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“Design Statement”

to accompany the following application:-

**Demolition of previous extensions and creation of new two-storey addition and single-storey rear addition with new front and rear porches. Includes replacement of existing doors and windows and rendering existing external walls:
Wells Farm - Pinley Green**

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This photograph is taken of the rear of the existing building, clearly showing the conservatory and previously constructed extension.

Existing photographs



Existing property:

This existing farmhouse consists of an original brick core structure with its front (south) elevation fronting onto the public highway.

At some point in the building's history and considerably prior to the applicant's ownership, and unusual two-storey extension was constructed to the east of the property. This being unusual because its eaves and ridge level are taller than the original part of the house, and the materials do not match the existing house in any aspect.

This extension is finished to its main front elevation in a grey rough cast render, with brick quoins being formed using brickwork that doesn't resemble the brickwork of the original cottage. The roof junction with the brickwork at the gable ends to both north and south elevations are finished with an unusual timber detail, which looks out of keeping with the rest of the cottage.

To the east elevation and continuing to the south elevation, the wall construction of the above described extension becomes predominantly brickwork, with the choice of brick being very different to the traditional style of brick from the original cottage.

To add a further unusual twist to this previous extension, the rear facing window at first floor level is off centre, it is neither balanced nor symmetrical with the ground floor opening, nor is it centred to the ridge, as such it forms a very uncomfortable overall appearance.

The rest of the cottage has also been extended to the rear at different times in its life, with a mixture of different materials and different brickwork creating a rather haphazard rear north elevation.

The previous owner gained planning consent to add a further extension onto the already rather ugly two-storey extension in the form of a white UPVC conservatory, this has been poorly built as is situated in a very unusual position which further exaggerates the overall uncomfortable appearance of this existing cottage.



The photo above shows the first floor rear facing window within the existing extension, being clearly positioned away from the obvious central location.

Design statement/brief:

My clients have been living in this farmhouse since 2013, however they have always planned to try to improve the overall appearance and the usability of the property. My clients want to undertake relatively modest work that will improve the overall appearance of the property.

In addition to visual improvements, one of the bigger concerns about the overall building is that there is currently a hidden roof valley which is completely enclosed with the pitched roofs around the structure. This roof valley area is constantly leaking, it doesn't allow water to drain away adequately and is therefore allowing rainwater to soak through into the central core of the building, causing damp problems and has over recent years caused internal flooding as well.

My client's directed brief to me is as follows:

"We absolutely love the setting of this house, but we feel the house is very much in need of improvement for multiple different reasons. It is obvious to anyone who spends any time looking at this building that it has been badly designed with extensions having been fairly poorly executed, and certainly very poorly thought through. The mixture of different brickwork and the poor choice of render as well as some of the odd design details are something that we want to rectify to bring the property more in keeping with other farmhouses in the village. We are really looking to implement works and a design which significantly enhances both the way in which the building flows internally and the overall aesthetics of the property from the roadside and our garden. Whilst the design necessitates some additional space being added to the property, we strongly believe the design will significantly improve the appearance of the property and add additional charm within the village.

The various 'bolt on' additions to the property made over time are sadly not really fit for purpose and create somewhat of an eyesore from the roadside and the garden area.

The current roof design is woefully inefficient, at some point in the past someone has created a hidden roof detail which is only accessible through a roof hatch, This hidden valley is not very well constructed and sadly means that when we have heavy downpours we are quite often faced with water finding its way into the house. This is made worse by the rainwater pipe from this hidden valley dropping down inside the house, we have had more than one circumstance now where the rainwater has flooded through the inside of the house.

We want to take this opportunity to simply improve the overall appearance of the property by removing some aspects of previous extensions, and replacing them with extensions that are more in keeping with the existing design. We would like to balance the elevations by moving the unusually positioned windows and to use more locally acceptable render. At the same time we wish to replace all of the existing windows and doors.

We would like to fully remove the existing unsightly conservatory and build a more traditional extension as part of a relocated kitchen.

All in all, we are simply looking to improve the functionality of the house and at the same time improve its overall appearance, both from the public highway and its appearance from within our own garden.

Sue Dawson

Design progression:

A full and detailed architectural survey was carried out for the building, and also a full topographical survey was carried out around the main farm complex. This included picking up the footprint of the various areas of concrete hardstanding, and any obvious signs of previous buildings along with the levels and details of the farmhouse.

Using the survey information we prepared as a full set of 2-D floor plans and elevations, and this was amalgamated with the topographical survey to create a detailed set of existing drawings.

In order to accurately show both the existing building and proposed designs, we created not just 2-D elevations and plans, but also 3-D perspective views. We feel these perspective views help both the design and the planning process in that they allow a better understanding of how the design will look. The perspectives

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are presented from eye level looking back at the building from different corners, and are all based on the scale design detail.

Design principle:

Following further discussions with my clients and having looked at the historic aerial photo and historic maps, we produced an initial historic overlay drawing sheet and this is included as part of the submission.

We started by removing the various aspects of the existing building that were causing the most visual offence, and explored the idea of potentially removing the existing two-storey extension. However, we sadly came to the conclusion that the full demolition of the two-storey east extension to simply replace it with something similar or of a better design, was not financially viable.

During the early stage of the design process it was agreed that rather than rebuilding the two-storey east extension, we would look to bring its design detail in line with a more traditional looking cottage in order to enhance the charming original cottage frontage.

With the above in mind we decided to fully remove the unusual timber detailing from eaves/verge junction and revert the roof to a similar style of eaves/verge as the rest of the existing cottage. It was also decided that the existing render looked out of place in comparison to multiple other rendered properties within fairly close proximity, and a decision was made to replace the render with an off-white more traditional looking render.

We also decided that the render should be wrapped around the side and the rear of the existing extension, giving us the opportunity to cover the inappropriate brickwork with the more appropriate render finish, thus considerably improving the overall appearance.



The above computer-generated image shows the proposed design viewed from the east, with the white UPVC conservatory fully removed, and the modern out of keeping brickwork covered with a more appropriate locally acceptable off-white render.

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To continue with the revisions to the existing two-storey extension, the ground floor window arrangement is redesigned to become set by folding doors, which gave us the opportunity to reposition the opening to be central to the ridge. Following on from this design revision, we have also chosen to reposition the first floor window immediately above to a central location, this window is being changed to an internal opening double door with a glass handrail.

The existing front porch, the rear porch, the side conservatory and some aspects of existing rear extensions were all removed and replaced with more appropriate design details. The front porch being designed to be an oak frame open porch of a comfortable general overall proportion.

To the rear, the removal of part of the existing roof structure allows the full removal of the really badly designed hidden valley roof, we have then redesigned the rear of the building to create three external gables, these gables form valley junctions, but the valleys are constructed to be open-ended and therefore easy to maintain in comparison to the hidden enclosed valley of the existing roof.



The photo below shows the existing rear, the image to the left shows the improved design with render covering modern brickwork and window opening arrangements balanced, along with the eaves/verge decorative detail being removed.



The photo below shows the existing front, the image to the left shows the improved design with the eaves/verge decorative detail being removed.





The image above shows the proposed rear elevation, and the existing left-hand gable now balanced with a central first floor doorway and handrail, and finished in off-white render. The centre and the right-hand side of the property is now balanced as a repeat of the existing rear facing gable, with the oak frame garden room creating a central rear projection.

As a final design detail we have incorporated a traditional oak framed rear projection, which is part of an internal redesign, making the kitchen the central hub of the house and allowing the kitchen to make use of the more modern glazing within the traditional oak frame, thus giving views into the garden.

Design conclusion:

In conclusion, this proposal changes the appearance of an existing two-storey extension, improves its overall appearance with the application of a more locally acceptable off-white render, and the removal of an out of keeping eaves/verge detail.

To the side and the rear, the improvements to the existing building continue with the removal of existing substandard extensions, and the replacement of the extensions with new additional elements of construction using materials that are carefully chosen to match the existing, with design detail also carefully created to match the existing house and similar properties in the surrounding village. Other than the removal of the existing conservatory, importantly, the changes to the rear of the property will not alter the silhouette of the property from the public highway.

This overall proposal significantly improves the public and private appearance of the property, and creates a more family orientated usable internal space.