



**Old Mill
Luxton's Lane
Downhead
Shepton Mallet
BA4 4LQ**

Design and Access Statement
December 2022

Information provided with this application is in accordance with the following National and Local validation requirements:

Householder application for planning permission for works or extension to a dwelling.

NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Location plan of the site showing any site boundaries: Refer to drawings
- Site plan: Refer to drawings
- Existing and proposed elevations: Refer to drawings
- Existing and proposed floor plans: Refer to drawings
- Existing and proposed site sections and finished floor and site levels: Refer to drawings
- Roof plans: Refer to drawings
- Design and Access Statement
- Application form: Online application
- The completed Ownership Certificate as required by planning regulations: Online application
- Agricultural Holdings Certificate as required by planning regulations: Online application

LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

- Biodiversity Checklist: Required
- Ecology Report: Required
- Drainage Drawings: Required
- Flood risk assessment: Not required
- Heritage Statement: Not required
- Tree report: Not required
- Parking and access arrangements: Refer to Design and Access Statement
- Photos: Refer to Design and Access Statement

Description:

Demolition of existing single storey rear conservatory and erection of replacement single-storey extension, rear covered veranda, conversion of attic to bedroom accommodation, over cladding of existing masonry walls with timber cladding, alterations to fenestration, entrance porch and associated hard landscape areas.

1.0 Introduction

The design and access statement has been prepared by Designscape Architects in support of a householder application for a new extension and alterations to the existing detached house on behalf of the householder applicant. It should be read in conjunction with the application drawings. The applicant wishes to extend the house for the benefit and occupation of their family.

2.0 The Site and House

The site is located on the edge the hamlet of Downhead. Downhead is formed by a loose collection of agricultural buildings, centred on a group of cottages clustered at the junction of Pound Lane and Luxton Lane. The site is accessed via a track drive from Luxtons Lane, following the edge of Tadhill Copse. To the south the landscape gently descends through open countryside subdivided by field boundaries. To the immediate north, the land falls steeply to a streambed running through woodland. To property boundary is defined by the neighbouring Downhead mill to the northwest, Tadhill Copse to the north, field hedgerows to the east and south and the former millpond to the west. Downhead Mill includes a large two storey stone building, now used as a house, the gable end of which is positioned circa 28m to the west and a single storey outbuilding close the house. The site property includes a large garden to the west and rear of the house, mainly laid to lawn, a smaller kitchen garden to the north and side, with an open parking area and garden to the front and east. A narrower section of garden to the south links the front and back gardens.



The house is a detached 2 storey house with pitched roof and gable ends. To the north the house extends into a pitched roof single storey wing, the attic area of which is used as bedroom accommodation. In the north west corner, a conservatory with a shallow monopitch roof completes a rectangular building form.

The house dates from the 1980's replacing a mill building located on the site. Originally known as Downhead Mill, prior to demolition the building was known as the Old Mill, after construction of the mill to the north – which is now known as Downhead Mill. As a result, the current house is named the Old Mill despite the fact it is neither particularly old nor has ever been a mill.

The house is constructed with 'Bradstone' type concrete, artificial stone facing blocks, covered by clay roof tiles, with

white timber and uPVC doors and windows. It has undergone minor alteration since first construction, with conversion of the original integral garage into living accommodation – now used as an artist’s studio and the addition of rear conservatory.

3.0 Constraints and Opportunities

3.1 Context

The property is located outside of any planning development boundary. The house is in a generally open location, with some distance from properties at the centre of the hamlet, with the exception of the immediate property, Downhead Mill. It is located fairly close to the neighbour’s garage, however this outbuilding provides some separation between the main houses. The building is set against a backdrop of trees when viewed from a distance. It enjoys relatively open views to the wider landscape to the south from the upper floor of the house, these are reduced at ground floor where boundary hedgerows provide screening.



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3.2 Site and house.

The orientation of the house, facing east/west takes good advantage of the path of the sun, with primary rooms located to the south. Each side of the house has a distinctly different character and relationship with the external space. The front of the house is somewhat dominated by parking, with the relationship between vehicle circulation and garden space poorly defined. The rear garden is open, with areas of border planting and lawn. Closer to the house a large patio takes advantage of the afternoon sun. The northern garden is enclosed on 3 sides, dominated by the presence of mature woodland to the north. It fulfils the function of a kitchen garden and contains small shed

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outbuildings.

The internal organisation of the house is quite loosely planned. Alternative options were considered to better optimise the internal space for the use of the family. The conservatory is poorly constructed with low levels of thermal performance. The connection between the kitchen and the external garden could be improved to better utilise the spaces between. The attic space is large and constructed without use of trussed rafters. This is capable of conversion to bedroom accommodation.

4.0 Planning consideration.

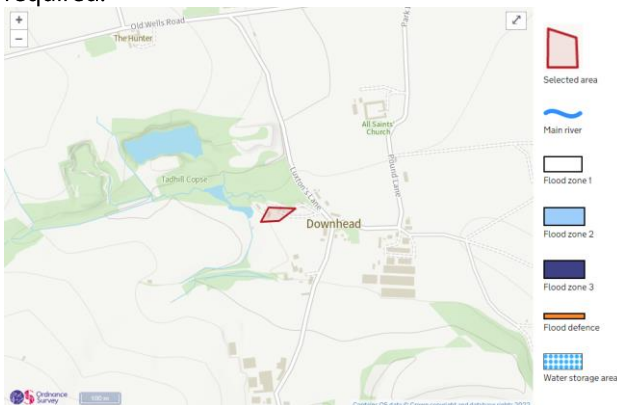
4.1 Key planning considerations are outlined below:



- DP1: Local Identity and Distinctiveness
- Policy DP5 Local Wildlife Sites. An ecology report is included with the application
- DP6: Bat Protection. The site is outside the Bat Consultation Zone.
- DP7: Design and Amenity of New Development
- DP4: Mendip's Landscapes

4.2 Flood Risk Assessment:

The site is located with Flood Zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding. No flood risk assessment is required.



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4.3 Relevant Recent Planning History:

- In 1982 under reference 101788/003 the planning permission was granted for the erection of a detached house and garage in connection with a trout hatchery at The Old Mill, Downhead.
- Condition 2 of the permission imposed an agricultural occupancy restriction.
- In July 2008, under reference 101788/009 a Certificate of Lawful Use was granted on the basis that the above-mentioned occupancy condition had been breached for more than ten years and was therefore immune from Enforcement Action. The information attached to the decision warned that if the property was sold, it could constitute a fresh breach of the occupancy condition.
- To demonstrate the applicants also benefit from immunity, they submitted a Section 191 application. This was granted on 25 January 2021 under reference 2020/2452/CLE.
- A Section 73 Application Relating to Residential Occupancy Condition was submitted and approved by the previous owner/occupiers concerning the property. Ref 2021/0223/VRC

Adjacent applications of interest include:

- Downhead Mill Luxtons Lane Downhead Shepton Mallet BA4 4LQ - Extensions and alterations to existing dwelling – ref. 2020/1819/HSE

5.0 Proposal

5.1 Brief

The applicant's brief for alterations to the house are led by the needs of the family for a long-term occupation, not all of which require planning approval. Including:

- Alterations to improve the appearance of the house by overcladding or similar approach
- Better integrate the house with the garden and the surroundings
- Replacement windows
- Update to electrical installation
- Replacement of existing oil-fired central heating system
- Alterations to external areas to improve the approach and terrace areas
- Reorganisation/extension of the ground floor
- Form boot room, laundry room, pantry
- Combined kitchen, diner, family room
- Separate snug/living room
- Conversion of the attic

5.2 Amount of Development

The proposal increases the existing accommodation, by less than 100sqm.

5.3 Layout

The existing conservatory is replaced with construction suitable for all year occupation. This area is knocked through into the existing kitchen to create a larger room and the kitchen functions are moved into the new space. The studio room is subdivided to create a pantry and study. The existing cloakroom is reconfigured to form a boot room and new door.

The existing glazed porch enclosure is removed. A new veranda is proposed adjoining the house, with new doors linking the dining room/kitchen.

The first floor bedroom 4 is altered to create a master bedroom dressing room. The window to the front of the house is blocked up. A new stair above the existing is added to provide access to the attic. The stair is positioned to avoid

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alterations to the existing roof line.

The existing loft space is subdivided to form 2 bedrooms and shower room. A new roof light is added to the rear roof within the shower room. Gable end windows are added to light the new windows.

5.4 Scale

The volume of the existing, original house remains the prominent character defining the scale of the building in the landscape. The form of the new side extension and rear veranda are subservient to the main volume. The proposed roof forms follow those of the existing house.

5.5 Landscaping

Minor changes to the existing hard and soft landscaping are proposed to enable the proposed development. The front drive is more defined to delineate the separation between cars and garden. A side path to the north is added to provide access to the new pantry door and the western patio is altered to accommodate the new veranda and access to the kitchen garden.

5.6 Appearance

The appearance of the existing house is somewhat detracted by the use of bradstone facing blocks. The proposal includes over cladding this stone with timber boarding. This will be allowed to weather naturally. The over cladding provides the opportunity to improve the insulation performance. The existing white painted windows are to be replaced with black metal framed windows, which will also improve the thermal performance of the house. Overall the alterations will maintain the agricultural character of the house and improve its appearance by replacing the artificial external wall material with natural also allowing the house to better blend into the landscape and maintain the local identity and distinctiveness.

5.7 Drainage Strategy

The existing house is located distant from mains sewers. Foul water is discharged to a septic tank, surface water runs to soakaways located within the kitchen garden. Refer to Topographic Survey with Existing drainage schematic noted. The proposals utilise and connect with the same, existing drainage network.

6.0 Privacy and Amenity

The proposals include new windows in the attic. None of these will alter the pre-existing conditions with respect to overlooking between neighbours, which are in any case sufficiently distant to maintain privacy. The proposed alterations, veranda and extension will have no impact upon amenity for the neighbouring property to the west.

7.0 Access and Parking Arrangements.

The existing access to the property is via an unmade track from Luxton Lane. This is used by vehicles and pedestrians. There is a parking area for 3+ cars, with space to turn around at the front of the house. The proposals look to reduce the area dedicated to car parking, however in line with the Somerset CC Parking strategy 2013 space for parking 4 vehicles are proposed.

8.0 Flood Risk Assessment.

The Environment Agency Map indicates that the site is not in a flood risk area.

9.0 Ecology

An ecology survey undertaken at the property identified the potential for the house to be used by bats. Following surveys have been undertaken and a bat report produced which includes measures for the protection of bats and provision of roosts within the altered and extended building. See Stark Ecology Bat Survey Report, December 2022, submitted with the application.

10.0 Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development will provide appropriate additions to the existing house. By virtue

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of its siting, the proposed extension will only have a minor impact upon the context and appearance of the house. The materials proposed for recladding the house will improve the appearance to the existing house and enhance the setting. The by virtue of the location and proximity of neighbouring properties, the windows and veranda will cause no harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties and their occupants.

Appendix A: Site and Context Photos



View of rear elevation



View of front elevation



North elevation from kitchen garden



Conservatory



Neighbouring Downhead Mill viewed from the north side of the house



Kitchen Garden



Location of proposed veranda adjacent neighbour's garage



Shed on northern boundary

Appendix B: Illustrative Views.



View of house frontage – as proposed



Bird's eye view from southwest – as proposed.



Rear veranda – as proposed.



Northern elevation from Kitchen garden – new extension and veranda – as proposed.

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