



**PROPOSED ALTERATIONS to HIGH COTTAGES 12 St ANDREWS LANE CONGHAM
NORFOLK PE32 1DS**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION

Introduction

This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants by F N Davey B.Sc, FRICS, a designer and Chartered Building Surveyor, and a member of the Planning and Development faculty of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. As a designer I have worked on countless schemes in Norfolk and beyond, specialising in projects which require adaptations to existing buildings and including work to Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas. My involvement was particularly sought in view of my experience as a chartered building surveyor and the need to consider the extent of remedial work and refurbishment necessary within the existing building and in respect of a substandard previous extension, and to ensure that the proposals are practical from a constructional standpoint.,

Background

12 St Andrews Lane Congham is a period semi detached cottage built in the local vernacular style and which has been occupied under an old tenancy arrangement for a period in excess of 70 years. It has had some basic modernization over that period but in more recent years the accommodation and its layout have increasingly fallen short of a standard which would nowadays be considered to be satisfactory, to the extent that the property is barely habitable and does not meet the standard required for the house to be rented out. Amongst the shortfalls which now need to be addressed are:

- The absence of a safe route of access from the upper floors (winder stairs and route passing through fire risk room)
- Kitchen Scullery in lean-to of single leaf masonry
- Widows decayed beyond repair
- Roof requiring recladding, with dilapidated dormer
- Poor kitchen and sanitary facilities
- Dampness and disrepair
- Poor and inadequate thermal insulation
- Lack of mains sewage connection

Whilst not all of these shortfalls would warrant consideration for planning process, many of the works needed to bring the premises into a habitable condition do change the external appearance and to a lesser degree the character of the premises. In carrying out the required work it is possible to make some enhancement of the external appearance.

Proposals

The principal proposal is to remove a sub standard, rendered single storey addition to the side, and to replace it with a taller but still single storey addition which will allow a modified staircase to be included, to modern standards. The replacement stairs, together with a new level access at the entrance door, will significantly increase the standard of physical access for the occupier. The replacement will also extension allow replanning of the internal accommodation which will allow proper sanitary facilities and a dedicated kitchen area. This extension would be permitted development under the GDO's except that the mono-pitched roof that is needed for the design will extend to a little over 4m in height to its 'ridge'.

In order that the attic level accommodation is useable space, in conjunction with the roof cladding replacement and insulation two new dormer windows are proposed for the rear elevation roof, together with a slight enlargement of the front elevation dormer which needs to be rebuilt due to decay. Some other fenestrational changes are proposed in order to provide sufficient light and ventilation within the accommodation, with replacement windows to match the new 'cottage' style double glazed, high thermal efficiency windows for the new work.

The extent of the work is such that the premises will not be capable of habitation during the work process, with the premises also having to be cleared of belongings to enable the extent of work necessary to be reviews and the applicants have arranged for a static home on site for the tenant, which will be removed once the work has been completed, together with widening of the access onto the site in order that vans and builders vehicles can drive onto site and park without blocking the road. This access improvement will subsequently also allow domestic vehicles to turn around on site rather than reverse either in or out. This work will not include any hard surfaces and natural drainage of surface water will be maintained.

It is envisaged that the project will take between 6months and 1 year to complete once commenced, depending on external factors (labour and materials availability, Covid protocols, weather etc) and the extent of 'discoveries' made as the work progresses. The static caravan/mobile home will have connections to water, electricity and drainage (existing septic tank) during the term of its occupation

The plans submitted with the application shoe the proposals in detail and comprise:

Drawing 1525 .01	Location and Site Plans	1:1250, and 1:200	at A3 size
Drawing 1525-02	Ground f Floor plan as existing	1:50	at A3 size
Drawing 1525.03	Elevations as existing	1:100	at A3 size
Drawing 1525-04	Floor plans as existing -first and attic	1:50	at A3 size
Drawing 1525-05	Elevations, proposed -front	1:50	at A3 size
Drawing 1525-06	Elevations, proposed -rear	1:50	at A3 size
Drawing 1525-07	Elevations, proposed -front	1:50	at A3 size
Drawing 1525-08	Elevations, proposed -front	1:50	at A3 size
Drawing 1525-09	Elevations, proposed -front	1:50	at A3 size

Scale and Context

12 St Andrews Lane is a two storey plus attic style cottage of unknown age but which could date from the late 18th century, which stands as a semi-detached/end of row house which was built parallel to, and quite close to the road. The property occupies a very large site which was effectively a smallholding and the proposals will have little or no impact on the amenity space remaining for the property.

The house is of a vernacular style which includes a mixture of brickwork, clunch and carr-stone for the elevations together with a clay pantiled roof, a number of dormer windows are included in the group but with only one dormer window serving number 12. This two storey building is supplanted by a single storey lean to type side extension with rendered elevations seen from the road and fletton bricks elsewhere, beneath a monopitched clay pantiled roof. This extension is utilitarian in nature, and is visually unappealing.

The locality is primarily open countryside (farmland) in nature with scattered housing, and number 12 stands on a smallholding located between St Andrews Lane (also known as Roydon Road) on the north side and Grassy Lane to the south. The adjoining house and bungalow are believed to be used as a bed and breakfast business.

St Andrews Lane in this stretch is a narrow country lane which is single lane in width without public footway, and stands just outside the central village area. It is recognised that the scheme will involve construction adjacent to the highway, there is currently insufficient parking for contractor's vehicles but off road parking is readily achievable from the site and modifications for the access to achieve this will also allow permanent on-site parking for residents, and the potential for a future garage (not included within this application).

The village of Congham is a scattered development with a rural nature, with a strong local character reflected in the style of the design and scale of residential properties. It is understood that a Neighbourhood Plan is in the process of being prepared but that it is not yet at issue stage.

Design Considerations

Requirements of the design

The work is necessary for the upgrading of the property to an acceptable living standard and the revisions to the internal layout accommodates recommendations made by the Housing Standards department of the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, who have been consulted on the proposals.

The unsafe nature of the access to the upper floors, poor standards of thermal insulation and the need for general repairs are addressed by the scheme, much of which does not constitute formal development but most of the work will fall under the control of the Building Regulations.

The proposals involve the removal of a sub-standard side extension which faces onto the road and for its replacement with a new single storey extension of slightly larger size and which better reflects the form of the original building.

The attic floor has been used since the time of the original construction, or very close to that time. The rooms are very poorly lit and ventilated, with a small dormer and one small gable window. Two additional gable windows are proposed which results in the same number of dormers as are employed in the smaller adjacent roof are of no. 13.

Design, and visual impact on local area

The original property is of a vernacular design and scale employing traditional materials including 'Norfolk' red bricks, and areas of clunch (chalk) and carrstone walling. The existing extension is of a basic design and materials and features rendered walls and also hard fletton 'commons' bricks. The extension has a poor internal headroom and shows evidence of structural movement, it does not provide satisfactory standard of accommodation and is not worthy of retention.

The proposal provides a new extension using red bricks and with some vernacular architectural features such as the arched window head and projecting dentil brick courses to the eaves and verge. It will be stepped back from the main elevation and remains subservient to the original building but the monopitch roof reflects the local form and the extension complements the existing structure whilst not attempting to pass itself off as an original, period structure.

The increase in size of the replacement extension is marginal in terms of its footprint but it does rise somewhat higher at the roof apex, to the extent that the height marginally exceeds that which would be allowed as permitted development. Rather than compromise the design by attempting to fall within the permitted development limits, the design reflects an optimal arrangement and a planning application is consequently necessary.

The front (north) elevation is visible from the road, as is the east (side) elevation to a limited extent. In addition to the better proportioned replacement extension the dormer window requires to be rebuilt for purposes of repair and thermal efficiency, and will be slightly enlarged. Dormers of this type are relatively common in properties of this nature and sit well in the context of the steeply pitched roof slopes. It is, however, readily possible for a dormer to have excessive bulk and poor proportions due to the need to achieve modern levels of thermal efficiency, as is arguably the case with the dormer windows for 13 St Andrews Lane, which is the adjoining property.

The roof-line and form can make a strong visual impact and careful consideration is necessary in order that the size and form of any dormer is proportional, which has been reviewed at this, planning, stage. As far as possible the existing clay pantiles will be re-used, the shortfall in numbers which will inevitably occur will place any new tiles on the rear roof pitch.

Amenity and effect on surrounding development

The only other property in the proximity of number 12 St Andrews Lane is the adjoining house at number 13, which has itself undergone refurbishment and alterations relatively recently, including what appear to be new or modified roof dormer windows and replacement pvc framed double glazed frames.

The extension replacement has no impact at all on number 13, it cannot be seen from that house and has no overshadowing or overlooking effect.

One of the rear dormer windows newly proposed is located close to the boundary with number 13, and at attic level does achieve views towards the rear. This impact this will have is reduced by the fact that the rear boundary veers away from number 12 and across the rear of number 13, and tall shrubs also provide a degree of screening. There are also single storey extensions immediately to the rear of number 13, which will mitigate the extent and effect of any overlooking. Placing this in context, the minor loss of amenity which the proposals be caused to number 13 is considerably less than is suffered by number 12 as a result of the dormers on the rear roof of number 13.

The provision of a turning area on site and a visitor parking facility, which results from the essential need to provide sufficient access for plant, equipment and builders etc in order for the project to be carried out, will place visiting vehicles off the road with safer egress, and remove from immediate view both visitors and occupier's vehicles.

It is the opinion of the applicant and of the designer that the general improvement in the appearance and condition of number 12 as a result of the proposed work can only enhance the setting and tone of the locality.

Accessibility

The layout and nature of the accommodation is such that some aspects are deemed dangerous, and a prohibition notice has been issued by the Housing Standards office of the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council to the effect that the attic floor cannot be used for habitable use until improvements have been made. The purpose of the scheme is to address these issues and to improve accessibility, to include a fully protected access and egress route serving the upper floors, a single, straight-flight principal staircase. The 'inner room' downstairs becomes the higher risk (kitchen) use, and a second external door will be re-established at a formerly closed up doorway.

The accommodation will include a lobby/hall entrance, which will have a level access from the exterior at the main entrance door.

The present occupant is elderly and a ground floor sanitary facilities will be retained, but in a much more spacious form with a wider access door. The property would be capable of providing occupation on one (ground floor) level for a sole occupant if

any such needs arose, with sufficient space for a carer also to reside in the house. The proposal does provide some opportunity for additional sanitary accommodation on the upper floors, if this is required at any future time.

Planning policy considerations

Congham does not stand within a Conservation Area or an area of special interest and the usual national planning policy framework, planning practice guidance and LDF parameters are presumed to apply in this instance.

LDF core strategy policies do not raise any material considerations which would outweigh the benefits of the proposals requiring a planning consideration. The Development Management Policies Plan gives a presumption in favour of sustainable development in keeping with national guidance, and the environment, design and accessibility issues raised by the proposals have been discussed in this document and show the commitment to comply with policy DM15.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme replaces a poor and out-of-character extension which has a side elevation facing directly onto the highway. The extension has an unsympathetic elevation of rendered masonry, which is of poor thermal insulation standards and which is showing significant age related deterioration. The mass and scale of this existing extension is both out of proportion and partly of unusable headroom. The replacement as proposed will markedly increase the habitable use of the property generally and whilst this is at the loss of some area of exposed local stone, the benefits are considered to outweigh any minor drawbacks.

The proposal represents a significant investment into the property to extend its useful life and modernize the accommodation to better meet present lifestyles and the commitment to increased standards of thermal insulation and carbon reduction, without being unduly prejudicial to the character of the existing structure.

It is respectfully submitted that the proposals will not detract from the form and character of the locality but should provide a positive enhancement of the street scene, and that the scheme accords with the adopted national and local planning policy and that planning permission ought accordingly be granted.

Prepared and signed by



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