

# **DESIGN & ACCESS and HERITAGE STATEMENT**

## **One and a Half-storey Extension and internal remodelling to Bracken Cottage, Shincliffe.**

**Applicant:** Mr & Mrs Williams, Bracken Cottage, Bank Foot, Shincliffe, DH1 2PD.

**Agent:** Emerald Architects Ltd, Flass Gardens, Esh Winning, DH7 9QD.

**Proposal:** **Internal Modifications to existing residential property, construction of small one and a half storey extension to the front elevation and two dormer windows to the rear elevation** of the existing cottage to provide improved entrance staircase, circulation and access to the first floor bedrooms at Bracken Cottage, Bank Foot, Shincliffe, Co. Durham, DH1 2PD.

### **Scheme Information:**

**Proposed Use:** Residential.

**Size of Site (approx.):** 0.2 hectares

**Type:** Domestic extension.

**Site Designation:** Site is part of the Shincliffe Conservation Area. The existing buildings are not Listed.

### **Statement**

This Statement is submitted in support of the planning application. The site lies within the green belt which separates Shincliffe Village from High Shincliffe and is within the Shincliffe Conservation Area.

The site of Bracken Cottage lies on the east side of the A177 and is flanked by mature trees and woodland immediately to the east and south and also over on the west side of the A177.

The proposed development is the remodeling and extension to Bracken Cottage to improve circulation to the property and remove the need to go through bedrooms to access others. The redesign of the entrance area to create a new staircase, entrance lobby and first floor link enables all rooms to be accessed from the new corridor whilst minimizing visibility as it is contained within the courtyard. The only items visible from the main road will be the two new dormer windows which have been kept to an appropriate scale to retain the character of the building and minimize impact from the main road.

Access to the application site remains unchanged and is provided from the private access road north of the site, which leads to/from A177 to the west and also serves the immediately adjacent Beaumont Court residential development. The proposals do not affect the existing surrounding trees or woodland. The development does not encroach upon the existing garden area associated with Bracken Cottage but is contained within the existing front entrance porch area. The new one and a half storey extension and link corridor respect the current eave and ridge heights and have been integrated into the roof to ensure it remains hidden within the existing site compound and the proposed new dormer windows are to improve usable headroom space within the existing bedrooms.

### **Planning background:**

The site has been the subject of a number of previous planning applications by the previous owner.

This application seeks to address the internal circulation concerns of the existing dwelling to improve internal circulation and habitable space. The extension and link have been kept to the minimal area required to ensure the property retains its cottage appearance where practically possible, whilst remaining sensitive to the location.

### **Design assessment:**

The proposed front extension and first floor link corridor are intended to provide improved circulation space to the existing first floor bedroom which currently have very low corridor access due to the slope of the roof and the master bedroom is accessed through one of the other first floor bedrooms which is not practical or appropriate to today's living standards.

The proposal seeks to remove the existing single storey porch and enlarge it approximately 1m deeper and create a gable frontage to enable the new staircase and corridor link to be created whilst respecting existing eave and ridge levels. Two new dormer windows are proposed to the rear elevation that faces A177, however this is already masked by existing trees so their impact will be minimal.

There are no change to existing access arrangements.

The extension has been designed to suit the scale and design details of the existing building. There will be minimal change of the appearance with the introduction of two dormer windows when viewed from the A177. No other changes to the rear / visible elevation are proposed. The main changes will be viewed from inside the courtyard area which belongs to the applicants.

The fully glazed one and a half-storey extension combines the new entrance stairs, WC and access into the existing kitchen. This simple remodel enables the current staircase to be removed from the sitting room and the existing utility can be enlarged so that it is more usable and practical. At first floor the two original bedrooms are reconfigured to make them more accessible and usable, whilst the new link enables the master bedroom to be accessed from the new link rather than from a small impractical staircase in the ground floor lounge or via bedroom 2. The new dormer windows help improve usable bedroom space.

The extension will not significantly change the form or appearance of Bracken Cottage and there is minimal visual change from the adjacent Beaumont Court.

**Context:**

The new front extension and link are within the existing courtyard, not viewed from A177 so will not adversely affect the overall character of the area. There will be no significant impact on the surrounding built environment as a result of this extension and internal remodeling.

When approaching the site uphill from the north on the A177 the new extension is invisible, hidden as it is from view by the existing Beaumont Court residential buildings and Bracken Cottage – see photo 1 below.



Photo 1 – view looking south from A177.

When approaching down the hill from the south, the new extension is again hidden from view due to the topography of the site and the location of the master bedroom which masks the new front entrance porch and link.



Photo no. 2 – View looking north from A177.

Viewed from the southern end of the garden this view would not change. – see photographs 3 and 4 below.



Photo no. 3 – view looking north from garden gate.



Photo no. 4 – view looking north from garden gate (summer).

Approaching from the north on the shared driveway or when viewed from the nearby public footpath to the east of the application site, Bracken Cottage and the proposed extension only become visible once level with the east gable of no. 4 Beaumont Court, hidden as they are behind the bulk of Beaumont Court.



Photo 5

View of application site from drive / public footpath approaching from north



Photo 6

Coming down the public footpath from the south, the existing buildings and proposed extension will be largely hidden from view until almost level with the buildings, the roofs only being visible - see photographs below.



Photo 7 - View from public footpath looking north.



Photo 8 - View from footpath towards Bracken Cottage

**Accessibility:** The new porch extension is where the current entrance to the property is located and this will remain as existing albeit slightly larger footprint. and there are no significant changes in level or unusual features of the site or layout which would create particular difficulties for physically or visually disabled persons in accessing the property. The proposals will comply fully with the access requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations.

**Details and materials:** The proposed materials are to match the existing property in terms of render walls and rosemary roof tiles to match existing. The new larger window screen will be aluminium and the link will be metal cladding to help blend it into the roofscape where practically possible.

**Summary:** The proposed extension is minimal in the context of the site and scheme but can significantly improve existing living spaces and circulation within the property whilst preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposals so not detract from the openness of the Green Belt and does not result in any loss of privacy for present occupiers of either the host property or dwellings nearby.