

# Design and Access Statement

Extension and Internal Alterations to

The Bell House, Little Tew

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## 1) Introduction

This document forms as part of the planning and listed building application for an extension and internal alterations to The Bell House, Little Tew.

The Bell House is a Grade II Listed former inn and cottage, now a single dwelling situated within the Little Tew Conservation Area. It was built in the 17th Century with later alterations and consists of a 2-unit gable fronted plan linked to a single-unit cottage over 2 storeys and attic. The external walls are of limestone rubble and coursed, squared marlstone rubble with some ashlar dressings and with a Stonesfield slate roof. There is an existing single storey outbuilding adjacent to the house, clad in horizontal timber cladding and with a stone slate roof.

The Heritage Appraisal document prepared by Hubbard Conservation and attached with this application presents a detailed Statement of Significance and an Impact Assessment of the current proposals.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Location Plan Drawing No: 3060-PL050
- Existing Site Plan Drawing No: 1288 Topo (Prepared by Advanced Surveys)
- Existing Ground Floor Plan Drawing No: 3060-PL053
- Existing First Floor Plan Drawing No: 3060-PL054
- Existing Elevations Drawing No: 3060-PL056
- Proposed Site Plan Drawing No: 3060-PL060
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan Drawing No: 3060-PL061
- Proposed First Floor Plan Drawing No: 3060-PL062
- Proposed Roof Plan Drawing No: 3060-PL064
- Proposed Elevations Drawing No: 3060-PL070 and 3060-PL071
- Proposed Sections Drawing No: 3060-PL080
- Design and Access Statement
- Bat Survey Report August 2022 (prepared by NKM Associates)
- The Bell House Little Tew-Heritage Statement (prepared by Hubbard Conservation)
- The Bell House AIA July 2022 (Arbotrack Systems Ltd)

## 2) Location

Bell House is located at the north of the village of Little Tew. Little Tew is situated in the northeast of the West Oxfordshire district, it is approximately 4 ½ miles east of Chipping Norton and is accessible by the A44 and A361.

Bell House and its surrounding site comprise part of the Little Tew conservation area.

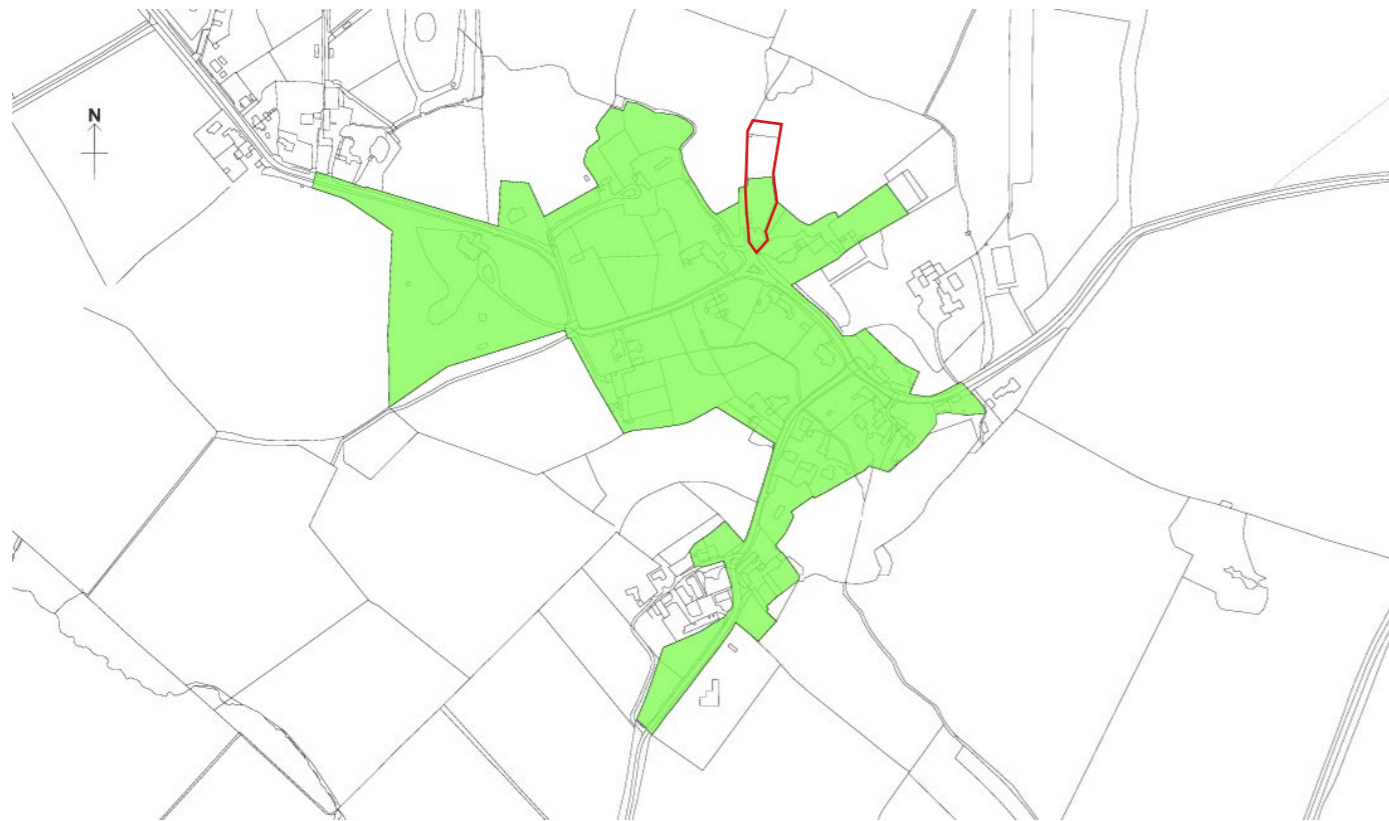
Whilst the front of the site is open, a boundary wall encloses the garden to the rear of the house, connecting at the edges of the house. Beyond the main garden area, there is a further area of the site partially enclosed by the stone boundary wall. Water Lane protrudes from Chipping Norton Road at the northern most corner of the village.

At this corner there are a group of properties. Bell House is positioned centrally with Grade II listed Manor House to the West and Ibstock Close to the East. South of the site is the settlement of Little Tew and north of the site opens up to agricultural land.

No off-street parking exists and as a result residents park adjacent to the existing front door.



Little Tew



Little Tew - Conservation Area



The Bell House - Location Aerial

### 3) Historical Context

The site contains one building entry (List Entry Number: 1052529) on the statutory list which is Grade II Listed.

#### Listing Text

*"LITTLE TEW THE GREEN SP3828 (North side) 11/111 The Bell House 27/08/56  
GV II*

*Inn and cottage, now house. Possibly early C17, re-modelled late C17 and extended early C18. Limestone rubble and coursed squared marlstone rubble with some marlstone-ashlar dressings; Stonesfield-slate roof with rubble stacks. 2-unit gable-fronted plan, linked to a single-unit cottage. 2 storeys plus attic. Double-gabled 4-window front has, to right, the gable end of the earlier inn range with a renewed cross window above a C20 arched doorway; to left, the 2-window cottage range with renewed leaded casements. Gabled linking section has a variety of altered casements and a gable parapet with a ball finial matching that to right. Right return wall has renewed cross windows at ground and first floors. Interior: inn range has a massive central stack, an inglenook fireplace with cambered bressumer, and a late C17/early C18 doorcase with pilasters and segmental arch. Until c.1880 the Bell Inn. (V.C.H.: Oxfordshire, Vol.XI, p.249; Buildings of England: Oxfordshire, p.691).  
Listing NGR: SP3838128660"*

The nearest listed property to the site includes, to the South, Croft Cottages (grade II Listed Cottage) and No-oven Cottage (Grade II listed), to the east, Ibstock Close and Cottage (Grade II), to the west, Manor House, and Coach House (Grade II) and to the northwest, Water Lane Cottage (Grade II). The Little Tew Conservation Area map also identifies significant Drystone walling which can be found as the boundary wall to the Bell House and along the west of the site.

The Heritage Appraisal document prepared by Hubbard Conservation and attached with this application presents a detailed Statement of Significance and an Impact Assessment of the current proposals.

### 4) Pre-Application Summary

In arriving at the current design scheme for The Bell House, there has been Pre-application consultation and communication with the local planning authority, West Oxfordshire District Council (Ref: 22/03193/PREAPP).

- The council advised a reduction in the amount of glazing on the extension which has now been reduced.
- The secondary staircase from ground to first has also now been retained and boxed over to preserve the original feature.
- The doorway connecting the upstairs lounge to the stairwell has also been retained.
- The amended proposals were subsequently discussed with the council on site, and it was advised to proceed with the formal application.



Streetview



East Range



Entrance Hall

## 5) Design

The proposals aim to primarily address the internal layout of the property which is far from ideal for contemporary living due to the evolution and past usage of the property. The existing kitchen is felt inadequate and the internal living spaces have a poor relationship to the garden which can only be accessed from the inner hall. The ground floor rooms are modest in size and cellular. Two 20th Century staircases rise to the first floor where there is a substantial drawing room with an open staircase to the second-floor bedrooms.

As part of the proposals, it is intended to sensitively rationalize the internal layout, providing much-needed clarity, by locating the study, sitting area and snug at ground floor level by an inner hall, and by including the bedrooms and master suite at first-floor level. The existing main entrance will be retained as a reception hall, and the existing internal stair handed (fit to be accessed via the inner hall) restoring the room to its former proportions.

A traditional gable-ended vernacular outbuilding (as a replacement outbuilding) is set at a lower ground level and creates an open-plan kitchen/living area. A simple flat-roofed glazed link from the main house to the replacement outbuilding is also proposed to maintain visual separation with outward views towards the garden. The proposed replacement outbuilding is designed not to exceed the ridge height of the existing outbuilding, and to have minimal openings to the west, to preserve its subservient appearance to the main house when viewed from Water Lane. The relationship between the existing outbuilding and the dry-stone wall facing Water Lane is also to be maintained.

To rationalize the odd arrangement of spaces created due to the acute angle of the garage structure with the rear of the house, it is also proposed to provide a direct link from the inner hall to the extension. This link will also avoid breaking through the existing fabric of the listed property and maintain a direct interface between the house and the extension.

It is proposed also to revert the lean-to garage roof to the original gabled roof arrangement by re-orienting the roof slope at the same pitch and direction as the roof of the adjacent main house. The proposed extension will follow this pitch angle and direction, to create a coherent composition.

Currently, no off-street parking exists and as a result, residents park adjacent to the existing front door. As part of the current proposal, it is envisaged to reuse the existing garden field gate access and create a private parking area for up to three cars.

The main entrance will be relocated to the link, further emphasizing the character of the link as a fulcrum point between the existing house and the replacement outbuilding. The solid appearance of the proposed front entrance is designed to evoke anticipation, utilizing contemporary materials.

To the north of the extension after the existing field gate, there are remains of a former building with low-height walls. It is envisaged to repair a section of these walls and set up a new timber outbuilding within the walls to form a new structure for garden storage purposes to help maintain the property.



Proposed Site Plan

## 5) Design Continued

On the first floor, the large lounge/drawing room will relocate to the ground floor offering space for a master bedroom and ensuite bedroom to be added.

The unattractive skylight on the first floor will be sealed down to a domestic conservation-style roof light as proposed elsewhere. Two roof lights (conservation style) will be added to the roof slope, concealed within the roof valley. These will provide natural light to the top landing and attic staircase.

The proposals will result in an increase in GIA as listed below:

Garage Conversion - 16.5 sqm

Proposed Extension - 79.15 sqm

Total GIA increase - 95.65 sqm

The form, scale, and proportions of the extension are all designed to ensure the replacement outbuilding does not detract from the architectural character and prominence of the main house.

The choice of materials and detailing have been carefully considered to reflect and complement the rural aesthetic of the Cotswold vernacular style and use the contrasting and contemporary material palette in the extensions. Dark-stained horizontal timber cladding is proposed on the extension and natural blue slate roof to emphasize the subservient nature of the outbuilding. The elevation facing the garden will be predominately dark grey aluminium framed glazing to provide a seamless relationship between internal and external spaces. Vertical timber boarding in natural oak is proposed on the entrance link.

## 6) Access

As noted above, The Bell House currently has no off-street parking, it is proposed to reuse the existing field gate access and create a private parking area.



Proposed Elevation - North East  
1:100



Proposed Elevation - North Extension



Proposed Elevation - North Outbuilding  
1:100



Proposed Elevation - South Outbuilding  
1:100



Proposed Elevation - South West  
1:100



Proposed Elevation - South West (Part)



Proposed Elevation - South East

## 7) Sustainability

The proposed extension will be designed to current energy-saving standards with high levels of insulation and minimal heat loss. These will be developed to fully meet the requirements of the 2023 building regulations.

An EV car charging point is proposed in the parking area.

Greywater collection and re-use systems will be integrated into the scheme such as water butts for garden irrigation and car washing. Alongside the implementation of water-efficient appliances, which will be installed where appropriate with the primary aim of reducing water consumption.

Building materials and labour shall be sourced as locally as possible and building waste minimized through a site waste management plan implemented during the construction phase where any materials will be reclaimed and reused onsite.

Existing landscape features will be protected and enhanced, encouraging wildlife and healthy ecological populations.

## 8) Ecology and Biodiversity

The ecology report has identified that no bats are either using the house or outbuilding and hence no further survey or mitigation has been recommended.

It is proposed to remove 2no. C-grade Cypress trees (please refer to the accompanying tree report) between the existing field gates. This will be replaced by a new indigenous species of trees and shrubs.

It is envisaged to integrate bat and bird boxes and build them into the extension and incorporate these as free-standing types on the site trees. A low-level external artificial lighting scheme designed will be implemented to avoid any disturbance to wildlife and to reduce light pollution.

## 9) Conclusion

The Bell House is a Grade II Listed former inn and cottage, now a single dwelling in a quintessential English village setting. The property with a unique plan form, has evolved over time but now deserves updating to suit current expectations and lifestyle. In doing so, practical, and aesthetic advantages are achieved which are appropriate to the character and stature of the property.

A new garden outbuilding is also proposed away from the House within the gardens. The building will be traditional in form and respect neighbouring properties.



*View of extension from garden*



*View of link and extension from house*



*View of glazed link*



10) Site Photographs





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