



Windy Walls Farm, Dalton, Newcastle upon Tyne

Planning Application Design + Access statement

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1.0_ Introduction

This planning application design and access statement has been prepared by Elliott Architects Ltd on behalf of Mr David Wilkinson and Mrs Tanya Merridew and seeks approval from Northumberland county Council for the proposal to replace the existing house with a similarly sized property of higher quality on the site, which is located at Windy Walls, Dalton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE18 0DE.

Our clients have strong local ties and have lived and work in the local community for many years. They purchased the property over 6 years ago and live there with their three children who attend local schools. Both clients currently work from home.

The existing house is a rendered farm house of low-quality construction. Historic remedial maintenance has exacerbated the decline of the property and the dated layout and evolutionary cellular extensions do not meet the functional needs or aspirations of the clients and their extended family, who therefore wish to construct a revised scheme which meets these needs whilst considering an alternative, innovatively designed and more sustainable approach.

The proposal seeks to replace the poor quality existing building with one of a higher specification and design quality. The existing main house and proposed designs both have five bedrooms and occupy the same position on the site, the revised proposal looks to incorporate the volume of the adjacent store to provide an additional accessible bedroom for more permanent accommodation for an elderly relative and a studio that will enable our client to work from home.

The clients are keen to create a building with exceptionally high environmental standards, and the design has allowed for this to be developed in the technical stage of the project should it be granted planning permission, where the building will substantially outperform minimum building control standards. The environmental approach is described later in this document and includes superinsulation, passive cooling, the use of thermal mass and a living roof. It is therefore an exciting opportunity to raise the standards of housebuilding in the region in both design and sustainability terms.

This document seeks to communicate the detail, consideration and thought process behind the buildings development which has created the considered and appropriate scheme which forms the proposal.

2.0_ Location and Context

The site is located on the outskirts of Dalton, a small hamlet situated three miles from the town of Ponteland. The house and site are in an entirely rural setting surrounded by arable fields. The house and redundant farm stead are accessed by a private drive that rises steeply from Paddock Lane. The private drive is owned by my clients and serves only one other small domestic property immediately adjacent to the Lane.

The existing farmhouse is over 60m from the public highway and as previously mentioned occupies an elevated position above the road, offering only obscured views of the building from the Lane. The house is subservient in its context of its neighbouring stables and barns, set back from their principal gable by 29.6m.

The house is only visible in part from Paddock Lane to the South as shown in the images below and is not visible from any other elevation due to its rural position.

The existing house and supporting store / barn buildings have been in domestic use for over 20 years so there would be no change in its use.



Google image of existing house .



Existing site, adjacent barns and relationship with public highway

3.0_Design: Existing house appraisal

The existing building is a generous two storey, linear property which is flanked by a large glass 1.5 storey garden room to the West and a stone store to the East. Historically a two-storey rear extension has been added and a number of single storey lean too extensions.

The property was originally constructed in solid stone and brick and has an outward appearance of poor quality cement and pebble dashed render. The roof is of natural slate tiles and windows are a combination of white painted timber frames and dark stained frames, all of which are at the end of their life span.

Previous owners have from the mid to late twentieth century modified this building through extension over time which has led to the piecemeal evolution of the building. The building is therefore rambling, in its accommodation and internal use as well as its external appearance.

The existing house has been maintained to a degree but with inappropriate solutions, externally the building has received both cement-based and pebble dash render to most walls installed over a solid masonry substrate. At the time of installation, the stone lintels, cills and rainwater downpipes have been buried within the render finish which has led to significant damp and decay problems deep within the masonry walls. The damp issues have also led to the bowing of windows which present a fundamental problem were these elements simply to be replaced.

Although the property is generous its accommodation does not work for the needs of a modern family. The kitchen is very small for a property of this size and its linear nature cannot accommodate a dining table within this room, the independent dining room does not cater to the needs of this family and their 3 children. The clients both work from home and require independent study and studio spaces to assist with work / life balance.



Existing house at Windy Walls : viewed from the drive



stone mullions moving and unaligned as a result of damage to principle masonry wall



dated conservatory at end of life, leaking at abutment causing further damage to render



Poor quality render, pebble dash failing and cracking



existing downpipes buried within render, pipes rotting and failing causing damp internally



existing stonework splitting, poor quality pebble dashed render



failing concrete render causing damp problems internally

4.0_Design approach: background

Our client's initial intention was to renovate and extend their property, however on evaluation of the condition of the existing building and the aspiration of our clients to achieve a sustainable family home, it was considered that a replacement dwelling would give them the opportunity to retain the arrangement of the building and its setting whilst not compromising on retro fitting a poor-quality building envelope.

The purpose of creating a new house is to reimagine the elements of the house that work well and respond appropriately to the site and context, whilst taking the opportunity to remove and rectify the poor historic choices.

Our clients are keen to retain the position, scale, massing and aspect of the existing property, they enjoy the arrangement and formality of the principal spaces within the original farmhouse and wish to maintain their position and function within the proposed new dwelling

Retaining the original position of the building on the site was also a conscious decision to respect and retain the relationship of the new building with the retained stables and barns.

It should be noted that the design is for a family home and is not being developed for commercial sale or rental, and that the design has been carefully developed to meet the specific needs of the clients and their extended family creating a home for life. They are passionate about good design and the local area and this has resulted in a fantastic opportunity to develop a very special project.

The design has been developed by Elliott Architects Ltd; a locally based practice who have been recognised for high quality design and specialist expertise in buildings in sensitive contexts. We have had three local projects shortlisted for the most prestigious architectural design awards, the RIBA awards and have won four awards in the last six years, with all of these projects being in listed building settings or conservation areas. We are therefore highly qualified and committed to delivering a quality design in this special context

5.0_Historic: considerations:

Although the proposal has contemporary elements, we have been strongly influenced by the physical and historic context of the original property and believe that the project is sensitive and innovative in its relationship with the landscape setting and the history of the site.

It was a conscious decision to retain a memory of the existing house with particular regard to its position, scale and form. The proposed front elevation has taken direct influence from the existing house in its arrangement, proportion and fenestration of the formal existing elevation. It has a centrally located door and traditionally proportioned windows. Walls are proposed to be constructed in a random rubble stone with a heavy lime mortar, materials evident in the adjacent barns and historically in the main house.

The single storey structure to the West is a contemporary reimagining of the garden room and the studio to the East is also to be formed in random rubble stone with more generous openings that reflect the original barn aesthetic.

The scheme therefore takes a number of contextual influences and reinterprets them, this is of great importance when creating meaningful architecture, which has such a strong influence on our places and communities. More detail on this is given in subsequent sections describing the design approach.

Proposed house footprint shown in blue. Existing house footprint shown in red.



Existing Front Elevation _ Windy Walls.



Proposed Front Elevation _ Windy Walls.

6.0_ Design approach: Scale, Position, proportion + Materials

The proposal is a finely crafted bespoke solution which considers how best to achieve the functional requirements of the brief in the sensitive setting whilst also being innovative in its design and sustainable credentials.

The main house and elevation that fronts the public highway has a memory of the existing, original farmhouse. The footprint occupies a similar linear plan to the existing house which is appropriate within the site and its wider setting at the brow of the hill. The formal rooms to the front enjoy a Southerly aspect incorporating smaller, more traditional window formats that offer a formality whilst also assisting with solar control. The rear of the property is North facing, entirely private and enjoys views across the rolling fields. The secluded position affords the back of the house to be more contemporary in its open plan function which is reflected in the larger format glazing and general language of the elevations. The composition is less rigid in its rhythm and lighter weight in materiality offering a softer, more transparent transition with the rural setting beyond.

- The proposed house comprises of three principal volumes;
- the main body of the house - reflecting the original farmhouse with contemporary rear elevation
- the studio and guest suite – replacing the existing adjoining stone store
- the garden room – a contemporary replacement for the current conservatory

Materials are proposed to be rubble stone, a refined cast concrete plinth and coping, natural slate roof tiles, intensive green roof and naturally finished timber cladding, doors and windows.

The materials have been carefully considered to be sympathetic to the landscape setting with a predominant palette of stone, complemented with a green roof, light buff masonry and timber cladding which will be left to weather naturally, resulting in a silver grey. The small amount of concrete exposed to the roof parapets will be light and with a light buff aggregate to mirror the elements of the local sandstone. Stone cannot be used structurally to form the longer, thinner elements of the design and so the use of concrete provides a connection to the local materials whilst allowing them to be read as elegantly proportioned horizontal planes.

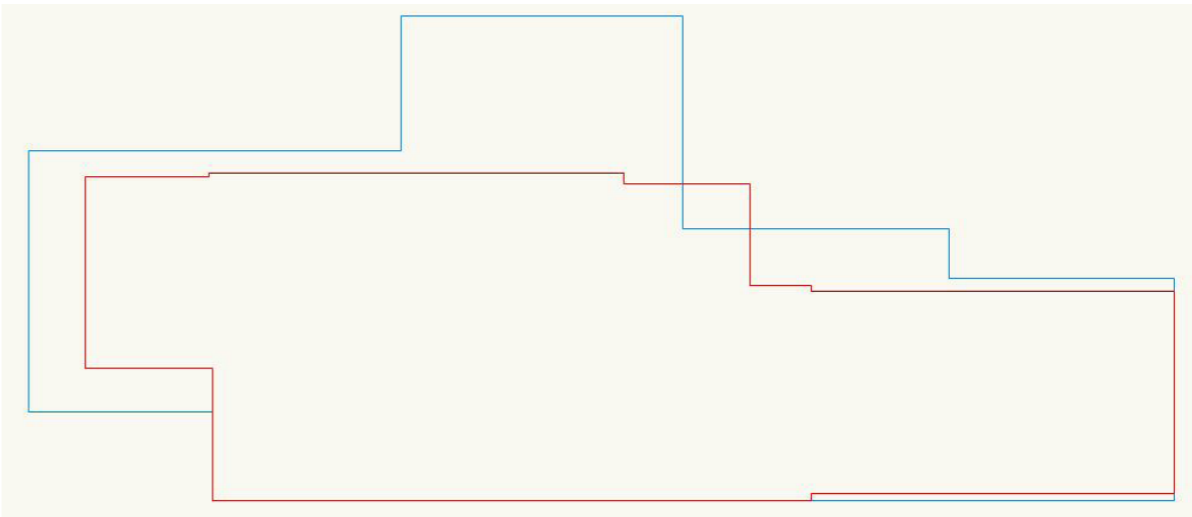


diagram comparing existing house footprint in red with proposed house footprint in blue

Materials Palette: Natural slate roof, Rubble stone walls with lime mortar, concrete banding, natural timber cladding + living roof



Precedent image by Ruinelli Associates



Precedent image by Ruinelli Associates



Replacement garden room to be lightweight, timber framed



Natural timber cladding

7.0_Wildflower Roof:

There are many benefits to using a green roof; this design approach is highly suitable for this site and building programme, and it also allows the opportunity for other practical benefits relating to sustainability which are outlined below.

The green roof will be treated as meadow as an extension of the landscape; planted with wildflowers, the area will require minimal attention or maintenance. It is important to note that the roof garden will not be occupied and periodic maintenance would be no more frequent than that of a conventional house with regard to guttering/ flashings, etc.

The practical and wider benefits of a green roof are also significant, and the roof offers an improvement in drainage terms through the additional capacity to attenuate rainwater; the plants and soil absorb water during rainy periods and evaporate back into the atmosphere when it is dry, offering a significant improvement in drainage terms over the existing site. Lying in the countryside, the design takes into account the ecology of the site by providing areas of green roof and natural stone. The roof is also an opportunity to increase the biodiversity of the site as well as integrating it harmoniously with the landscape.

The decline of insect populations globally and locally is an increasing problem and one which needs to be taken seriously. The use of planting on the roof will improve the diversity of local flora and fauna, reinforcing the plant and insect populations which are the essential foundations of the bio-cycle.



Intensive wild flower meadow grass roof

8.0_Highways + Accessibility

The site is accessed via a private drive directly from Paddock Lane. The proposal utilises the existing entrance arrangement to the site, as well as a very similar (but improved) area for parking and turning within the site. Highways and access considerations are therefore established safe in terms of appropriate access, levels, turning area and visibility. Enough space for ample off-street parking has been incorporated into the design for the clients and any visitors.

Accessibility is an extremely important concern and the design considers the statutory requirements and design guidance set out in the Equality Act 2010 and building regulations to ensure compliance and to consider future adaptability if and when required.

As mentioned previously the house is to be a home for life and has been designed to support three generations of the family in order that they can live together with support whilst retaining independence and privacy.

Sequence of images below of the site seen from the public highway.
The site is very well screened by the rising topography and mature planting



image of existing house + barns from public highway at drive entrance



image of existing house from public highway approaching from the East



image of existing house + barns from public highway approaching from the West

9.0_Sustainability: Longevity + Homes for Life

The investment in quality design and materials specification of this kind indicates the significant commitment of the clients to the project and the site.

As a practice we are very experienced in designing sensitive solutions to make existing buildings function in conjunction with modern life, practically, physically and sustainably. This property however does not have significant heritage value, it was not constructed from high quality materials and has been inappropriately maintained by previous owners. It was originally a utilitarian farm house built for practical purposes in an economic manner. The current building is at the end of its lifespan and it is therefore deemed inappropriate to respond to the compromised existing building fabric.

The holistic design of the proposed scheme is appropriate for the client's and their family's needs today and into the future, their intention is for this to be their family home for life and the design reflects their need for versatility and adaptability into later life for both them and their extended family.

This increased lifespan of the building means that the embodied energy of the building is greatly reduced, offering significant improvements to the sustainability of the building. Elliott Architects are currently working with Dr Zaid Alwan of Northumbria University to study and quantify the embodied energy of buildings in relation to design and lifespan, in an ongoing collaboration between practice and academia.

The design has been optimised to maximise the environmental performance of the building. The roof treatments and construction offer benefits to thermal performance by using techniques and materials which maximise insulation and air tightness, and will be designed to work in harmony with the additional thermal mass of the building to naturally regulate temperature fluctuations.

The energy performance of the building is further improved through the use of underfloor heating; in taking this approach temperatures are kept more consistent but also work with the day/ night cycle where heat builds up during the day and dissipates at night. This use of thermal mass fundamentally incorporates sustainable design into the DNA of the scheme.

7.0_Conclusion:

The proposal has evolved through an intensive, detailed and committed design process, and is a high quality design which is sensitive to the context of the setting whilst clearly building an innovative approach to its surroundings.

This is an approach which is endorsed by local and national planning policies which support innovative design which draws on influences from the historic context whilst remaining sensitive to it in order to enhance and continue the character of the area.

The scale, position, materiality and form are appropriate within the context and care has been taken to design the building to minimise impact on the site visually and physically, with an improved design, higher quality materials and greener footprint than the existing building.

The scheme has been designed to a high standard by award winning architects with local knowledge and respect for the countryside setting and the wider landscape. It is a more appropriate, innovative and sustainable proposal than the existing building and has been designed to meet the family's needs.

The commitment and vision of the clients to make a positive contribution to the area is clear, and this is a rare opportunity to create an exemplar of positive sustainable design in a rural setting. It is therefore hoped the planning officers will be in a position to recommend approval for this scheme.



Image of proposed house viewed from the South



Image of proposed house on approach from the drive



Image of proposed house viewed from the South West

14.0 Precedents_elliottarchitectsLtd

elliottarchitectsLtd are a multi award winning RIBA chartered architectural practice based in Northumberland, and have a reputation for high quality, design focussed architecture. We have a wide range of experience in the construction industry with a proven record in delivering sustainable architecture of the highest quality.

elliottarchitectsLtd have developed particular expertise and a reputation for excellent design in sensitive historic and rural contexts, and are well placed to deliver the high standards required of this project.

We have worked on a number of prestigious projects including at Gibside in Gateshead for the National Trust (Grade II*, shortlisted for an RIBA Award), the double RIBA award winning Visitor Centre at Crook Hall in Durham (Grade I, UNESCO setting, Durham Sustainability Award), and at Earl Grey House on Grey Street in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Grade II, Grade I setting, Shortlisted for an RIBA Award, Highly commended in RICS Awards, Shortlisted for AJ Retrofit Award), as well as in National Parks and conservation areas across the country.

Our most recent RIBA award winning project is in the Hexham conservation area on St. Andrew's Road, where we received a regional award and the prestigious RIBA Small Project of the Year Award 2018.



The Dell, Northumberland

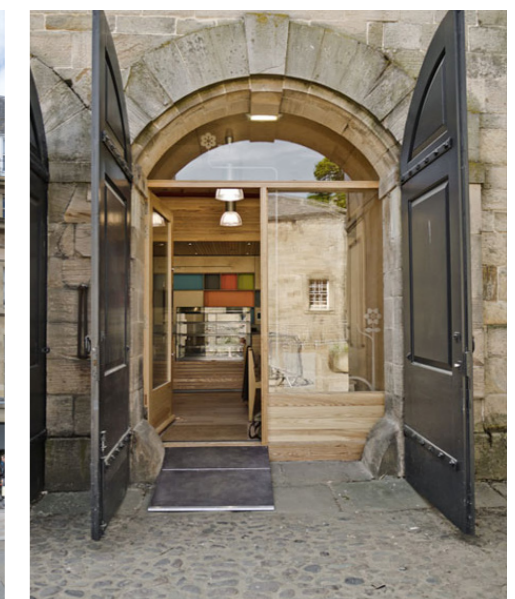


Crook Hall Visitor Centre, Durham (Grade I listed setting)

RIBA 
Shortlisted in the
RIBA Awards 2017

RIBA 
RIBA North East
Winner
2016

RIBA 
RIBA North East
Small Project Award
2016



From left to right:
St. Andrews Rd, Hexham (Conservation Area), North Bank, Haydon Bridge (Conservation Area), Milkhope Coffee Shop, Blagdon Estate (Grade II), Earl Grey House, Grey St, Newcastle (Grade II), Carriagehouse Cafe, Gibside (Grade II*)

Shortlisted in the
RIBA Awards 2016 RIBA 