keeping with the other buildings which front the field to the south of the application site.

The existing cottage, having been converted to an outhouse, will not compete as a dwelling to the new development but rather, compliment it as pan-tiled garages and workshop.

The mature woodland trees to the north of the house will show above the roof line and allow the house to nest within this backdrop.

The one acre site contains at least half an acre of woodland, and along with the large pond and courtyard, the footprint occupied by the buildings is a very small part of the plot. There will be no overshadowing, overbearing and overlooking on existing and future occupiers.

Landscaping

The integration of the landscape and the new house has been the primary inspiration for both the design and the materials to be used. The result will be a building and a landscape which will encourage a large variety of wildlife through the habitats created within the boundaries of the site. The clients are qualified as Architects and Landscape Architects and the site was selected specifically to merge these two disciplines in a naturalistic and contemporary response to development. Extensive advice has also been sought from expert organisations listed at the start of this document.

The drive to the existing cottage winds south through the trees and is delightful and invites mystery. The new proposal retains this atmosphere. Comments noted from the Pre-Application suggest that rerouting the drive to a building set in the woodland would not be acceptable. This along with ecological and solar gain reasons have influenced the applicants to resite the new house within the residential curtilage.

The current woodland is neglected with three mature trees, all of which are Sycamores and many previously coppiced Sycamores which are tall, thin, top heavy and with no lateral branches. The woodland area has restricted light due to the intense canopy from a near monoculture of Sycamore trees. This has resulted in the lack of understory plant species and a limited variety of animal species as identified by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. A woodland with a wider selection of trees will be less vulnerable to disease and storms will increase species diversity. The applicants have undertaken a thorough Woodland Management Proposal (see 'Proposed Tree Management and Planting Scheme') which identifies works to be carried out in a phased approach over the next 12 years to increase the diversity of this area. Consultation with an officer from NSDC Planning Development Department has resulted in permissions to carry out the proposed work. (App. No. 21/0000\TPO. The species selected to be planted, resulting in a massive net gain in tree numbers, (over 120) have been identified from those growing in local woodlands surrounding Westhorpe.

The topography of the field to the south of the property slopes down towards the site and this slope with the resultant rain water run-off has dictated the position of a naturalistic pond between the new house and the field. The creation of this wetland habitat will have an impact on reducing the discharge of water into the water course in a flood event as it would act as a holding tank for water draining from the field. The roof area of the new dwelling will also be directed into the pond prior to the run off reaching the existing water course.

The UK has lost 90% of its wetland habitats in the last 100 years and the Environment Agency and Wildlife Trusts are encouraging the creation of ponds to conserve biodiversity. (Ref:consult.environment-agency.gov.uk)

The entire landscape will be planted with native species to build on the environmental and ecological value of the site and to compliment the environmentally sound ethos of the new build.

The restored woodland, the naturalistic pond, and the innovative design of the house, will enhance the immediate setting and compliment the rural characteristic of the landscape and the mix of styles of the other surrounding houses.

Appearance

The entrance to the site will remain unchanged. The rural, country lane setting, and the quiet wooded entrance defines what lies beyond. Unseen from the road, an understated, contemporary designed eco house, using light-handed materials in order to blend into the woodland background, reflects in the naturalistic pond and compliments the pan-tiled out buildings constructed from the original cottage.

The proposed new house is composed of two integrated volumes. The two storey element is clad in differing width oak boards to replicate the varying diameters of the trunks within the woodland and to give the house a soft look. The intersecting single storey

module is clad in corten steel which has a weathered look and will change colour over time to blend in with the natural surroundings. The green roofs over the single story element will be planted with native species to be environmentally beneficial, an efficient insulator for the residents within the house and create a visual indication of the green ethos of the build. There is a strong contrast between the oak and the steel but the two ultimately complement each other and are designed to look contemporary and blend with the surrounding landscape. The slate roof on the two storey element replicates that of the nearest neighbouring property 'The Elms' and the black photovoltaic panels will not be as intrusive as they would otherwise. The retained part of Woodland Cottage will be smaller than the original cottage. The appearance of this clay pan-tiled building will be retained but take on the look of an outhouse to compliment the new build. An external staircase will be installed sensitively to suggest access to the 'loft' area of the outhouse. The existing garage roof will be replaced with a green roof which will be an improvement on the existing new roof which is intrusive. The gable end of the garage is also unattractive at present so will be oak clad as in the main building.

Following the original pre-application enquiry, further draft sketches were submitted to NSDC conservation officer informally to ensure that the applicants were working towards an appropriate proposal. Draft sketches showing the retention of part of Woodland Cottage as outbuildings and the inclusion of ideas valuing the ecological elements of the build and landscape were submitted to the NSDC conservation officer who responded positively:

"I think the ecological/landscaping values will be critical to your proposal and a significant positive. Subject to the detail, I would be prepared to support a proposal along these lines".

The appearance of the new house from the south will be seen across the pond and beyond the hedge from the footpath crossing the field and from the houses which lie approximately one hundred metres opposite across the paddock. The main windows and openings are designed to face south so will be seen from this aspect and they are broken up by the oak cladding. The green roofs will also be able to be seen. The west oak clad elevation can be seen from the footpath. This is designed to be understated, soft and subtle in order to blend in. As it weathers over time, the appearance will become gradually more naturalistic.

The principals of this entire proposal, both in building, conversion and landscape, is to create a delightful residential property which makes best use of a previously flooded site and which contributes positively to both the locality in aesthetics and to the environment generally.

