



Phillips Planning Services Ltd.
Town Planning and Development Consultants

RECTORY FARM

NORTHMOOR

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED NEW GREENHOUSE, RELOCATION OF EXISTING OIL TANKS & PROVISION OF EMERGENCY GENERATOR

SEPTEMBER 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application seeks permission for works associated with the ongoing, improvement and refurbishment taking place at Rectory Farmhouse following the grant of various planning and listed building consents over the past 12 – 18 months. The main aspects of the proposal are:

1. The erection of a new greenhouse to the west side of the existing outbuildings
2. The relocation of two oil tanks to the north west corner of the garden (from the existing position adjacent to garden wall just to the south west of the main house)
3. The provision of an emergency generator to the north of the proposed oil tanks

1.2 This statement explains the proposals in the context of the site and the relevant opportunities and constraints which exist.

1.3 It is set out as follows:

- 2.0 Site and Heritage Description
- 3.0 Relevant History
- 4.0 Relevant Planning Policy
- 5.0 Analysis
- 6.0 Conclusions.

2.0 SITE AND ITS HERITAGE CONTEXT

2.1 Rectory Farm is located to the south side of Church Road in Northmoor as highlighted on the Historic England Heritage Map extract opposite.

2.2 The property is listed (Grade II*) and stands adjacent to a number of separately listed buildings, also as highlighted (blue triangles), including a Dovecote, an old Granary, Church Farm House, Cruck Barn and St Denys Church. Outbuildings associated with the property are set to the west side and are also highlighted.

2.3 The application site and much of the wider village has been designated as a part of the Northmoor Conservation Area.

2.4 The main house has been the subject of various alterations during the 18th, 19th and 20th century but the intactness of the original 17th-century building exhibits evidential value as a comparatively high-status farmhouse in a manorial grouping with the church & other structures. The 17th century phase of the building is also of considerable historical value. In addition, the design of the building, as a farmhouse of some not inconsiderable status, reflecting the gothic revival tradition, with refined features in the principal rooms is also of considerable aesthetic value. As a private residence with little historic reference or images in the public domain its communal value is considered low to moderate



Heritage Map showing the property and its context

- 2.5 The extent of 18th century element of the house is considered to hold moderate evidential value as too little of it survives for any meaningful interpretation. The early-18th century doors, of both higher & lower status, due to their quality, typicality & age are of considerable aesthetic value.
- 2.6 The 19th-century refurbishment and extension of the building is fundamentally legible and intact, and thus of little evidential value. The alterations to the house at this time are considered characteristic of the 19th century, and reflect changing social patterns and outlooks and are therefore of historical value
- 2.7 The outbuilding to the west comprises two distinct elements, a red brick structure to the north and a timber-framed structure to the south. The timber frame of the southern structure has been entirely replaced at lower level, but the historic roof structure survives. The northern structure retains altered historic brickwork on both east and west fronts, although the north front is entirely modern brickwork, and the southern wall, dividing this from the southern section, is timber-framed with fragments of lath and plaster.
- 2.8 The date of the outbuilding is unclear, but the brickwork is very similar in colour and texture to the west wing of the main house. The bond differs slightly, as the outbuilding is Flemish bond, whereas the west wing is a loose Flemish garden-wall bond.
- 2.9 The former stables and granary building to the north were completely rebuilt in 2000 following fire damage. It therefore holds no intrinsic historic value and its significance is largely derived from its group value and the contribution that it makes to the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings. It has recently been de-listed as a result.
- 2.10 The existing oil tanks for the property were located adjoining the garden wall to the south west of the main house and so visible in views towards the grade II* listed house. They have had to be removed to facilitate the construction of the permitted side extension at the property and this also ensure that they are not readily visible alongside the grade II* listed property.



Aerial view of the group of buildings



Rectory Farm



Granary Building



Dovecote



Outbuildings

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

Planning & Listed Building Applications

- 3.1 The Council's online record system contains quite limited historic entries in respect of Rectory Farm.
- 3.2 Firstly, permission was granted in 1989 for 'Internal Alterations' (W89/1608) but there are no plans or details to confirm what these alterations related to. Secondly permission was granted for further 'Internal Alterations' including the removal of a kitchen wall in 1989 (08/0208). Again, no plans are details are available.
- 3.3 In terms of the adjacent building 'Extra Cover', the records note that permission was originally granted in 1986 to convert what was an associated barn to a dwelling (W86/0795).
- 3.4 Unfortunately, the building suffered major fire damage in the late 1990's and so in August 2000 planning permission (W2000/885) and listed building consent (W2000/886) were granted enabling the demolition and rebuilding of the dwelling.
- 3.5 It is clear therefore that in terms of 'Extra Cover' the building is wholly modern having been rebuilt in the early 2000's. As noted in Section 2, as a result this has now been de-listed.
- 3.6 In 2022 two sets of Planning & Listed Building consents were granted to enable the re-roofing / repair of the main house, the outbuildings and the adjacent Extra Cover (22/00768/LBC / 22/00735/HHD & 22/00734/LBC / 22/00729/HHD).
- 3.7 Also in 2022 the two sets of consents most relevant to this new application were granted under references 22/01774/HHD & 22/01775/LBC and 22/01777/HHD & 22/01778/LBC enabling a side extension and various internal alterations.

3.8 Following this on 4 May 2023 alterations to the approved schemes (design of the proposed side extension), were granted (reference 23/01267/HHD 23/01268/LBC).

Pre-application

3.9 A pre-application submission was made to the Council ahead of this submission. We highlight the following elements from the response received.

“Greenhouse

*With regard to the impact on the listed building, the proposed greenhouse is **not considered to obscure the historical architecture of the existing listed building and would not have an adverse impact on its setting.***

*In terms of scale, the proposed greenhouse appears moderate in size, however in comparison to the generous plot it is set with it will **not represent an overdevelopment of the site.** The proposed siting means it would not have an adverse impact on any street scene, neighbours or wider Conservation Area.*

*With regard to design, the materials and the pitched roof design of the proposed greenhouse are **complimentary and in-keeping with the surrounding area and therefore considered acceptable in principle.***

Therefore, officers are of the opinion the principle of a greenhouse of this design and in this location is acceptable.

Generator

*Officers are of the opinion consent will be required for the new location of the generator. As the principle of development has already been established **there aren't any red flags for the newly proposed location in my opinion.** “*

3.10 In terms of the Oil Tanks, the initial pre-application advice received was:

*“It is understood that two of the oil are existing and just being relocated as they currently stand where the kitchen extension is approved to be built. Officers are of the opinion that **the relocation of the oil tanks will not require planning permission.**”*

3.11 However the officer subsequently advised that this view had changed and that planning permission would be required. As a result the relocation of the tanks has been included as part of the application.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021

4.1 The NPPF provides the governments guidance on the way in which the planning system should approach the delivery of sustainable new development. We highlight the following aspects.

- The purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development (p.7)
- Planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. (p.9)
- Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way so that application for sustainable development can be approved wherever possible. (p.38)
- Planning conditions should be used in order to enable permission to be granted where possible rather than simply seeking to refuse development which could be made acceptable. (p.54 & 55)

4.2 Chapter 16 is entitled “Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment”. It advises:

*194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require **an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting**. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.....*

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any

necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

201. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Local Planning Policy

- 4.3 The current Development Plan for West Oxfordshire is the Local Plan 2031 adopted in September 2018. Policy EH11 relates to listed buildings and states:

“Proposals for additions or alterations to, or change of use of, a Listed Building (including partial demolition) or for development within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of, a Listed Building will be permitted where it can be shown to:

- *Conserve or enhance the special architectural or historic interest of the building's fabric, detailed features, appearance or character and setting*
- *Respect the building's historic curtilage or context or its value within a group and/or its setting including its historic landscape or townscape context, and*
- *Retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design that is sympathetic both to the Listed Building and its setting and that of any adjacent heritage assets in terms of siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design and form”*

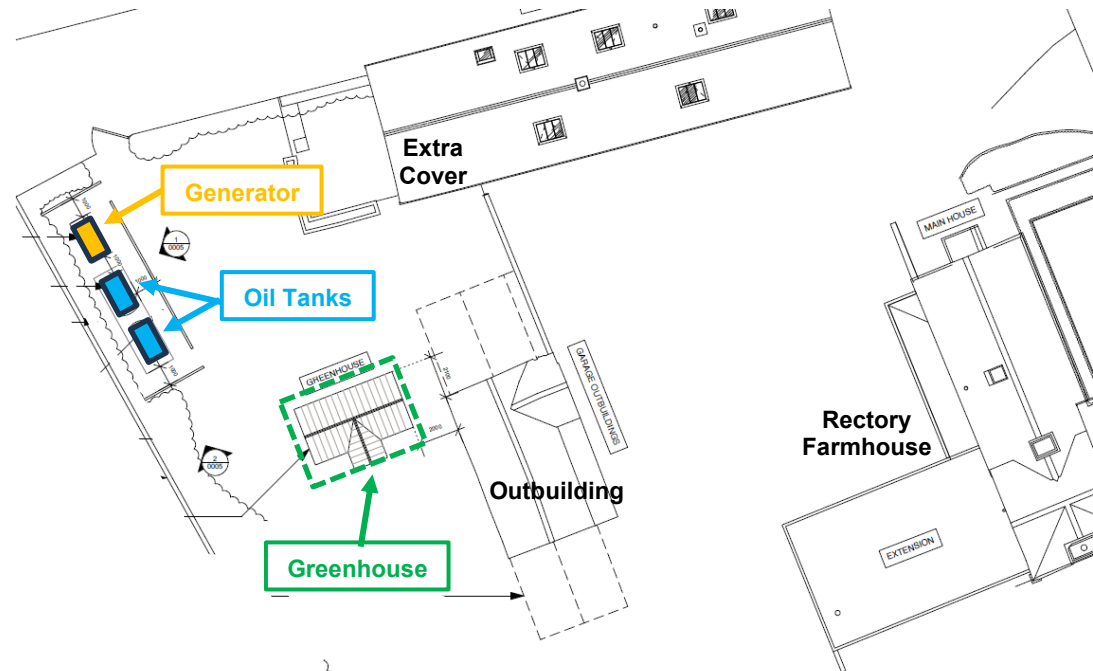
4.4 Chapter 7 explains that a key aspect of bringing forward alterations to listed buildings is firstly understanding its context and character. That is, why it is of listing quality and what are the features that contribute to its special interest. It explains that once the context is understood, then it is possible to establish whether or not works would be harmful.

4.5 In terms of roofs and roofing materials Chapter 9 highlights that there are two traditional roof materials which dominate within West Oxfordshire, natural limestone stone slate and Welsh (blue slate). The guidance notes that in respect of listed buildings the Council will generally expect replacement of roofing materials on a like for like basis and a good match where new materials are being used in terms of colour and texture.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS

5.1 As noted in Section 1, the main aspects of this proposal are:

1. The erection of a new greenhouse to the west side of the existing outbuildings
2. The relocation of two existing oil tanks to the north west of the garden (the tanks were previously located adjacent to the garden wall which stands to the south west of the main house)
3. The provision of an emergency generator to the north of the proposed oil tanks



5.2 The location of each proposal is shown on the plan extract opposite by way of context. As will be noted, care has been taken to position these elements well away from and so outside of the setting of the listed building.

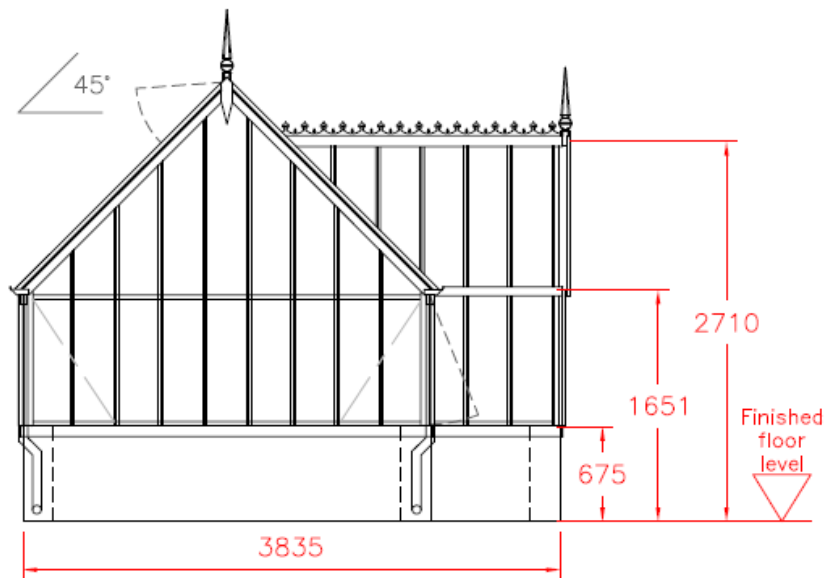
Context plan showing the proposed site layout

The Greenhouse

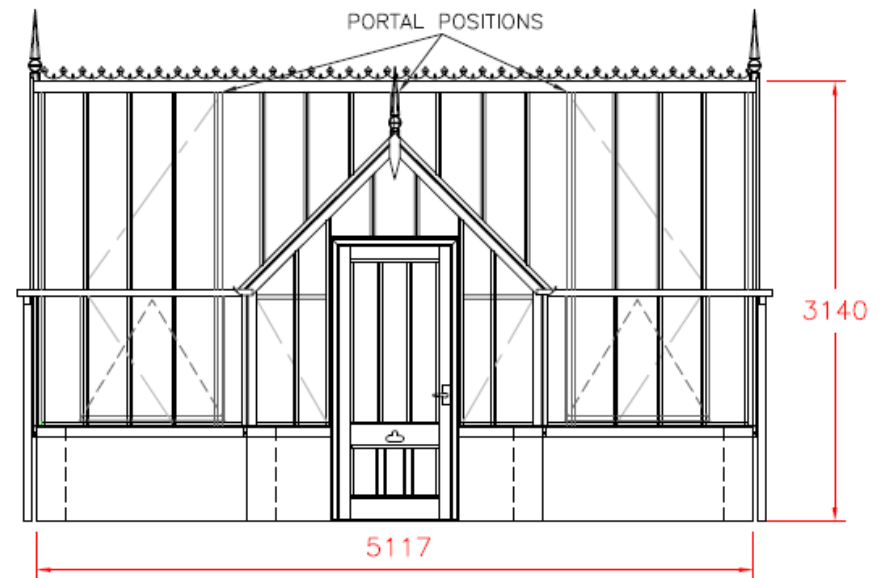
5.3 The proposed greenhouse would be offset from the west side of the existing outbuilding by approximately 2 metres.

- 5.4 As the proposal would have a maximum height of 3.14 metres to the ridge it would be screened in any views from the ground floor of the main house and from the open courtyard area to the west side of the house.
- 5.5 Notwithstanding the discreet location the structure would be of traditional design with a low brick plinth and glazed framing as shown below and so of suitable appearance for the grounds of the house and in terms of the wider conservation area location. This was the assessment made by the case officer at pre-application stage who advised:

*“With regard to design, the materials and the pitched roof design of the proposed greenhouse are **complimentary and in-keeping with the surrounding area and therefore considered acceptable in principle.**”*



Proposed side elevation



Proposed front elevation

The Relocation of the Oil Tanks

- 5.6 The property runs on an oil based heating system as there is no gas supply to the village. Historically the oil tanks have been located quite close to the house, adjoining the garden wall to the south west.
- 5.7 This has meant that the tanks have been very visible on approach to the building from the south west side, detracting from the overall setting.
- 5.8 As part of the wider extension and improvement works that are taking place it is necessary and also considered appropriate to relocate these old tanks to a more suitable location to the north west of the outbuildings and north of the proposed new greenhouse as discussed above.
- 5.9 The existing two tanks are required and these must be set above ground level on a small base. The photograph opposite shows an image of one of the existing tanks to be relocated.



Oli tank as proposed

- 5.10 The two tanks would be set against an existing planted boundary as shown on the section extract on the following page. They would not be visible from outside of the site as they would be lower than the existing planting in this area which will also be further enhanced.
- 5.11 A 'hazel hurdle' screen is proposed to the front of the tanks to provide screening within the site itself. Whilst the tanks would not be visible from the house due to their location, this will screen the tanks from view when using that part of the garden.

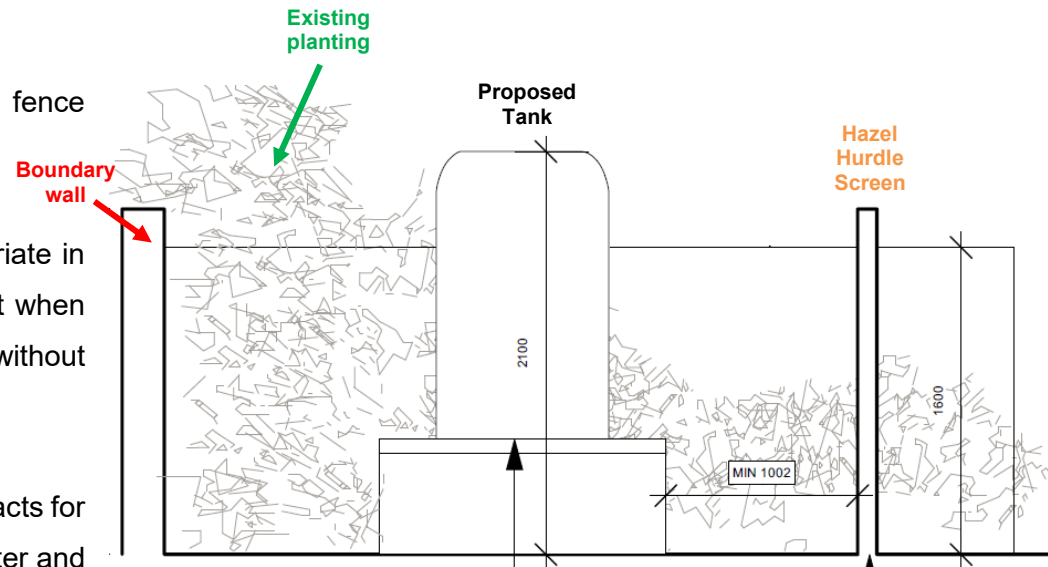


Example of a Hazel Hurdle Screen

5.12 The screen is effectively a traditional, rural, low key fence which is often used for these kinds of purposes.

5.13 It is considered that the proposed approach is appropriate in all respects and would represent a clear enhancement when compared to the historic positioning of the tanks, without screening and close to the listed property.

5.14 The positioning and screening ensures no adverse impacts for neighbours or the wider Conservation Area, the character and appearance of which would be preserved.



Section through proposed tanks and screening

Proposed Generator

5.15 For clarity, the proposed generator is not required for general use. It is hoped that it may never be needed but is to be installed as a 'back up' in the event of an electricity power cut. In this circumstance the generator would ensure household services and white goods such as fridges and freezers continued to function. Importantly in periods where the owners are away from the property with the alarm system set in the event of a power cut the generator will ensure that the system remains functional and prevents the alarm from sounding unnecessarily as a result of a loss of power.

5.16 The generator is proposed to be located next to the oil tanks and so enclosed in the same way between the boundary landscaping and the new Hazel Hurdle screening.

5.17 The proposal would have no adverse visual impacts as a result.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Rectory Farm is listed (Grade II*) and forms part of a pleasant grouping of further individually and curtilage listed buildings. It also stands within and the Northmoor Conservation Area.
- 6.2 Planning permission and listed building consent is sought to enable the construction of a green house, the relocation of the properties oil tanks and for the provision of an emergency generator within a screened enclosure to the west side of the property.
- 6.3 The proposals have been the subject of pre-application discussions with the Council indicating that each item was likely to receive support upon application.
- 6.4 It is respectfully submitted that the proposals would at least preserve and in the case of the relocated tanks enhance the setting of the listed building and preserve the character and appearance of the wider conservation area. There would be no adverse impacts upon any neighbouring properties.
- 6.5 Officers support for this application is therefore requested.