

On Behalf Of:  
C/o MS Francesco Bonu  
74 Josephine Avenue  
Brixton  
London  
SW2 2LA

Date: 31st October 2019  
Our Ref: 19/02650/PREAPP  
Please ask for: Chloe Jacobs  
Telephone: 01993 861697  
Email: [chloe.jacobs@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:chloe.jacobs@westoxon.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Bonu

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

APPLICATION: 19/02650/PREAPP

PROPOSAL: Alterations to include demolition, conversion and replacement of various outbuildings

AT: Dower House Dunthorp Road Heythrop

I write in regard to your enquiry received by the Council on the 23.09.2019 seeking the pre-application views of the Local Planning Authority. The relevant information is set out below. Please be aware of the disclaimer at the end of this letter. If you have any questions relating to the advice given, please contact the Case Officer.

## **Policies**

EHI Cotswolds AONB

EH13 Historic landscape character

EH14 Registered historic parks and gardens

EH3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

H6NEW Existing housing

OS2NEW Locating development in the right places

OS4NEW High quality design

NPPF 2019

DESGUI West Oxfordshire Design Guide

## **Site Characteristics and Constraints**

The application site relates to The Dower House, a substantial detached stone house built of stone in the Cotswold vernacular with tiled roof slopes and mullioned and transformed window at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The house is located on the edge of the village of Heythrop as part of the Heythrop Park Estate. The Dower House is not listed but is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. The site does not lie in the Conservation Area but is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Dower House originally served as the rectory to the newly built St Nicholas Church (Grade 2 listed) which adjoins the garden. The Grade 2\* listed medieval church (the Old Church of St Nicholas) is located in a copse immediately south of the Dower House.

The enquiry relates to a number of alterations and extensions to both the Dower House and its surrounding outbuildings. I shall discuss each element in turn:

***1 The demolition of a small stone building housing the oil tank, located in the North West corner of the courtyard adjacent to the back door of the house and replacement with a new extension to the house that will fill in the north part of the courtyard and provide two new back doors.***

In principle, the demolition of the existing stone building and the replacement and extension is considered acceptable. However, we would recommend that the roof pitch of the building to the North West Corner of the courtyard emulates the steeper pitches of the main building. We also have some concerns in regards to the junction between the low lead pitch roof and the pitched tile roof element. This element would require careful consideration and as such, we would suggest that you do not modify the rear entrance wall closest to the dwelling house and instead, step it in approximately 300m-500m to give a better relationship with the North Western element.

***2 The conversion of the existing outbuildings to new uses that are ancillary to the main house. The garage adjacent to the Cow Barn will be demolished and a new L-shaped extension built on the site of the garage and chicken run to house a pottery studio for the clients' use.***

The conversion of the existing outbuildings to new uses that are ancillary to the main dwellinghouse is considered to be acceptable in principle. If a formal application is submitted, officers may find it necessary to apply a condition to the consent tying these outbuildings to the Dower House so that they remain ancillary. The extension to the proposed studio is also considered to be acceptable in principle. However we would suggest reducing the number of rooflights to create a nice, simple and uncluttered roof space.

***3 The demolition of the existing stables adjacent to the walled garden and replacement with two garages.***

The existing stable buildings are not listed and do not appear to be of any particular architectural merit. On this basis, the demolition of the stables and the erection of a replacement garage building is considered to be acceptable in principle. Once again, we would suggest reducing or omitting the rooflights within the garage element.

***4 The demolition of a small circular stone store adjacent to the swimming pool and replacement with a flat roofed, timber pool house. The pool house will have black-stained timber cladding and a green roof with sedum plants.***

The proposed pool house is a sizeable building which ultimately spreads the development a considerable distance away from the main dwellinghouse. This element would need to be significantly reduced by at least a third of its proposed size. We would therefore suggest that the floor plan is minimal and that the structure is as low as possible to protect views both into and out of the setting of the nearby Grade II Listed building. A low pitched, standing seam zinc roof might allow for the building to sit lower within the landscape.

Other matters for consideration:

## Ecology:

I can confirm that the above planning application site is located within the red impact zone associated with the new district licensing scheme. This means that there is a high probability of great crested newts being present and the general advice would be for the applicant to consider entering the scheme, which has a flat rate for householder applications. This would mean that the applicant would be covered under the council's licence and if newts were found during demolition or construction, they could be safely moved out of harm's way in accordance with the best practice guidelines. The scheme requires the applicant or their agent to make contact with NatureSpace (i.e. submit an enquiry form) to check their eligibility to enter and then upon receipt of the correct payment, NatureSpace will run a metric to see whether any off-site compensation is required (based on habitat suitability data, development proposal, habitats/features affected, impacts and mitigation). Once completed, NatureSpace will issue a certificate that needs to be submitted with the application. The LPA can then issue the planning consent and authorise the applicant to work under their licence at the same time.

With the demolition of the existing stables, a bat survey may be required to inform the application. The first step in obtaining a bat survey is a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the building, which can be carried out at any time of year.

Furthermore, it appears that the site has evidence to suggest that there are nesting birds present. A survey would be required to look for evidence of nesting birds and, where evidence is found, adequate mitigation, compensation and enhancements should be provided. This should particularly focus on Barn owl, Swallow, House martin, House sparrow, Starling and Swift, as well as other species that are often found in buildings.

Given this information, the applicant should consider providing enhancements for bats and/or nesting birds as part of the proposal, for example, integral bat bricks (e.g. <http://www.ibstock.com/sustainability-ecozone.asp>), bat tubes (e.g. [http://www.nhbs.com/2fr\\_schwegler\\_bat\\_tube\\_tefno\\_162812.html](http://www.nhbs.com/2fr_schwegler_bat_tube_tefno_162812.html)) or *Habibat* (<http://www.habibat.co.uk/>), house sparrow terraces, starling boxes or swift bricks (visit [http://www.swift-conservation.org/swift\\_bricks.htm](http://www.swift-conservation.org/swift_bricks.htm) and <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/read-and-learn/helping-birds/nestboxes/smallbirds/siting.aspx> for more information and ideas) in accordance with paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework. These integral type boxes do not interfere with the habitable space of the house and require no maintenance. Woodcrete products are longer-lived than traditional timber-made boxes, and there are many different products available from a range of suppliers. Enhancements can also be provided for other species such as amphibians and reptiles, hedgehogs and invertebrates. Further information can be found at:

- [http://www.ciria.com/buildinggreener/complementary\\_features.htm](http://www.ciria.com/buildinggreener/complementary_features.htm)
- <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/biodiversity-ecosystems-and-green-infrastructure/>

## Application Submission

The following documents should be submitted with your application:

Design and Access Statement  
Ecological Assessment  
Heritage Statement  
Environmental Impact Assessment

West Oxfordshire District Council would encourage all applicants to consult with neighbouring properties prior to the submission of any application.

I trust this is of some assistance. If I can be of further help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Chloe Jacobs  
Planner

## Useful links

West Oxfordshire District local plan: <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning/localplan2011.cfm>

Environment Agency: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Thames Water: [developer.services@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:developer.services@thameswater.co.uk)

Natural England: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

NPPF: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/60772/116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60772/116950.pdf)

## Disclaimer

- Please note that this is an officer's opinion and is in no way binding Members of the Area Planning Sub Committee.
- The above advice is given for purposes relating to the Town and Country Planning Acts and for no other Council function.

West Oxfordshire District Council Planning Department promotes email correspondence as it is the quickest, easiest and most environmentally friendly way of contacting us.

Contact us at [planning@westoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning@westoxon.gov.uk)