

J.A.P. Architects

Proposed Home Office Pods at Gulling Green, Brockley For Mr & Mrs Baber

Design & Access Statement

Trevor Lang B.Sc
Lee Frere BA (Hons) Dip. Arch. RIBA

29a High Street, Clare, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 8NY
Tel: 01787 279490

e-mail: enquiries@japarchitects.co.uk website: www.japarchitects.co.uk

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction & Planning History
- 2.0 Heritage
- 3.0 The Site
- 4.0 The Proposal
- 5.0 Ecology & Trees
- 6.0 Summary

1.0 Introduction and Planning History

- 1.1 The original buildings at Gulling Green were recently converted to a dwellinghouse under consent references SE/08/0872 and SE/08/0873.
- 1.2 Various further applications were subsequently submitted and approved and these included:
- Extensions and modifications to dwelling: SE/13/0946/HH; SE/13/0754/VAR & SE/13/0811/HH.
 - Landscaping works, including extending the moat: SE/11/1152.
 - Detached Garden Room: SE/14/1907/HH.
 - Tractor Shed (and later enlargement): SE/12/0572/FUL & SE/14/1907/HH.
- 1.3 As shown in the image below, all construction work relating to the above applications has been completed to an exceptionally high standard.



- 1.4 The applicants, and owners of Gulling Green, are Mr and Mrs Baber. Mr Baber is shortly to retire, but will continue to work from home on various personal enterprises, occasionally requiring an assistant.
- 1.5 To fulfil their practical, home working needs and to further enhance the external landscape and amenity components of their property, Mr and Mrs Baber are hoping to create an additional, modest building that will function as a home office.
- ## 2.0 Heritage
- 2.1 The existing site comprises several building of different ages set within very attractive landscaped grounds. The dwelling – originally a traditional barn – was once part of an historic farm group.
- 2.2 The former stables building, which is attached to the former barn (all now converted to residential use) is the only listed building within the site. Known as Gulling Green Barn on the Historic England list (list entry 1391401) the former stables is thought to date originally from the late C17. It was originally thatched and the foregoing conversion works reinstated a full thatched roof. The internal frame, parts of which are thought to have come from an older and much larger building, has been largely preserved and the exterior is clad in natural boarding.

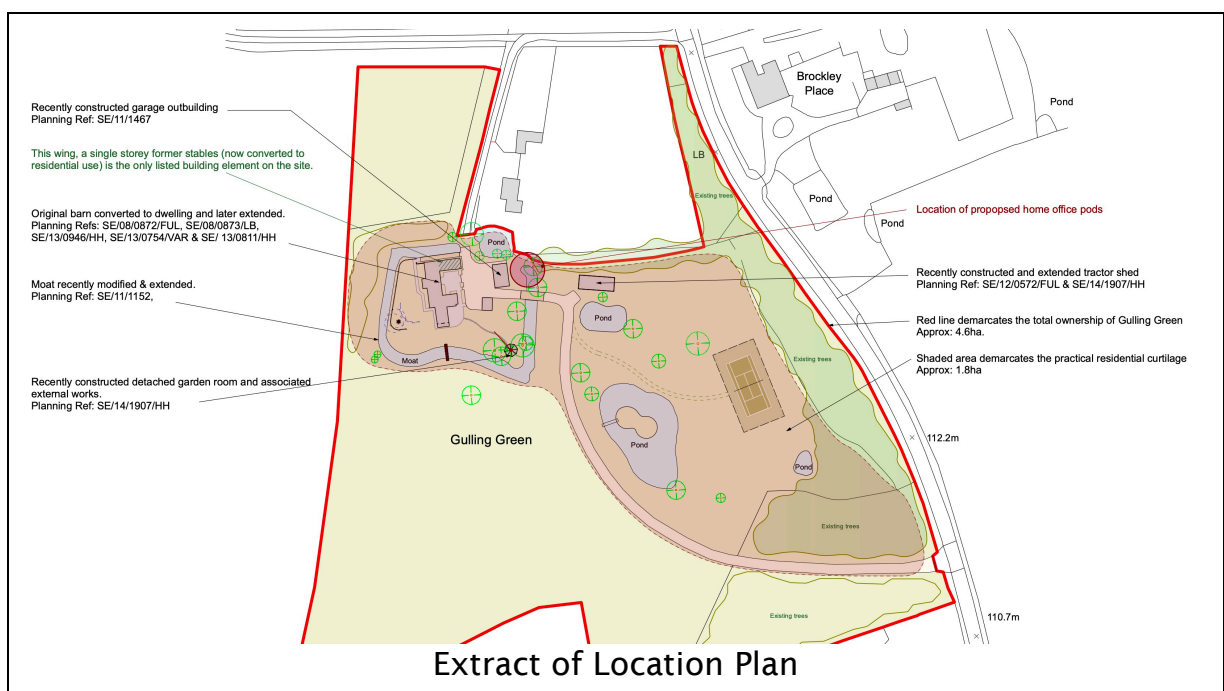
2.3 The works proposed with this application are relatively remote from the listed element of the building range and it is considered that no harmful impacts on character and setting etc will arise (see image below).

3.0 The Site

3.1 A site location plan and photographs are provided at drawing 20045-01.

3.2 The whole site at Gulling Green measures approximately 4.6ha. The building group, informal gardens, ponds and tennis court etc effectively make up a residential curtilage to the north of the access drive, measuring approximately 1.8ha. This area then merges with larger, open meadows to the south.

3.3 The works proposed in this application are to be located at the north east end of the moat, to the east of the recently constructed garage outbuilding.



3.4 The location for the works has been chosen to be within the established building group, but sufficiently tucked away from the main dwelling to afford privacy and relative seclusion.

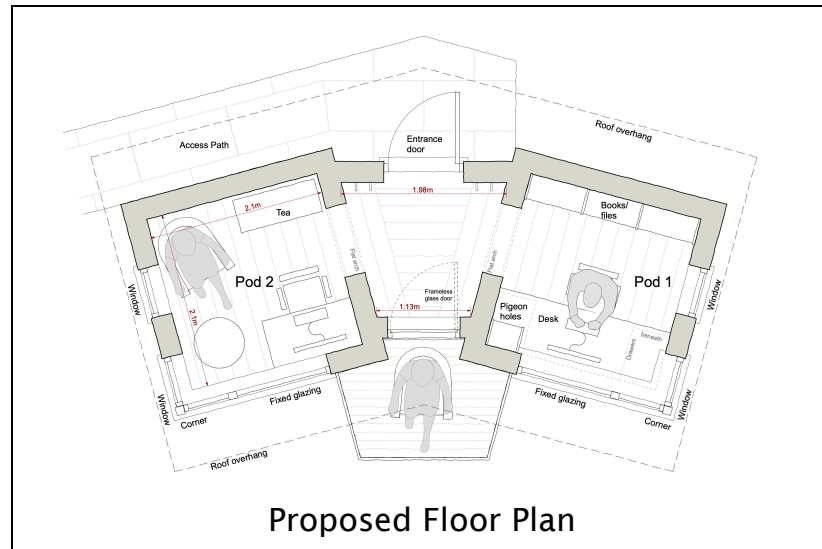
3.5 The end of the moat at which the proposal is to be sited was remodeled (dredged and re-shaped) as part of previous landscaping works that also incorporated a cluster of new, but mature, garden trees (which itself was a small part of a very extensive amount of tree planting carried out elsewhere on the site, particularly at the eastern boundary).

3.6 This end of the moat is to the south of the common boundary with a neighbouring property to the north, known as Gulling Green Farm. The boundary comprises dense and mature hedge and tree planting, creating a tall and effective screen between the two properties.

4.0 The Proposal

4.1 Detailed proposals are provided at drawing 20045-02 and 03.

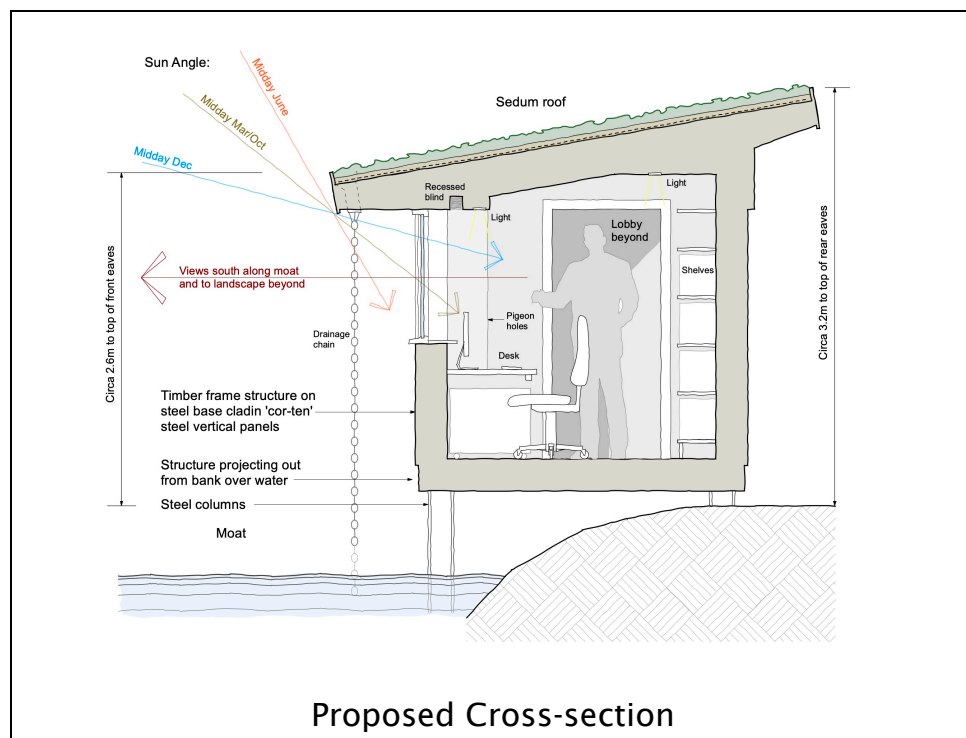
4.2 The new building will comprise two small 'pods', each measuring externally 2.6 x 2.6m. These are to be set at an angle to each other, drawing a visual focus south, along the moat and they will be linked by a simple recessed lobby space.



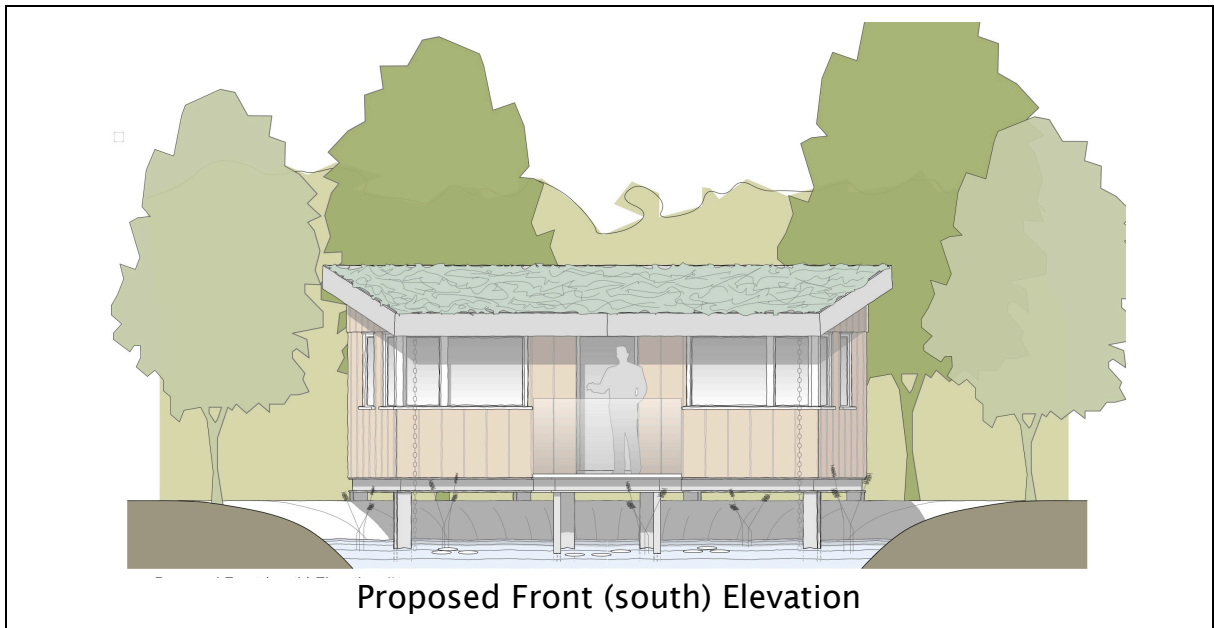
4.3 The building will be entered at the north side via a door accessed by a discreet path from the dwelling courtyard taken along the rear (north) of the garage outbuilding.

4.4 The pair of pods will be supported off steel 'I'-section legs taken down into the moat and its north bank – the connection to the ground will be a 'light touch', with no impact on the potential for flora and fauna, save for the support legs and the new path.

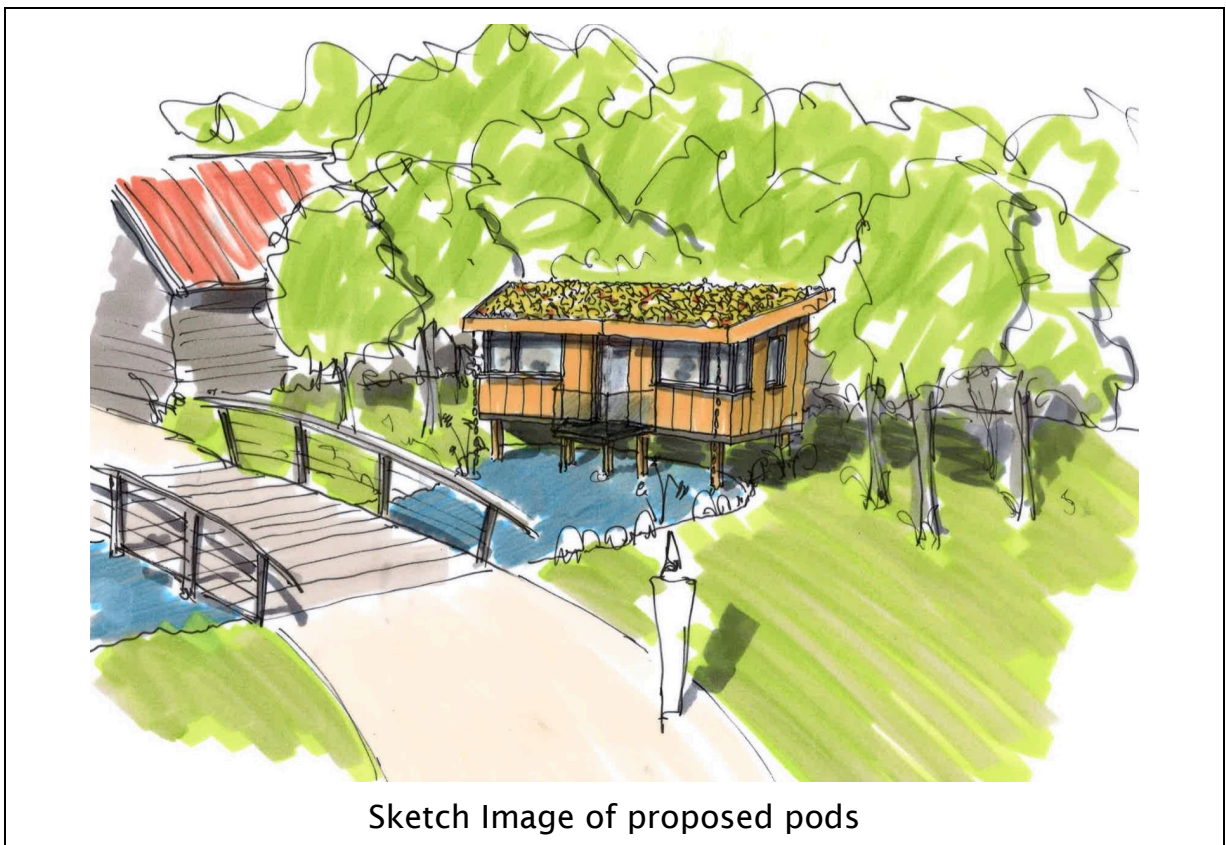
4.5 From inside, the pods will create the sense of being over water and this is to be augmented with a small, privately accessible deck guarded with frameless glass.



- 4.6 The roof will take the form of a mono-pitched structure with large overhangs to create shade from the daytime sun. Boarded in a simple steel fascia, the roof is to be finished in specialist planting – a ‘green roof’ system helping the new structure to visually nestle into the immediate landscaping. Drainage from the roof will be via two outlets at the south eaves, discharging directly to the moat via rigid steel chains.



- 4.7 The natural, earthy aesthetic is to be augmented in the external wall cladding which is to comprise oxidized ‘Corten’ steel panels.
- 4.8 The overall objective is to continue the established hierarchy of building forms in the immediate group, but to create something innovative, quirky and, to some extent, sculptural.



5.0 Ecology

- 5.1 Since the first application to convert the original barns to a dwelling, there have been several further applications to construct various outbuildings etc. For the earlier applications, Ecologist, Chris Vine, prepared Ecology surveys and reports – these were at a time when the site was in various states of development.
- 5.2 Since then, the immediate landscape has been progressed to its current, finished state: a very attractive, largely natural environment that has significantly upgraded former agricultural land to wild-flower meadows, has received hundreds of new trees and has created new wildlife ponds. The ‘net gain’ in terms of biodiversity is truly significant.
- 5.3 With the most recent applications (new octagonal garden room, extending the stables etc) it was agreed with officers that new ecological surveys and reports were not required as it had already been established that newts used parts of the site, which covers many acres. In response to a supporting letter provided by Chris Vine with the more recent application, the proposals were accepted in the absence of a full report, as matters dealing with appropriate mitigation etc has already been addressed. The following are extracts from Chris Vine’s advice at the time of the most recent application.

This area, directly affected by the new proposal consists entirely of recently laid short grass lawn which, from the recent development works to the former barn, was subject to considerable disturbance.

Great crested newts are known to use the pond a short distance to the northeast of the converted barn, now separated from the proposed new extension by a gravelled vehicle driveway and new grass lawns, as well as the two ponds further to the southeast. These three ponds have been left undisturbed by recent development works, as per previous advice given.

The moat has not been found to be used by great crested newts – quite possibly due to the presence of fish which were recorded during the previous surveys.

A new extension to the converted barn will require ground disturbing works for its foundations and may well disturb or damage any great crested newts which may possibly be present in the ground in this area close to ponds known to be used by the species.

The area of ground affected by the proposed new extension consists of short grass which has not developed, and is unlikely to develop, into a diverse structure; it has been subject to relatively recent considerable disturbance and appeared to lack any small mammal burrows or other features likely to be used by great crested newts for shelter and refuge.

It is considered less likely that great crested newts will be sheltering within this area although it remains possible that newts at the site may move across the area at night when foraging on land.

The proposed construction of a new extension is unlikely to result in any further disturbance or damage to great crested newts, over and above that caused by the recent completed development of the barn or indeed the current use of the site.

With proper care and appropriate precautions, it is entirely possible to extend the converted barn without causing any long term damage to newt populations.

- 5.4 No new foundations are proposed for the new pod structure, save for driven steel legs and the recently modified bank of the moat, at its north end, will be otherwise unchanged. In any event, Mr Vine has stated that newts are unlikely to use the moat. Compared to other enhanced areas of more 'wild' landscaping elsewhere, this particular location comprises a maintained lawn area and we contend that there will be no impacts on protected species etc.
- 5.5 The proposal adopts a very light-touch physical impact on the grounds and, as with other recent applications, we do not consider a full ecological survey and report to be necessary.
- 5.6 For similar reasons stated above, the proposed construction will not impact on local trees, all of which are to be retained.
- 6.0 **Summary**
- 6.1 Gulling Green is an exempla homestead development comprising excellent quality buildings and very attractive landscaping, much of which comprises extensive tree planting and grassy meadows where before the land was agricultural and largely devoid of biodiversity.
- 6.2 This proposal seeks to erect a modest and sustainable building nestled into the existing landscape – a building that will effect minimal impact in terms of its structural connection to the ground.
- 6.3 These proposals have been very carefully considered and we commend them = to the council.

L. Frere
For and on behalf of J.A.P Architects
Lee.frere@japarchitects.co.uk