

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF

**AN APPLICATION TO ERECT NO.2 OF 3BED DWELLINGS
WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND ACCESS**

AT

**LAND ADJACENT TO BROOKSIDE COTTAGE, FULLER
STREET, FAIRSTEAD CM3 2BA**



Date: 28 June 2021

Our Ref: 200955rev A



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Smithers Purslow in support of a full application to erect No.2 of 3 bed detached dwellings with associated landscaping and access at land adjacent to Brookside Cottage, Fuller Street, Fairstead, hereon referred to as the site.
- 1.2 Smithers Purslow are an independent multi-disciplinary consultancy of Architects, Engineers and Surveyors.
- 1.3 The submission is made on behalf of Dr Robin Gower, hereon referred to as the applicant. The site is within his families ownership and they wish to erect two modest homes for their families to continue to live and work in the area.
- 1.3 This statement should be read together with all existing and proposed drawings and application forms.

2.0 SETTING

- 2.1 Fuller Street is a hamlet in the civil parish of Fairstead and the Braintree District of Essex. There is a public house called The Square and Compass immediately adjacent to the site. A bus service 345 & SB21 passes in front of the site where there are stops either side of the road. Great Leigh is to the west is 30minutes walk and has a number of services. There is a royal mail post box adjacent. There is also sufficient number of dwellings to warrant a notice board next to the old phone kiosk (used to guide walkers). There is also a scaffolding business and a car repair garage. It is clearly a settlement, albeit small with a cluster of over 16 dwellings in close proximity. It is within the Terling and Fairstead Parish which has a Village Design Statement published in Sept 2014. There is no village envelope or public open space.



Fig 1 – google earth extract of site

- 2.2 There are two nearby Heritage Assets with the Grade II Listed 'The Stores' to the east and 'The Herons' to the north which is also Grade II listed (see fig 2 below). An OS map from 1874 shows the land was formerly occupied by a dwelling.

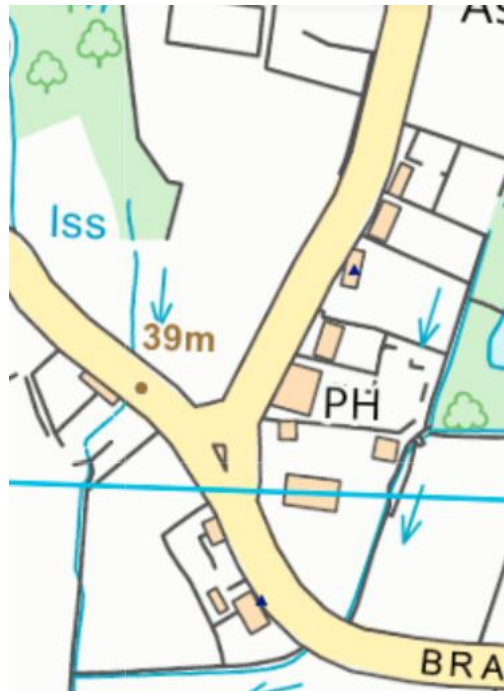


Fig 2 – Historic England Map showing nearby heritage assets



Fig 3 – Historic OS map 1874

- 2.3 The hamlet is set around a 30mph limit junction of 'Fuller Street' running west to east and an unclassified single track road rising north to the property called 'Ashwells Farm' and the small hamlet Ranks Green. Ranks Green has its own direct road access to nearby Great Leighs.
- 2.4 The settlement vernacular is distinctive in that almost all of the properties are rendered under slate or plain roofs. To the north the property 'Ashwells' has a hipped roof



Fig 4 – view north to Ashwells Farm



Fig 5 – view of site from single track lane to Ranks Green

- 2.5 The site itself is maintained, and gently sloping between Willow Cottage in the east and Brookside Cottage in the west and these types of sites are often referred to as 'infill sites'. A field gate grants access from the road, the site is surrounded by a maintained low hedge with timber field fencing making up other boundaries. A number of trees are present in the garden of Brookside Cottage. The site is crossed by electric cables servicing the adjacent cottages. There is a drainage pit on site for the cottage. Beyond the site is arable land with a large pylon in the near distance.

- 2.6 The paddock land to the south of the site is within Flood Zone 3 (see fig 6 below). The proposal has been laid out to position the dwellings and garden land outside of the FZ.

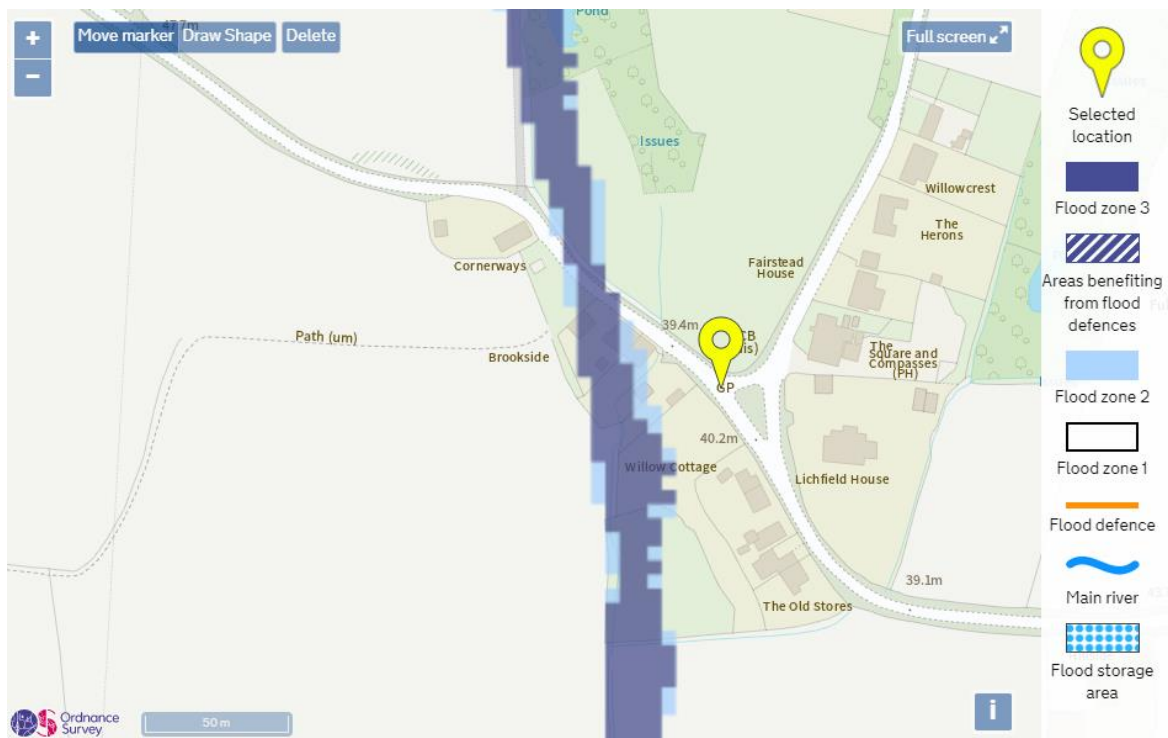


Fig 6 – Flood map from Environment Agency.

3.0 USE

- 3.1 This proposal seeks consent to develop the site to provide two modest homes for the family owners to allow them to continue to live and work in the area.
- 3.2 This residential proposal feels a natural ‘infill’ between two existing dwellings in the centre of the settlement. Immediately adjacent the site is a large area of open country side which merges into the centre of the settlement between the Braintree Road and Ashwells Farm House. This is highly visible when passing through Fuller Street from all three approaches.
- 3.3 The land around the dwellings will be used for access and landscaping.
- 3.4 Currently the ‘infill’ site is not used for anything in particular although it does have a drainage pit for the nearby cottage. Historically the site appears to have been occupied by a house or cottage (see 1875 historic map).

4.0 LAYOUT

- 4.1 Careful consideration has been given to the two dwellings to ensure that they do not cause any loss of amenity to adjacent dwellings. They are positioned lengthways on the site to maintain a generous gap between them to allow glimpses of the arable land beyond when approaching the site from the single track road (north). This will be further accentuated by the fact that this track is at an elevated level to the site. Locating the access centrally into the site will further aid this deliberate vista. Both of the properties will follow the notional built form of the hamlet in their proximity to the road.
- 4.2 Both dwellings are mirrored versions of each other and laid out to provide vista stops framing a central gap to the arable fields beyond.
- 4.3 Internally the dwellings have habitable rooms facing the street and also the access to provide good surveillance. The rear open plan kitchen and family rooms gives wonderful views of the garden and fields beyond.
- 4.4 At first floor bedrooms either face front or backwards with only landing windows or obscure glazed bathrooms having side windows at first floor. This is to prevent any concerns with regards overlooking. The small bedroom can be used as a home office or study to follow increasing homeworking trends.
- 4.5 The dwellings are also orientated on site to follow the path of the sun so that both roofs could adopt PV panel technology. The large land to the rear could also be used to lay ground source heat pump coils (dependent on ground conditions) as an alternative to gas/oil fuel source.



Fig 7 – proposed floor plans and site plan

5.0 AMOUNTS

- 5.1 The two modest 3 bed dwellings will provide just over 104sqm of Gross Internal Area each on the 01ha. The site will be sub-divided to provide garden land for two families and perhaps extensive enough to allow home grown vegetables to be cultivated.
- 5.2 The provision of two dwellings will provide additional numbers to the councils targets to provide housing for local people who will no doubt help support local businesses nearby.

6.0 SCALE

- 6.1 Careful consideration has been given to the design with regards scale and massing. The general vernacular consists of detached two storey houses and cottages. The proposed design adopts this to maintain the scale with simple use of chimneys and appropriately sized cottage casement windows. The hipped roof will assist with reducing the overall massing.
- 6.2 The lengthways layout will also reduce the massing of the development. There is a lowered eaves feature on the inside elevation of the dwellings to mimic some reduced eaves properties and to provide a visual lead to the front doors.

7.0 LANDSCAPING

- 7.1 This proposal seeks to maintain the hedging along the front of the site to allow the proposal to become an integral part of the settlement. It will use simple field fencing for boundaries and this includes the rear gardens to allow the gap between the houses to be maintained as much as possible.
- 7.2 A tree planting and landscaping scheme would further allow the proposal to sit well on site and enhance the wider setting. The dwellings could adopt ecology enhancements such as bird boxes.

8.0 APPEARANCE

- 8.1 Both dwellings are faced with render and plain tiled roofs with brick chimneys to adopt the local character. The detailing of windows and eaves is also in line with the locality. The hipped roofs will provide a visual link connection with the Ashwells Farm House. The mirrored design will provide two 'cottages' which symmetrically follow the spilt of the road junction with Fuller Street.
- 8.2 The dwellings will be constructed to be well insulated following enhanced construction details and to adhere to the current building regulations with regards thermal heat loss and energy use. Water conservation will also be adopted internally as well as seeking to harvest storm water where appropriate.

8.3 The proposed dwellings will relate very well to the site and by understanding and adopting the local character it is considered that there will be no harm on the setting of the nearby listed buildings. The designs would architecturally provide interest in terms of massing with part lowered eaves, details/materials that blend with the local character and a simple form to sit well in the street scene to frame the view through the site.

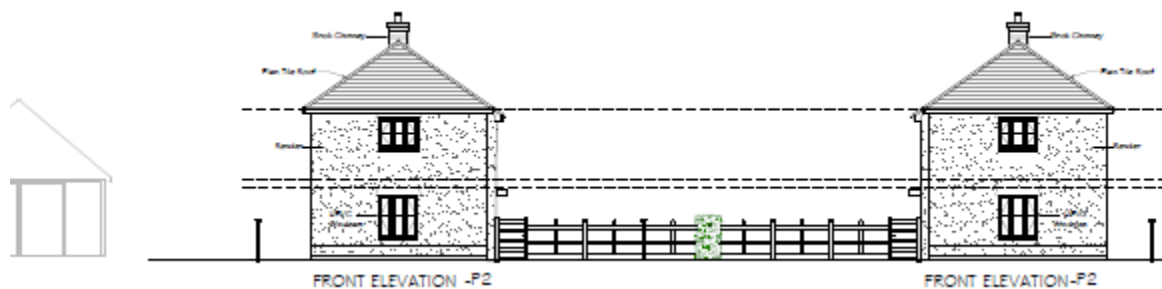


Fig 8 – street scene (not showing hedge which will line the front of the site)

9.0 ACCESS

9.1 Access into the site will be directly off the road for both pedestrians and vehicles. Entering the site both dwellings have front doors under canopies which are clearly visible and will provide level access entry into the ground floor. Parking will consist of two spaces each per dwelling but visitors can enter onto the shared driveway without blocking. There would be sufficient space on site for vehicles to enter and exit in a forward gear and for the required visibility splays to be provided.

9.2 There is a public footpath to the west of the site but this will be unaffected by the proposals.

10.0 PLANNING HISTORY

10.1 The below is an extract of the public access planning history on the site consisting of two planning refusals and one dismissed appeal:-

Planning Applications (3)

- Proposed single dwelling
Ref. No: 04/02153/FUL | Status: Application Refused
- Erection of one dwelling
Ref. No: 98/00258/OUT | Status: Application Refused
- Erection of one no. cottage
Ref. No: 05/00745/FUL | Status: Refused then dismissed on appeal

Planning Appeals (1)

- Erection of one no. cottage
Ref. No: 05/00040/REF | Status: Appeal Dismissed

Planning Enforcements (1)

- Enforcement Enquiry
Ref. No: 07/00204/COU3 | Status: Case Closed

- 10.2 In 2018 a pre-app 18/60242/PREAPP was submitted to seek feedback on the proposal for two dwellings on site. It was assessed against the appeal inspectors comments on the previous refusal and also against the current policies at the time and the concluding comments were as follows:-

Conclusion

In conclusion, the site is located outside of any defined village envelope or development boundary, in a location where new residential development would not be supported. The proposals would not constitute sustainable development as the site is in a location with limited access to facilities, amenities, public transport links and employment opportunities and would undoubtedly place reliance on travel by car and do little to enhance or maintain the vitality of the area. Officers remain of the view and concur with the conclusions of the Planning Inspector that the development of this site would harm the character and appearance of the countryside. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed development of the site would comply with Policy RLP16 of the Adopted Local Plan as the site could accommodate more than one dwelling, a conclusion also reached by the previous Planning Inspector. While Officers acknowledge that the development of the site would deliver some benefits, namely the contribution of 1 dwelling to the Council's Housing Land Supply and economic benefits during construction, it is not considered that these limited benefits outweigh the harms identified above. As such, the proposal would not be supported by Officers if a formal planning application was submitted for consideration.

- 10.3 Since Feb 2021 some of the previous policies have been updated by Section 1 of the 2013-2033 Local Plan. Remaining policies will therefore have different weight according to their consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 10.4 Press reports state earlier this year Braintree Council was assessed against the 2020 delivery test results for 5 year housing land supply and was found to be at 85% compared with 67% the year before. This was identified by way of large development sites coming forward and was considered to be around 4.8 years supply.
- 10.5 Within the district there have been recent appeals upheld which have similar principles to those contained within this application. APP/Z1510/W/20/3256120 Land to West of Water Lane, Pebmarsh CO9 2NA (02/02/21). APP/Z1510/W/20/3255306 Fox House, Church End, Shalford, Essex CM7 5HA (15/01/21). Appeal A: APP/Z1510/W/19/3242033 Appeal B: APP/Z1510/W/20/3249936 both relating to 3 Foley Paddocks, High Garrett, Braintree Essex CM7 5NU (30/04/21). Appeal Ref: APP/Z1510/W/20/3255805 Land off Water Lane, Steeple Bumpstead, Essex (15/01/21).
- 10.6 All 5 of the latter listed appeals relate to development proposals outside of settlement boundaries and were found to outweigh policies due to the lack of a 5 year housing land supply in the district and also that sustainable principles could be demonstrated.

11.0 CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The pre app response from 2018 firstly identifies that the site is outside the settlement boundaries however it should be noted that there are over 10 dwellings as a 'cluster' nearby. Assessed against sustainability, the hamlet does have a public house and employment locally with two reasonable bus services directly outside the site. This would still require some car journeys to take place but with a shift to home working over recent times and the rise of home delivery services for groceries and online shopping more and more people are reducing car journeys. Adequate access to services and facilities for the occupants can therefore be demonstrated.
- 11.2 The proposal would provide 2 additional dwellings to much needed housing targets which would also stimulate local economies through their construction and in supporting local businesses through footfall. Two local families would be able to continue to live and work in the area.
- 11.3 The proposed adopts recommendations and comments identified in the Village Design Statement the proposal will respond and relate with a high quality design. The appearance, scale, massing, landscaping and understanding of the setting all come together to compliment the site. A key design element is to provide a continuation of a visual link of the countryside beyond the site by carefully considering and positioning the design. Low maintained hedging and simple field fencing will maintain this layout and the centralised access will also assist. This will address previous concerns raised in the pre app and appeal from 2005 where weight was given to the views through the site.
- 11.4 Understanding the significance of the nearby heritage assets the design will present no harm to setting or character but will respond to them architecturally. Historic maps provide evidence that the site has also been previously occupied with a dwelling. The layout also follows the grain of development and makes sure both dwellings are outside of the flood risk plains in the south. The use of hedging, field fencing and other rural treatments would all contribute to the appearance and encouragement of ecology. Dwellings will be constructed to reduce thermal heat loss and energy consumption whilst allowing natural daylight into the rooms. Roofs will face southwards for potential use of PV technologies and the rear land could be used as a communal ground source heat coil array and the opportunity for vegetable gardens.
- 11.5 The clear benefits and demonstrable sustainable principles should be given weight alongside the findings of recent 2021 appeal decisions. Assessed against its own merits the proposal should also be considered on balance positively by the planners as it will add to housing delivery and significantly provide opportunities for the local families to continue to live and work in the area.

12.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS PLAN

