

COMBINED DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

ERECTION OF SINGLE-STOREY, OAK-FRAMED GARDEN
ROOM AT CASTLE OAK, CASTLE ROAD, OFFTON



Prime Oak,
Whitehouse Farm,
Whitehouse Lane,
Swindon,
South Staffordshire,
DY3 4PE

November 2022

1. Introduction

This combined design & access statement and heritage statement has been prepared by Prime Oak to accompany a joint householder planning and listed building consent application for the erection of a single-storey, oak-framed garden room at Castle Oak, a dwelling situated to the south of Offton, a village in Suffolk 7 miles northwest of Ipswich and 3.5 miles southwest of Needham Market.

Castle Oak is a Grade II listed barn that has been converted to a private residence. It is not sited on Article 2 (3) land.

This application follows previous applications (Council refs: DC/21/04321 & DC/21/04322) for householder planning and listed building consent for a similar scheme that were withdrawn prior to determination last year.

This document should be read in conjunction with the drawings enclosed with the accompanying application, including:

- Location plan at 1:1250 (Drg. 86129/01);
- Proposed block plan at 1:500 (Drg. 86129/02);
- Existing floor plan, roof plan and elevations at 1:100 (Drg. 86129/03 & 86129/04);
- Proposed floor plan, roof plan and elevations at 1:100 (Drg. 86129/05 & 86129/06).

Prime Oak will be designing and constructing the proposal on behalf of the property owners. Prime Oak are one of the country's leading specialists in the design and construction of oak-framed buildings for all kinds of domestic and other uses, utilising traditional mortise and tenon pegged joint carpentry techniques.

2. The proposal

The proposal is for the erection of a single-storey, oak-framed garden room to the north-facing elevation of the property. The garden room would be heavily glazed and sit under a dual-pitched roof of clay pantiles.

3. Heritage Statement

Castle Oak is a grade II listed property that is situated just to the south of the village of Offton. It seems that the former barn and surrounding buildings were once part of a farmstead with Castle Farmhouse lying to the west of the cluster of former barn/agricultural buildings.

Additionally, to the south of the property lies the Castle itself – a scheduled monument.

Castle Oak is now a private residential property. Originally, though, the structure was a traditional barn and reflects the local rural vernacular. The structure's listing reflects this. The property now known as Castle Oak was listed on 24th January 1986 as "BARN 50 METRES EAST OF CASTLE FARMHOUSE". The listing description states the following:

"OFFTON CASTLE ROAD TM 04 NE 6/144 Barn 50m east of Castle - Farmhouse - II Barn, early C16 with alterations of lace C16 and c.1800. 5 bays. Timber-framed and weatherboarded. Asbestos-sheeted roof, probably once thatched. A gabled midstrey was added to the centre bay on the east side c.1800. Heavy C16 studwork with long arched windbraces of convex curvature; originally, walls were infilled with wattle and daub. The C16 crownpost system is complete, with rectangular posts, 2-way braced. The roof was originally hipped; the alterations at either end incorporate clasped-purlins. Tie-beams were formerly arch-braced, except at the southernmost bay; here is a small original side door, and evidence for a loft and/or a partition suggests a former stable or cowhouse. A further bay

was added to the north end c.1600, and repairs at both ends of c.1800. The barn stands 30m north of the moated site of Offton Castle (Scheduled Ancient Monument No.57)."

The significance of the building lies in its obvious age and its many original features and historic fabric outlined above. To some extent, it might also be considered to have group value with the neighbouring barns to the west (now Offton Tithe) as well as Castle Farmhouse itself.

Comments from the previous applications at the property show that there was concern about the extent of the opening created for the garden room previously proposed, and thus, the erosion of historic character and fabric by the removal of this section of historic flint wall. The current proposal has responded to this by seeking a more modest opening for the garden room.

The heavily-glazed garden room's visual permeability allows one to easily appreciate the flint wall when viewing from the outside, too. This, when combined with the fact a greater section of wall is proposed to be retained than the previous application ensures that harm to the wall itself is minimised.

The proposal would be a modest extension of an obviously contemporary style that would be visually lightweight and differentiated from the rest of the building. The design of the garden room allows the remainder of the former barn to be easily appreciated, legible and discernible as a building of former agricultural use and considerable age. It would be sited over to the eastern end to balance the property somewhat as well as affixing to the northern elevation and thus having no impact on the scheduled monument to the south.

Having regard to the above, the following sections of the statement shall assess the proposal in further detail.

4. Use

The use proposed is entirely domestic and appropriate to the setting.

The current patio space is used for a similar function already with casual sitting and dining whilst appreciating the far-reaching views northwards. The proposed garden room would allow for this to continue in a covered, permanent form, thus allowing the occupants of Castel Oak to enjoy this space throughout the year, protected from the elements.

The proposed use would have negligible impact on the setting of the listed building and would be entirely appropriate to this now residential property.

5. Amount

The proposed garden room would occupy a small section of the substantial garden, constructed over an existing paved area as noted above.

In terms of height, the proposed garden room would not exceed the height of the single-storey parts of the dwelling to which it attaches. This assists with establishing a level of subservience to the main property and reducing the impact of the extension.

6. Layout

The proposal would be simply laid out with a garden room attaching to the eastern end of the north facing flint wall. A smaller opening than that previously proposed would be created to allow for access in to the garden room from the main house. The decrease in the size of the opening created, and installation of door separating the current kitchen and the new garden room ensure that the

proposal reads as an extension to the property and is not part of the original structure, thereby addressing the comments made by the conservation officer on the previous applications.

7. Access

There would be no alterations to the existing access for the property as a result of the proposal. The proposal does not give rise to demand for additional parking and therefore these arrangements also remain unaffected.

8. Scale

The garden room would be a subservient addition, sitting below the ridge line of the main property and occupying a modest footprint of around 24m². The gabled garden room would seem subordinate to the much greater gable of the weatherboarded section of the barn.

The proposed materials ensure that the garden room would be seen as more of a lightweight addition than, say, a bricks and mortar addition of the same dimensions. Furthermore, the scale of the proposal generates no concern with regard to either overlooking of neighbouring properties or public space.

9. Appearance

The garden room would provide a high-quality structure, being constructed from English Oak using traditional construction methods. The garden room would pair together a traditional building method and material in the form of the visible oak framing with large amounts of glazing to achieve a contemporary feel.

The garden room would sit under a pitched roof of clay pantiles which would provide a good level of visual synergy with the rest of the property. Additionally, the timber framing would ensure that there is a harmonious visual relationship with other sections of the barn as well as other surrounding buildings that feature exposed timber elements.

The oak frame and prevalence of glazing helps to achieve a more visually permeable and lightweight addition than other materials would. This enables the proposed garden room to blend in without seeming dominant or imposing.

10. Landscape

The garden room would be constructed to the north of the property over a section of existing patio and would therefore have negligible impact.

The proposal would be positioned away from surrounding trees and is located away from water courses and falls in flood zone 1.

11. Sustainable Development

The proposed garden room would be constructed of oak sourced from well managed sustainable and renewable forests, whilst the traditional carpentry methods to be employed rely less on the use of modern power tools and would provide a structure that could be more easily dismantled, and the materials reused elsewhere if required. The proposed construction method and materials to be used are therefore highly sustainable.

The garden room features significant amounts of glazing. This allows for lots of natural light to flood into the room, thereby reducing the need to provide heating and lighting to the room. The garden

room would also feature French Doors on the western elevation that would allow for natural ventilation and air flow in warmer weather. Furthermore, the glazing shall feature argon filled units – a thermally efficient solution that exceeds current building regulations requirements.

12. Conclusions

The above demonstrated that the nature of the design, layout, construction and appearance of the garden room would not unduly harm the character, appearance or significance of the listed building. The proposal takes on board the feedback from the previous applications at the property to inform a new design that is respectful of the historic context in which it would sit. The garden room would be clearly identifiable as a modern addition which sits comfortably in its historic setting and would not impede the legibility of the historic farmstead or the listed barn itself.