



CHARLIE O'BRIEN

Design and Access Statement

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Far Horizons,

Lew,

Bampton



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Introduction

1. This Statement accompanies an application submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council for full planning permission for the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuilding and the subsequent erection of two storey dwelling with parking and associated landscaping at Far Horizons, Lew, Bampton.

Application Site

- 2.1 The application site is located in the open countryside, approximately 1km to the north of the village of Bampton and 4km to the south-east of Carterton. The dwelling sits in over 5000sq.m of private residential amenity space which is primarily a triangular plot that widens to the rear (east). The plot is further sited in an open paddock that has a dense tree belt to the east which limits views of the proceeding open countryside, spanning to the east. The extent of the site is shown edged in red on the site location plan accompanying the application.
- 2.2 The nearest neighbouring dwellings are located to the south (circa 118m) and to the north (circa 200m). A comprehensive farmstead with large agricultural buildings are also located to the south (circa 115m to 200m). The remainder of the site is surrounded by largely open views of the surrounding countryside.
- 2.3 The site itself comprises of a two storey (a single storey conservatory is situated to the rear elevation), four bedroom dwelling, constructed out of a mix of reconstituted stone and render with a concrete tile roof finish. A single storey double garage and workshop is sited on the east elevation.
- 2.4 The dwelling is not listed and the site is not located in any Conservation Area and/or landscape designations.



Relevant Planning History



- 3.1 There are no relevant past planning applications in relation to the application site.

Relevant Planning Policy

- 4.1 Set out below is a list of the relevant national and local policy in respect to the area's Development Plan that has been considered in the submission and development of this application. As you will appreciate, the proposed scheme not only complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan but also delivers an aesthetically pleasing development; replacing the unsightly worn-down dwelling, which is also environmentally unfriendly (via design, construction and the existing building materials).
- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework, from here on in known as the Framework, was published in February 2019 replacing the previous versions of 2012 and 2018, respectfully. The Framework sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.3 **Paragraph 7 of the Framework** confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 4.4 **Paragraph 8 of the Framework** sets out the overarching objectives of the planning system in achieving sustainable development.
- 4.5 **Paragraph 11 of the Framework** sets out the Government's commitment to supporting sustainable development and states that proposals that accord to the development plan should be approved without delay.
- 4.6 **Paragraph 59 of the Framework** re-affirms that, in order to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, *'it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed'*.
- 4.7 **Paragraph 78 of the Framework** advises that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality or rural communities, with opportunities taken for villages to grow where this will support local services.
- 4.8 **Paragraph 109 of the Framework** specifies that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 4.9 **Paragraph 121 of the Framework** outlines that Local Planning Authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans.
- 4.10 **Paragraph 170 of the Framework** advises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, inter alia –
- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes;
 - recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land; and
 - minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

**West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031**

- 4.11 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was adopted by full Council on the 27th September 2018 and is the Statutory Development Plan for West Oxfordshire.
- 4.12 **OS1 – *Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development***: Advises that planning applications that accord with the Local Plan will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.13 **OS2 – *Locating Development in the Right Places***: Insofar as it relates to the villages, states that these are suitable for limited development which respects the village character and local distinctiveness and would help to maintain the vitality of these communities.
- 4.14 **OS3 - *Prudent Use of Natural Resources***: All development proposals (including new buildings, conversions and the refurbishment of existing building stock) will be required to show consideration of the efficient and prudent use and management of natural resources, including:
- making the most efficient use of land and buildings;
 - delivering development that seeks to minimise the need to travel;
 - minimising use of non-renewable resources;
 - minimising their impact on the soil resource;
 - minimising energy demands and energy loss through design, layout, orientation, landscaping, materials and the use of technology;
 - minimising summer solar gain, maximising passive winter solar heating, lighting, natural ventilation, energy and water efficiency and reuse of materials;
 - maximising resource efficiency, including water;
 - minimising risk of flooding;
 - making use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems;
 - using recycled and energy efficient materials;
 - minimising waste and making adequate provision for the re-use and recycling of waste.
- 4.15 **OS4 – *High Quality Design***: New development should respect the historic, architectural and landscape character of the locality, contribute to local distinctiveness and, where possible, enhance the character and quality of the surroundings. In preparing proposals regard should be had to specific design advice in Supplementary Planning Guidance and related guidance documents.
- 4.16 **H1 - *Amount and Distribution of Housing***: Sets out the overall housing requirements and the framework for delivery under the terms of Policy H2.



- 4.17 **H2 – *Delivery of New Homes*:** Provision will be made for at least 15,950 new homes in the period 2011 – 2031. The Policy expresses that new dwellings will only be permitted in the small villages, hamlets and open countryside where they comply with the general principles set out in Policy OS2 and in the following circumstances:
- replacement dwellings on a one for one basis
- 4.18 **H6 – *Existing Housing*:** Advises that changes to existing housing will be managed to maintain sustainable communities and a high quality in environment.
- 4.19 **T1 – *Sustainable Transport*:** States that priority will be given to locating new development in areas with convenient access to a good range of services and facilities, where the need to travel by car can be minimised.
- 4.20 **T4 – *Parking*:** Advises that parking in new developments should be provided in accordance with the County Council's adopted parking standards.
- 4.21 **EH2 - *Landscape Character*:** Proposals that would result in the loss of features important for their visual, amenity or historic value will not be permitted unless the loss can be justified by appropriate mitigation.
- 4.22 **EH3 – *Biodiversity and Geodiversity*:** States that the biodiversity of West Oxfordshire will be protected and enhanced to achieve a net gain in biodiversity including, *inter alia*, by ensuring that all applications that might adversely affect biodiversity are accompanied by adequate ecological survey information.
- 4.23 **EH7 - *Flood Risk*:** Advises that flood risk will be managed using the sequential risk-based approach.
- 4.24 **EH8 - *Environmental Protection*:** New development should not take place in areas where it would cause unacceptable nuisance to the occupants of nearby land and buildings from noise or disturbance.

West Oxfordshire Design Guide

- 4.25 In addition to the above, the Council have also prepared the West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2016) as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The proposals have been prepared having regard to the guidance contained in the SPD and other design/landscape-related documentation.

Principle of Development

- 5.1 This application seeks to gain Local Authority support for the appropriate redevelopment of the site. The application has been carefully thought out to ensure that the proposal successfully achieves a highly well-designed dwelling which corresponds with all national and local policy.
- 5.2 Policy H1 states that the principle for replacement dwellings will be considered acceptable as long as it is a one for one basis.
- 5.3 Policy H6 further specifies that proposals to replace an existing dwelling, which is not of historical or architectural value, will be permitted on a one-for-one basis, provided that the



character of the surrounding area is not eroded, there would be no harmful impact on ecology or protected species and the replacement dwelling is of a reasonable scale relative to the original building.

- 5.4 As highlighted above, the existing dwelling is two storeys high with a single storey conservatory to the rear elevation, constructed out of a mix of reconstituted stone and render with a concrete tiled roof. A single storey double garage and workshop is sited on the east elevation. Internally, the dwelling comprises of four bedrooms, three main reception rooms and a large kitchen/breakfast room with an adjoining conservatory.
- 5.5 The house was built in the 1950's and overtime the dwelling has become tired and run-down. Moreover, the dwelling is of no architectural or historic merit and is not situated in a designated Conservation Area.
- 5.6 As detailed in Drawing No: FH03 (Proposed Block Plan), the proposed dwelling will be primarily set on the same footprint as the existing dwelling. The dwelling will also be two storeys high and constructed out of natural Cotswold Stone and slate tile roofing, thus utilising locally sourced materials. The development will also incorporate oak timber with glazed features to create an attractive rear gable elevation. Although the proposed dwelling will be 'slightly' larger, it is evident that the application is of a reasonable size and scale when compared to the existing dwelling and is further set in a large curtilage that would not impact on any neighbouring properties.
- 5.7 Furthermore, the applicant sought to ensure a proactive working relationship with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and duly sought pre-application advice. In response, the Officer stated within the report (21/00642/PREAPP):

"In this instance, the existing dwelling is not considered to be of any historical or architectural value and the proposal seeks to replace this dwelling on a one-for-one basis. The proposed new dwelling will be sited within the same area as the existing dwellinghouse and seeks to use the existing foot print of the dwelling combined with that of the existing detached garage, albeit slightly larger than the existing. I am of the opinion that given the context and size of the plot, that the proposed replacement dwelling is considered to be of a reasonable scale and therefore could be supported in principle."

- 5.8 It should also be acknowledge that the Mount Owen Farm (which is located 180m to the north), is two and a half storeys high with pitched gables, cast stone quoins and chimneys, and constructed out of natural stone and slate roofing. The District Design Guide states:

Where the principle of development is deemed acceptable in planning terms, fundamental to the success of any subsequent proposal will be a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the site and context. Only with this in place can a genuinely meaningful design solution be reached.

Whatever the scale or nature of a proposed development, particular care should be taken to ensure that local character is respected or strengthened. This need not entail the slavish replication of surrounding housing layouts or house types, for example; however, it could involve drawing on locally distinctive aspects of design – for example, architectural details or materials – and should involve the preservation or enhancement of local character, and the

avoidance of 'dropped-in' design solutions with little or no relevance to the unique context of the site.

5.9 It is evident that this application has carefully considered the neighbouring developments and has ensured to utilise the same design principles and materials while working proactively with the LPA.

5.10 In the pre-application report, the Officer states:

In regards to the design, the proposed replacement dwelling would be two storey and has been designed to reflect the surrounding dwellings and is therefore considered to be in keeping with the rural character and appearance of this part of Lew. It has been suggested that the wing including the gym and garage is separated from the main dwellinghouse to reduce the overall visual scale and massing of the replacement dwelling.

5.11 It has to be expressed that the pre-application report was very positive highlighting how the dwelling accords with Local Policy while reflecting the surrounding character. In respect to the eastern wing, the Officer did recommend separating the gym and the garage to reduce the overall massing.

5.12 It must, however, be recognised that there are no public footpaths within the vicinity of the site and as a result, public views are only pertinent to the unnamed road which serves as the dwelling's access point. Due to the dwelling's position (with the principle elevation facing to the south and west gable elevation facing onto the unnamed road) in the plot and the fact the existing outbuilding is only sited 5.5m away from the house, the juxtaposition of dwelling and outbuilding ensures that the overall built-form is seen as a one connected assembly.

5.13 The attached photo highlights how the position of the development ensures that any public viewpoint (i.e. from the public road) see's the overall scale and massing in one development context without any significant parting.





- 5.14 Another fundamental part of the design process was to ensure the development did not sprawl out into the open countryside and harm the surrounding landscape. The current position of the dwelling and associated outbuilding results in the overall built form extending outwards to eastern boundary of the plot, in a closer location to the open countryside. This results in the built-form of the plot sprawling further outward. However, this application proposes to condense the overall development, thus, moving the built-form away from the eastern boundary which would help negate the visual impact on the eastern periphery. What's more, public views of the dwelling would still be witnessed within the same development context; insofar, a two storey dwelling with a single storey eastern wing.
- 5.15 Overall, the application is for a replacement dwelling (one-for-one basis), will be primarily sited on the existing footprint, is of a reasonable scale (relative to the original building) and has been carefully designed to utilise locally sourced materials while respecting the same design principles of the neighbouring dwellings. Therefore, the proposal meets all policy requirements to establish the Principle of Development, as set out in the Local Plan.

Existing and Proposed Landscaping

- 6.1 As detailed on the submitted plans, the majority of existing landscaping – and which contributes to its verdant character – is located on the boundaries of the site. The layout of the proposed scheme has been specifically designed to ensure that this existing vegetation is retained and, by so doing, this vegetation would make an on-going contribution to the character of the locality, whilst also ensuring the development is appropriately embedded into the site and its surroundings.
- 6.2 By virtue of the dwelling's large plot and associated curtilage, as well as the existing hedging encompassing the site's boundaries, helps to ensure that the surrounding landscape is maintained whilst helping to negate any impact from the proposed development.

Impact on existing neighbouring amenities as well as future amenities of the residents.

- 7.1 The nearest neighbouring dwelling is sited over 100m away and as such, the application will not cause any overlooking and/or loss of daylight to neighbouring amenities. In addition, the dwelling would benefit from an extensive area of amenity space that would, in quantitative terms, comfortably meet the requirements of future occupiers. Moreover, that space would be level, private and free from excessive shading and would thereby meet related qualitative standards for such private amenity space.

Highways

- 8.1 As indicated on the site plan, a new access point will be incorporated to the north of dwelling. The existing access is presently situated on the brow of the hill and as such, is unsuitable for the occupiers of the dwellinghouse. By instilling a new entrance to the north, away from the brow of the hill), ensures a more convenient and safer option to the future occupants of the dwelling. The entrance will also benefit from appropriate levels of visibility to the north and south, and thus provides a safe and convenient ingress/egress arrangement. Furthermore, the access will be well screened with additional landscaping (including the existing hedging along the road) which will further improve the overall aesthetics of the site. In addition, and within the site, the width of the access way would be sufficient to allow vehicles to safely manoeuvre.



- 8.2 Due to the significant size of the plot, the application can easily accommodate 2 allocated parking spaces (as per required for three bedroom dwellings) as set out in the Oxfordshire County Council Parking Standards, as well visitor accommodation. Moreover, the application is proposing a two bay garage (as indicated on Drawing No: FH06).

Climate Change

- 9.1 On the 2nd March 2021, West Oxfordshire District Council declared a new Climate Change Strategy focusing on five key areas:

- Protecting and restoring natural ecosystems
- Energy
- Active travel and low-carbon transport
- New development standards and
- Education and engagement

These are areas the Council has identified as having the most impact in tackling climate change, reducing CO₂ emissions, increasing sustainability and local resilience, and enhancing the natural environment.

- 9.2 It must therefore be highlighted that the existing dwelling is of 1950's construction and does not, **in anyway**, accord with the latest building standards and sustainable climate change design methods.
- 9.3 The proposed dwelling would conversely utilise the latest building control methods by using renewable and recyclable resources, reducing energy consumption and waste, minimising non-renewable resources and maximising resource efficiency (including but limited to, rainwater harvesting).
- 9.4 As a consequence, the dwelling will be significantly more environmentally friendly and sustainable than the dwelling it will replace and appropriately accords with Policy OS3 (Prudent use of natural resources).

Flooding and Drainage

- 10.1 The application is located in Flood Zone 1 and ensures that the proposal addresses the effective management of all sources of flood risk.

Conclusion

- 11.1 This scheme provides an aesthetically pleasing development which can easily be accommodated on the application site. By replacing the unsightly dwelling and outbuilding with a new significantly higher quality design of a three bedroom dwelling; not only improves and enhances the immediate landscape to the benefit of the surrounding character, but also helps to deliver a significantly more environmentally sustainable dwelling.



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- 11.2 Consequently, the scheme's layout, orientation, scale, size, design and materials, both compliments and respects the surrounding landscape without causing any detrimental effect to the neighbouring properties. In addition, as highlighted above, the application is wholly compliant with all relevant national policies and guidance, in respect to the Area's Development.