

Heritage, Design & Access Statement

The Granary, Brancepeth

DH7 8DQ



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Contents

01. Introduction

02. Site, Use and Background

03. Heritage Statement

04. Policies and the Proposal

05. Appearance, Materials and Construction

06. Access Statement

01. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been produced to assist in the understanding of the scheme as part of the full planning application. Read in conjunction with associated drawings and supporting documentation, it is hoped that it will outline my design approach taken to sympathetically convert this historic building into a family home. I have spent most my life at Brancepeth Castle and have grown up working on the grade 1 building alongside experienced tradesmen using traditional methods. This has given me a broad knowledge of historic buildings and the correct methodology to maintain the character and historical assets. As a tradesman I will be doing the work myself in accordance with traditional practices that suit the age of the building. All too often modern materials and methods are used which are not compatible with historic settings resulting in accelerated degrading of the fabric. The knowledge I have procured over a decade has been particularly valuable when designing the building to help retain its original features and work with them rather than against, as well as adapting existing openings to breathe new life into the building.

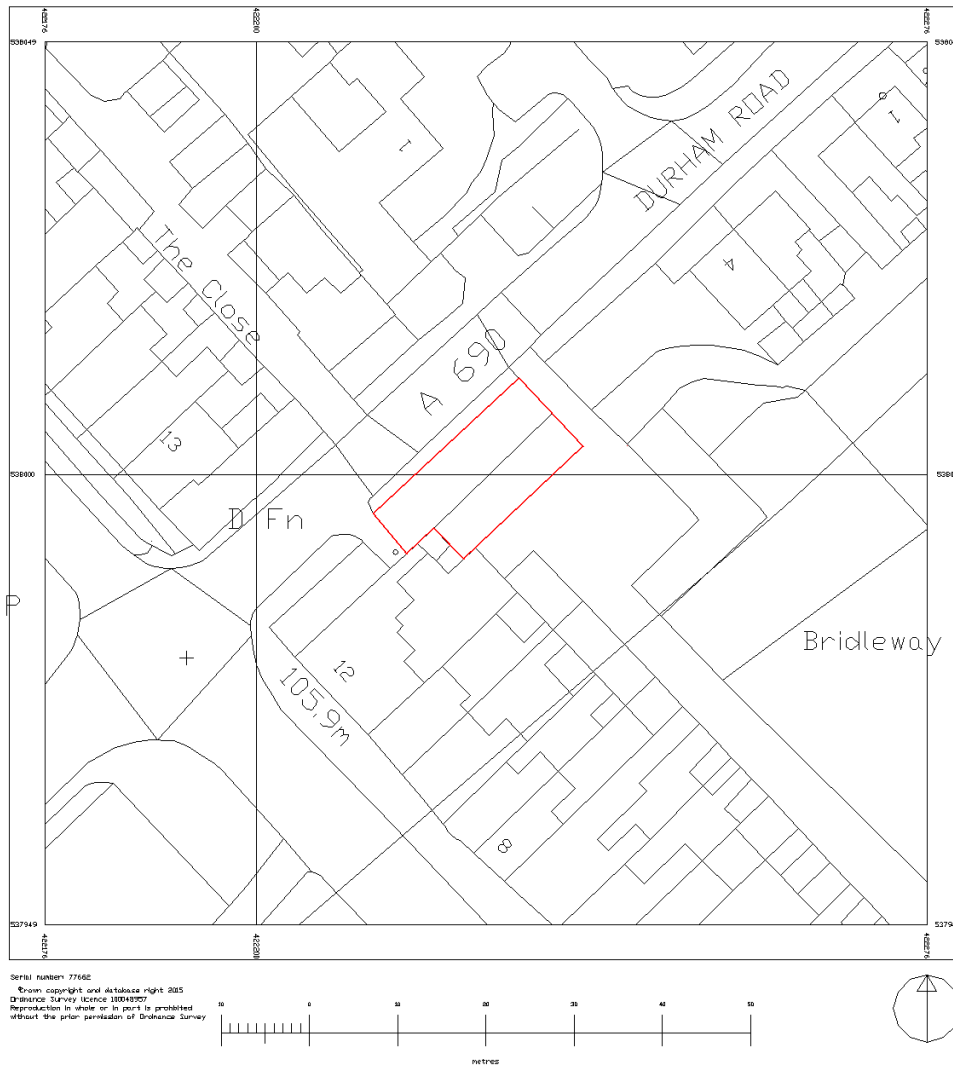
02. Site, Use and Background

The Granary is an old grain and cart store that was historically part of the Duke of Westminster's Estate. The building fronts Durham Road in the heart of the village and falls within the conservation area of the village. The building is Grade II Listed and on the listing is referred to as the coach house & grain store.

The site comprises of the original coach house and granary building, front garden, rear access path and use of courtyard to access parking in line with the other residents of this courtyard area. The aim of this planning application is to convert The Granary into a new residential property that can be very much part of the village once again. The site benefits from proximity to mains water, drainage, and electricity for connection.

The building is a course rubble stone construction and is in good condition. The ground floor composes of the original openings for the cart stores and a single door to access the first floor via a stone staircase. These openings have subsequently been closed off with doors and at present is garaging. The first floor is a suspended timber floor, open plan area with exposed timber trusses, windows and the original door opening for the grain deliveries to be hoisted from. Unfortunately, the original hoist does not remain, but the wall bracket is still in place and could be restored. The existing roof is natural slate. The location of the building is on Durham Road, however, is sited to face into the original courtyard at the rear. No windows exist at ground floor overlooking the garden and main road and the building is screened from the road and footpath by a hedge. These features are consistent with the original purpose of the building and photographs from 1906. At first floor level hit and miss windows overlook the front garden, main road, and rear courtyard. The courtyard provides access to the rear of the terrace of houses that line the road to the castle. Within the front garden, a bus stop has been added to the curtilage of the site, however, the previous owners have no paperwork associated with this or any information granting permission for it to be built within the garden area.

Site Location Map



The building has access to the rear courtyard directly from the Durham Road, along with other residential properties that are served from this access point. It also links to the rear access road of the terrace of houses leading up to the entrance of the castle. There is already a small enclave of houses within this area, including the original stable block that has already been converted into a residential property.

The building at present is masked from obvious view from the main road as shrubs are overgrown in the front garden and almost disguise the building from view. There are two existing trees in the front garden that have TPO's on them. All the scrub plants are due for removal and the hedge will be pruned to reinstate it as part of the village road frontage. The land holding is approximately 250sq.m with a dwarf stone wall edging the front garden boundary and a small cobble footpath to the rear of the property that demarks the curtilage line. The site is relatively level, the only change is across the front garden where it raises towards the building and sits approximately .7m above the interior floor level.

Existing Building



03. Heritage Statement

The development site is approximately 250sq.m and sited within the designated conservation area of Brancepeth village. The Granary was listed 7 December 1987 and given a Grade II Listed building status. The Listing is as follows:

Coach-house with loft, now garaging. Mid – late C19. Coursed rubble and graduated green slate roof. 2 storeys, 4 bays. 4 wide, boarded double doors under wood lintols and between square-plan stone piers. Boarded door under stone lintol at right. 4 partly glazed, hit and miss windows above. Loading door to right of centre in large gabled half dormer. Low pitched hipped roof. 4 partly glazed hit and miss windows on first floor rear facing main road. Included for group value. Listing NGR: NZ2223037999

The building was part of the Duke of Westminster estate which remained a working estate up to 1978. The estate comprised of several buildings scattered around the village including the stable block (now developed into a 3-bed bungalow opposite), a sawmill, forge, and various houses for the workers on the estate, to live in and maintain the whole estate. There was also a large forestry operation within the estate which was run by a Mr. R.Ellis, who purchased the building in 1978. The building has only been used for storage since the time of purchase from the estate in 1978. The building and garden having been passed to Mr Ellis' siblings have now been sold to Mr. Hobbs who is the applicant for the Planning Submission.

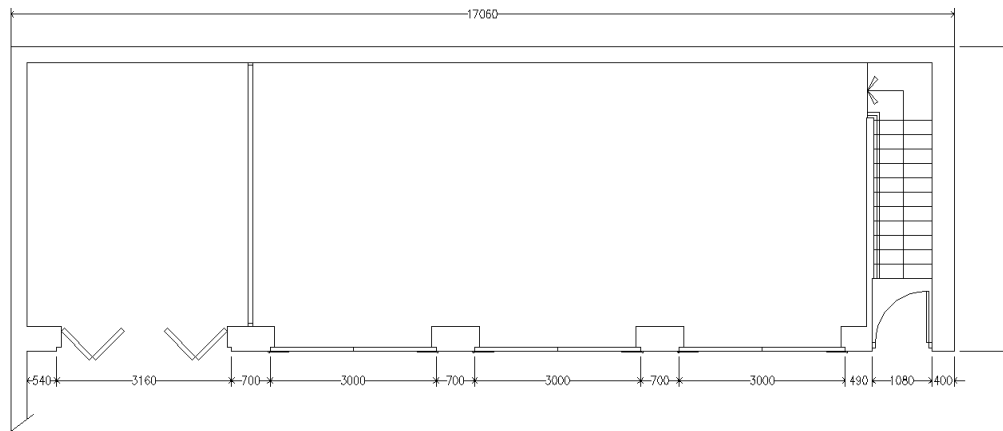
The Nature of the Asset

The granary has a beautiful historical character and appearance. Within the conservation area character appraisal produced by Durham County Council the building is considered as a heritage asset. The existing openings, form, scale, location, and size enable it to be converted to a residential property with ease as the existing opening can be utilised to serve the various rooms for the dwelling. Two trees in the garden have TPO's on them and will be dealt with accordingly.

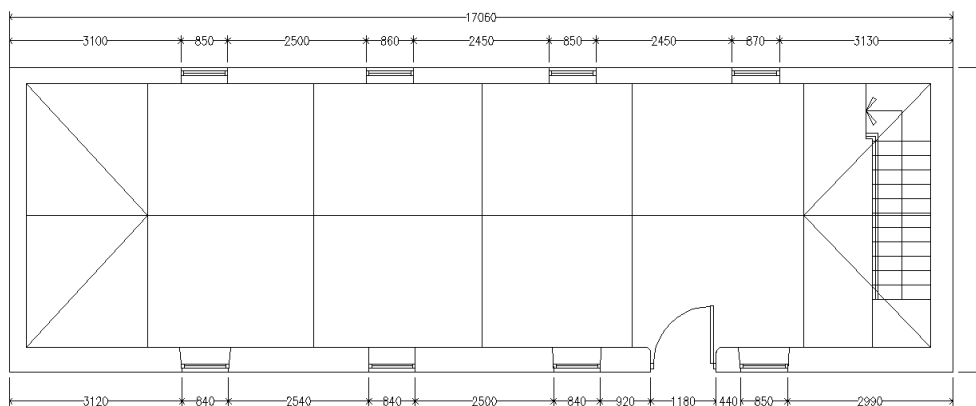
The Extent of the Asset

The site is tucked away from the streetscape of Durham Road as it currently faces inwards to the rear courtyard with windows at first floor to face the main road. By modifying the property slightly and introducing an external traditional stone stair to the roadside elevation this would enable the buildings occupants to connect safely to its garden without detracting from its heritage. By converting an existing opening into a half-glazed door, the removal of historic fabric is kept to an absolute minimum. Formalising the hedge will match the neighboring properties to create a front garden, this has been the means of disguising the building used historically as shown in the 1906 image. It was clearly considered a working building and not meant to be part of the village street scape. I intend to maintain this principle as well as benefit from reduced traffic noise creating a healthy area for young children. In relation to the wider surroundings the site can only be seen from the main road or the private rear courtyard. The Listing refers to the external materials of the building and included as part of a 'group value', with the materials being prevalent throughout the architecture of the village. No reference is made to any significant interior items.

Existing Floorplan



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN
NO SCALE



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
NO SCALE

The Significance of the Asset

The Asset is significant and would be classed as holding architectural, artistic, and historic importance, which this proposal has respected in the design and layout of the proposed dwelling. The proposal utilises the existing openings and garden area. The changes which this application seeks is to move the stone staircase from inside the building to create a traditional granary stairs externally on the roadside elevation; alteration to the existing roofline to allow for converting a window opening to a doorway; four conservation Velux windows to be added to the south roof; two conservation velux windows to be added on the west roof to provide natural light into the living area; one flue on the courtyard facing roof from a DEFRA approved biomass boiler to provide carbon free energy to the property in line with Part L building Regulations.

Existing Elevations



The Impact on the Asset

The proposals will have no significant impact on the architectural, artistic, or historic interest of the asset as the proposals have been prepared to sympathetically restore the building whilst utilising the asset rather than working against it. The impact is only visible on the roadside elevation with the addition of a traditional stone staircase and slightly altered roofline. This has been designed to add visual interest to the roadside elevation and an asset to the general streetscape. It is hoped that this proposal will be accepted and given the same consideration for conversion to a residential property as buildings within the courtyard have previously been given. The conversion of the existing building does not give rise to any loss or concealment of key features or historic fabric, do not block key views, and have minimum impact on relationships between buildings as it already currently exists in the proposed location.

Application for Demolition/ Extension

This application does not require any demolition works, it requires an extension to the roadside elevation in the form of an external staircase.

Sources of Information

Durham County Council website

English Heritage Website

04. Policies and the Proposal

This application was approved previously under Planning Reference DM/20/00753/FPA and listed building consent DM/20/00754/LB so this application seeks to gain a new approval for the modified scheme where the layout has been revised, external staircase added, velux conservation windows and a flue.

Principle of Development

This planning application seeks for the conversion of an existing Grade II listed granary into a private residential dwelling. The building has been designed and remodeled to utilise the existing openings in the building and garden area. The new residential property will be a 3-bedroom property with open plan living and kitchen areas, bathrooms, utility, and garage. Three of the existing large garage doors will be sympathetically replaced with glazed screens. The garage door will be replaced like for like of a stronger design. The first-floor loading door will be replaced with a half glass door with a style matching the existing windows to provide natural light into the living space, it will be openable with a sympathetically designed Juliet balcony fixed within the opening utilising the existing metalwork. The metal hoist feature will be reinstated to reflect the character of the original building.

It is proposed to move the existing interior stone staircase to the external road elevation to link the building to the main streetscape while still looking very in keeping with a traditional granary store. By converting an existing opening, it will give a direct connection to the garden from the property and provide reassurance of safety for children in the space and improve security.

Design & Landscape

This proposed site is in a prime location in the heart of the village of Brancepeth. At present the building faces away from the main road and into the courtyard at ground floor, disconnecting it from the existing street frontage. The building is set back from the public footpath by its garden. Its location, and the style of the building, enable it to be easily converted to have a dual frontage.

This will allow the building to be brought back into use as a functional family home, but also to give it a strategic position on the main streetscape.

The granary has been designed to suit the requirements of modern-day living, with flexible living spaces, multi-use room options and sanitary facilities on both floors. I wish to respect the architectural character of the courtyard elevation, by retaining its features and enhancing them using glass and timber to minimise impact on the building. The roof will be replaced with new welsh slate using reclaimed existing slate from the property where possible. A mix of recycled and wood fibre insulation will be being introduced internally to retain the need for the building to breath, whilst keeping all the existing timber trusses exposed and refurbished. Wood fibre insulation finished with lime plaster will clad the internal perimeter walls retaining the breathable nature required to maintain a stable moisture content and retain the properties of a historic building. The layout of the spaces will be kept semi flexible using timber partitions finished in a contemporary style. The traditional stone staircase moved to the external face of the building will provide a direct access

from the garden up and into the main living area of the property. This will make the roadside elevation look once again like a traditional granary with a wrought iron handrail.

The new residential property seeks to retain the existing openings, roof structures and façade features which enables the dwelling to be integrated within the shell of the building with ease. Existing internal heights at first floor work easily for residential living even with the retention of the timber trusses and insulating in between. The existing floor boarding will be sanded to clean wood and finished with a natural product to enhance the living area. At ground floor the internal level will be scrapped and dug out to introduce a new limecrete floor to maintain breathability of the fabric with level access. The garage will be scrapped and dug out to introduce a new concrete floor with a cork edge to isolate it from the existing fabric so as not to cause damp to penetrate the walls. The external cobble stones lining the courtyard elevation and defining the edge of the property's curtilage will be retained. Car parking provision will be integrated within the building footprint as a closed garage area utilising one of the existing bays. A natural stone retaining wall will be built 500mm away from the front of the property to allow soil to be removed that sits against the building together with a ground drain to minimise penetrating damp into the ground floor.

[Proposed New Residential Dwelling in Context with Local Surrounding](#)

To take local context and precedent into consideration, the property adjacent to the granary was the original stable block and has already been converted into a residential property. The granary lies within Durham County Council Conservation Area and is a Grade II Listed building. It has a low stone dwarf wall to the roadside boundary which will be retained, and it is proposed to maintain a native hedge along the boundary edge to reduce traffic noise as well provide privacy for the occupants. It is my intension to clear the overgrown shrubs to the front garden and retain the two mature trees that have TPO's, a separate application will be started for removing the branches 2m away from the roof as advised by the tree report. An existing gap in the dwarf wall to the west end will provide a gated entrance to the garden without the removal of historic fabric.

[Highway Safety](#)

The existing access to the courtyard and car parking issues were agreed in relation to the granted application through discussions with Planning and Highway Officers within the county council. This property has one garage defined with access from the courtyard. The owner of the estate road had been contacted in relation to the granted application and it was agreed that the proposed new dwelling can use the land to the rear of the property (in the courtyard) for access to the garage within the scheme, like other residents that utilise the courtyard area. The land by all intents and purposes is common land. No details bar the location are changing within this application.

[Environmental Health](#)

It is proposed to connect to the existing utility services which run alongside the building including water, electricity, and drainage.

[Bat Risk Assessment](#)

A new bat report has been provided. This building is deemed low risk because of the location of the large streetlight outside the property.

05. Appearance, Materials and Construction

This proposal respects the form and scale of the existing building and embodies the ethos of conservation which looks to either refurbish or re-use land by respecting the past whilst improving the site into the 'fit for purpose' requirements of the current day. This proposal sees the reinvention of the existing granary by re-using the building and converting it into a private family residence. The retention and refurbishment of the existing timber trusses will add feature and character to the dwelling. While this planning application transforms the granary and brings a more modern approach to the integration of new features, it has been designed to respect the existing building and character and add new features to the building by utilising old openings and materials. The conversion of an existing opening to provide a new doorway is in keeping with the listing and conservation principals. The new doors and windows will be made using timber to match the existing with the use of double glazing to improve noise and heat insulation. Gutters to be black cast iron to match the existing material. The facias will be timber to match the existing as previously approved.

06. Access Statement

In accordance with the requirement to formally state how access has been considered through the design process, this is to confirm that the proposed works will not change the existing access arrangements around the granary. The point of access to the site will be retained as existing. However, the primary access will be via the door to the first floor added on the roadside elevation.

The location of the property is sited on an existing rear lane which serves the terrace houses to the left and side of the property and the detached properties to the right. The original stables block which is opposite the site forms the edge of the courtyard and is already converted. A through route exists from the existing entrance to the courtyard down past the rear of the terrace houses and come out at the castle grounds. This access route will be retained and should have little or no impact from the proposal.

This scheme sees the utilisation of a beautiful building, to improve the quality of the courtyard and streetscape elevations whilst bringing a new chapter in the history of this building. This proposal sees the reinvention of a historical asset which will enable preservation and betterment of this property whilst respecting the conservation area policies.