

The Stables and Coach House to Embleton Tower, Embleton, NE66 3UW



Proposed Conversion To Residential Annexe Design and Access Statement

September 2023

Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd

CONTENTS

Design and Access Statement

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Site Analysis	3
	Location	
	Size and Shape	
	General Site History	
	Buildings and Structures	
	Access	
	Constraints	
3.0	Surrounding Area	6
	Land Use	
	Development Form and Style	
	Movement and Connections	
4.0	Design Policy Background	6
5.0	Design Solutions	7
	Design objectives	
	Design Concept	
	Layout	
	Built Form and Design	
	Materials Palette	
	Landscaping	
	Access	
	Drainage and Refuse	
	Biodiversity	
6.0	Impacts of Design Concept	11
6.0	Conclusions	12

1.0 INTRODUCTION

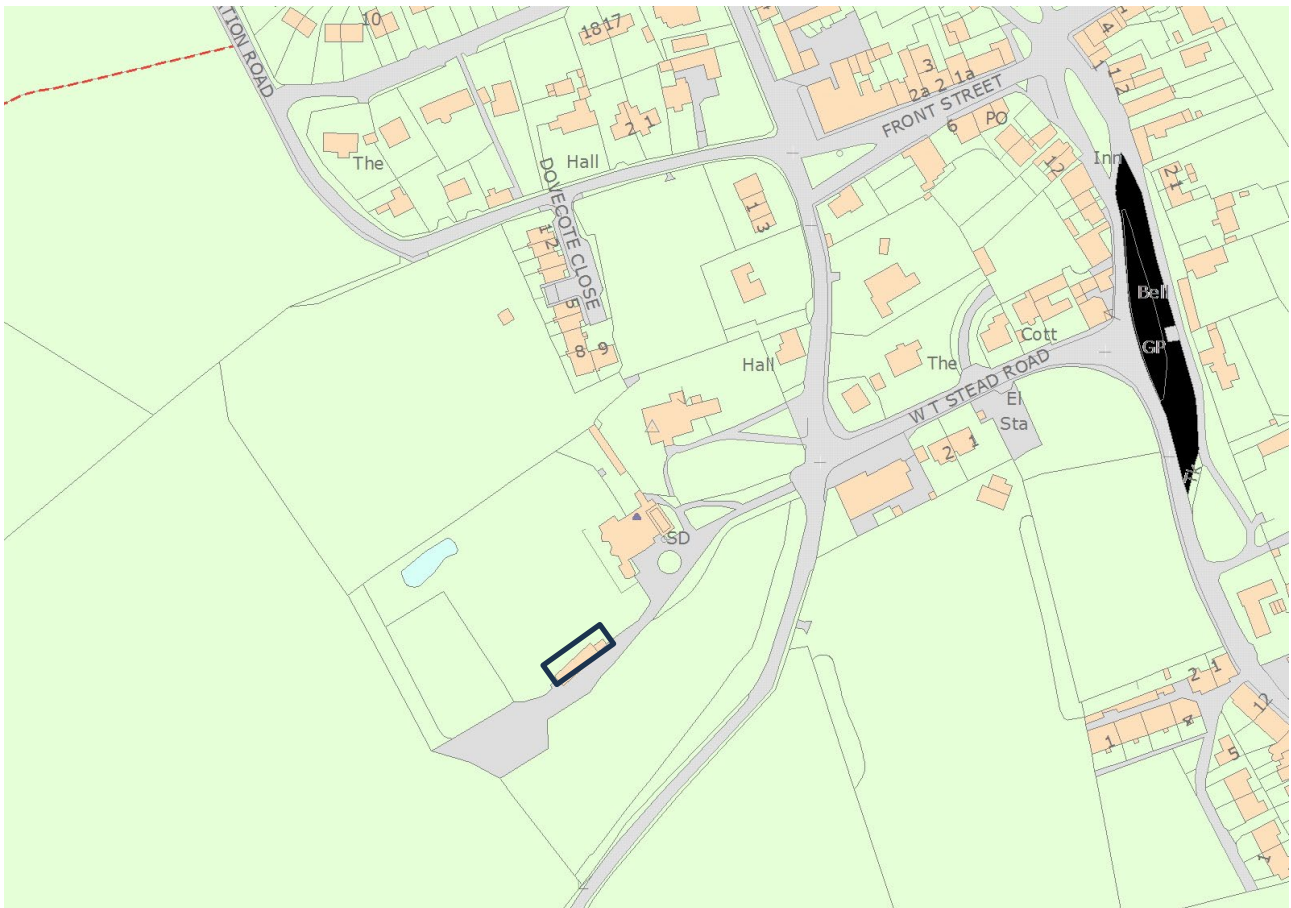
1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been produced by Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of the applicant Mr and Mrs Julian Kenny. It supports an application for the conversion of the former coach house and stables to a residential annexe for dependent relatives at Embleton Tower, Embleton.

2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 Location

2.1.1 The outbuilding comprising the former coach house and stables lies to the south west of Embleton Tower, Embleton which itself sits on the south west side of the village in close association with the village church.

Location Plan



2.2 Size and Shape

2.2.1 The plot is rectangular in shape and extends along an unmade track extending south west from the drive to Embleton Tower.

2.2.2 The built form is a three bayed building. The total floor area of the application property is approximately 150 square metres.

2.3 General Site History

2.3.1 The building dates from the early 19th century. It was originally built as the coach house and stables to the main house possibly with coach man or groom accommodation included.

2.4 Buildings and Structures

2.4.1 The main outbuilding is single storey and takes the form of a three bayed structure with a stepped ridge line as the building steps down the slope westwards. A half width offshoot at the western end may have been a later construction. The building is constructed in whinstone rubble roughly brought to course under a pantile roof.

2.4.3 The main walls of the buildings are in fair condition but there is some structural cracking in the eastern and western ends particularly in the western offshoot which is in a very poor state of repair. The roof tiles, water tabling and some timbers in the roof trusses are also in poor condition and will need to be replaced. The condition of the windows and doors are similarly poor and need to be replaced. Without significant intervention the building's future is likely to be short lived.



East and South Elevation



North and West Elevation

Access

2.5.1 The vehicular and pedestrian access to the outbuilding is via the trackway south west from the drive to Embleton Tower. The track way appears to be a stoned track now overgrown, The drive to the main house is accessed from the main road through Embleton opposite W.T. Stead Road.

2.5.2 Regular bus services (Nos 418 and X18) serve Embleton along the coastal route with a bus stop in the village at W.T. Stead Road near the site and the property would have reasonable access to local services including shops, village hall, garage etc.



Access track connecting to the Embleton Tower driveway

2.6 Constraints

2.6.1 The principal constraint on the conversion and development of the building is its positioning within the setting and curtilage of the Grade 1 listed Embleton Tower.

2.6.2 The site is not of itself in an area at risk of fluvial flooding and is in Flood Zone 1. There is the potential for surface water flooding near the site to the west but as this area is lower than the site itself there would be no risk to the property.

2.6.3 The site is not in an area identified by the Coal Authority where there is a risk to development. It is within a Surface Coal Resource Area but as this applies to the whole of Embleton and the proposal relates to the conversion of an existing building this is not a relevant constraint.

2.6.3 There are no other constraints likely to affect the site.

3.0 SURROUNDING AREA

3.1 Land Use

3.1.1 Land uses in the wider area around the site are mainly residential and ecclesiastical.

3.2 Existing Development Form and Style

3.2.1 Development along the main road through Embleton takes the form of traditional, mainly two storey, stone built or rendered properties many dating from the expansion of Embleton in the early 19th century after the development of the quarry. The church and the pele tower section of the listed house date from the medieval period. The Vicarage was developed and extended into a fine country vicarage in the early 19th century by John Dobson including an unusual elongated octagonal conservatory.

3.3 Movement and Connections

3.3.1 The principal movement corridors in the vicinity of the site are the main coast road through Embleton affording vehicular access up and down the coast and to Alnwick as the principal service centre about 7 miles distant.

3.3.2 Bus services providing connections to Alnwick, Newcastle and Berwick leave from stops at WT Stead Road close to the site.

4. DESIGN POLICY BACKGROUND

4.1 Overall the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure sustainable

development through the planning system. It requires development to achieve a balance by contributing to building a strong economy, supporting strong vibrant and healthy communities and contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment. At its heart, for development that achieves this sustainable balance, there is a presumption in favour.

4.2 The NPPF at section 11 seeks to make effective use of land and states that planning should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

4.3 Section 12 of the NPPF and in particular paragraph 127 sets out how planning proposals should achieve a high quality of sustainable design.

4.4 The *Northumberland Local Plan* (NLP) (Adopted 2022) identifies Embleton as a service village which will be the focus for investment in rural areas (**Policy STP1**). The NLP sets out at **Policy STP3** its principles for sustainable development which the proposal would have to meet and at **Policies QOP1 and QOP2** sets out the design principles relating to all new development.

4.5 Additionally Embleton Parish Council has prepared the *Embleton Parish Neighbourhood Plan* (EPNP) now 'made' which sets out at **Policy 4** its requirements to ensure high quality design in the village which all development must deliver.

4.6 Planning policy issues relating to heritage assets are dealt with in the Heritage Statement.

5.0 DESIGN SOLUTIONS

5.1 Design Objectives

5.1.1 The design objectives for the conversion and refurbishment are:

- To convert the outbuilding to a self-contained, sustainably designed two bedroom annexe to Embleton Tower to be occupied by dependent relatives.
- To achieve a design that works with the form and layout of the listed Embleton Tower and preserves and enhances its character and distinctiveness.
- To safeguard the future of the former coach-house - itself a building of local heritage value.
- To achieve a design that has negligible impact on the wider heritage of the Conservation Area and the natural environment around the site.

5.2 Design Concept

5.2.1 The design concept is to use the outbuilding as an ancillary building to the main house (Embleton Tower) in much the same way as would have been the case with the former coach house – physically separate but functionally linked to the main house.

5.2.2 Functional link 1 - Vehicular and pedestrian access will be from the main drive to the Embleton Tower by a gravelled track and a parking area will be created for two cars to the south side of the track.

Functional link 2 – the occupants of the annexe will share the garden of Embleton Tower with the occupants of the main house.

Functional link 3 – the infrastructure and services to Embleton Tower will also supply the annexe.

5.2.3 The intention is to minimise the interventions in carrying out the conversion and refurbishment to minimise the impact on the local heritage asset itself and the listed Embleton Tower but at the same time to create a living environment appropriate to the 21st century. However, some additional fenestration including rooflights will be necessary and the state of the western end offshoot means it is incapable of retention and to provide sufficient space within the annexe it is intended to rebuild this section to the full width of the main part of the outbuilding.

5.3 Layout

5.3.1 The layout is determined by the constraints of the existing building and the existing room formats as it is not intended to extend it substantially from its existing footprint other than at the western end.

5.3.2 The layout will provide for public rooms – lounge/dining room and kitchen at the eastern end and two bedrooms (one ensuite) and main bathroom arranged around a hallway in the western end.

5.3.3 There will be no change to the existing access to the property via the driveway to Embleton Tower other than to restone the track and insert two parking spaces. Refuse and recycling bins will be provided in a small timber built storage area adjacent to the driveway.

5.4 Built Form and Design

5.4.1 Externally the outbuilding to both main elevations will appear little different to that which currently exists although a timber storm porch is to be added to the south facing elevation and additional windows/doors will be inserted in the north facing elevation and the fully timbered coach doors in the south facing elevation will be replaced with glazed screens to allow additional light into the building.

5.4.2 The two large double coach door openings on the SE elevation present a challenge when considering how to fenestrate in such a way that the simplicity of the large openings is maintained but, at the same time, highly efficient, thin-framed glazing system is specified to minimise heat loss in winter and maximise solar gain year-round.

5.4.3 It was concluded that a thin-framed, aluminium glazing system, with lead grey powder coating, would be most appropriate as that would maximise the glazed area, have low u-values and, due to the colour and minimal framing/glazing bars, not insert overly domestic-style features into these openings. The existing glazing bar pattern used on the fixed lights will be replicated above the large, fixed glazing units using extra thin glazing bars.

5.4.4 The same principle would apply throughout the full SE elevation, and SW gable, where secondary openings would be fenestrated in the same way.

5.4.5 The NW elevation presents a different challenge given that it faces onto the garden and can be read in conjunction with the listed house. Taking our cue from the only window in that elevation, we propose only one additional opening, one enlarged opening to form French doors and one small window within the new 4th bay. All of these openings are of a much smaller scale than those on the SE elevation and have a more domestic character, with extra-thin glazing bars used to replicate the existing, small-pane format. Again thin framed aluminium framing would be the preferred approach closely matching the metal conservation rooflights on the roof pitch of this elevation. However, if Conservation officers consider timber windows and doors would be more appropriate in this elevation the applicant would accept this, but only for this elevation.

5.4.6 The western end of the outbuilding externally would also appear slightly changed in that the offshoot would be rebuilt to the full width of the main 3 bay building effectively adding a fourth bay. This will have a main window in the new, west facing gable end to light the principal bedroom.

5.4.7 Finally, because of the state of the pantiles it is likely that the tiling will be replaced on a like for like basis with repairs as necessary to wet rot damaged trusses.

5.4.8 Internally the principal changes to the current configuration of the property are as follows:

- Removal of ceilings in the main living space and kitchen and replacement of ceilings elsewhere.
- Relaying the floor slab in the main living space.
- Removal of stud partitioning in the western of the 3 bays.
- Insertion of new stud walling to form hallway and bathroom in the western of the 3 bays.
- To ensure the building is future proofed in terms of access needs the bedroom wing and the living space and kitchen areas will both be step free. However, because of the fall in ground level along the building, steps between the kitchen and hallway will be required. Internal and entrance doorways will be of wider format.

5.5 Materials Palette

5.5.1 The materials palette of the building is simple, consisting of only a few elements –

whinstone, pantile, timber windows and doors and in part cast iron gutters and downpipes. These are traditional materials and have aesthetic value in defining the building's character and significance.

5.5.2 The approach for material selection where new material is required for walls and roof will utilise and match the same limited range of traditional materials but as explained above utilising grey powder coated aluminium framing for doors and windows..

5.6 Landscaping

5.6.1 As stated above the outbuilding sits in an attractive sylvan setting. The proposed design works with this setting. No major trees are proposed for removal. There will be some clearing of the understorey and a degree of crown lifting to accommodate the parking area and to remove overhanging branches over the building but otherwise the trees will be retained.

5.6.2 A soft landscaping scheme along the south facing elevation of the building is proposed to be introduced featuring insect friendly/attracting plants.

5.6.3 The access track will be stoned up adjacent to this landscaping and a paved area incorporated immediately in front of the entrance porch.

5.6.3 A small private patio area is proposed on the north side of the building at its eastern end where there is access via glazed doors from the living area.

5.7 Access

5.7.1 The vehicular access to the new annexe will be provided from the driveway to Embleton Tower.

5.7.2 The occupants will park in new parking spaces to be created off the access track.

5.7.3 As stated the site is very well positioned in respect of bus stops and the coastal bus services.

5.7.4 Storage for bikes will be provided in the garden storage shed to be provided to the west of the outbuilding.

5.8 Drainage and refuse

5.8.1 Embleton Tower and its outbuilding is linked to the main combined sewer draining foul and surface water from Embleton. The drain run is located on the south and north sides of the outbuilding according to the client and flows west to meet the main sewer run.

5.8.2 Accordingly, it is proposed to connect up bathrooms and kitchen of the annexe to the drain run on the north side of the building.

5.8.3 The surface water drainage from roofs will be routed to soakaways via new cast iron rain water goods. The trackway access and parking area will retain their permeable surface and surface water will simply drain through.

5.8.4 Storage space for wheelie bins and air source heat pump will be provided at the east end of the building adjacent to the access track.

5.9 Biodiversity

5.9.1 In recognition of the incoming requirement to demonstrate biodiversity net gain the design for the conversion includes the provision of bat and bird boxes on the building and in the garden woodland adjacent. A soft landscaping scheme along the southern flank of the building will be designed with planting attractive to insects including bees and butterflies.

5.9.2 As Embleton is close to the protected sites on the coast the applicant understands that increased pressure on these sites from increased recreational access to the coast may require a financial contribution through a S106 legal agreement to mitigate the cost of coastal wardening and management.

6. Impacts of the Design Concept

6.1 The impact of the proposal on the grade 1 listed Embleton Tower is assessed in the Heritage Statement but, in essence, by retaining as much of the existing internal and external form of the outbuilding as possible the impact of the design concept is generally neutral and the character and appearance of the main house and its setting as well as the coach house itself would be preserved as a result of the development.

6.2 As stated above the key objective of the NPPF is for the planning system to achieve sustainable development. The NPPF makes it clear that the three threads of sustainability – economic, social and environmental gain must be sought jointly and simultaneously. The proposal reuses an existing building refurbishing it in accordance with sustainability principles and makes effective use of land and buildings. This approach is in accordance with sustainability objectives and the proposal would meet the NPPF policy objectives regarding the effective use of land and buildings.

6.3 In respect of the sustainability principles set out in policy STP3 of the NLP the proposed development, for the reasons above, would meet the following principles:

- b) - provide a type and mix of housing to meet local housing need;
- d) – contributing to the preservation and enhancement of historic built assets;
- e) – minimising impact on local amenity;

- g) – making effective use of finite resources including buildings;
- h) – making efficient use of land
- j) – being accessible by sustainable modes of transport;
- i) – demonstrating high quality sustainable design
- k) – making best use of existing facilities and infrastructure;
- m)- maximizing energy efficiency
- n) – locating development in areas not at risk of flooding

6.4 Equally in respect of the principles set out in Policy QOP1 the proposal would be compliant with criteria as follows:

- a) - making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness
- b) - creating a strong sense of place and integrating development into the surrounding context
- c) - visually attractive and using high quality materials respecting and enhancing the natural built and historic environments
- d) - ensuring a functional and adaptable building for future use
- i) - avoiding harm to amenity of occupants and neighbouring occupants
- j) - incorporating opportunities for wildlife and biodiversity as above
- k) - constituting efficient use of resources
- m) - mitigating climate change
- n) - ensuring the longevity of the buildings

6.5 Additionally the design will also meet the criteria of Policy 4 of the EPNP as follows:

- a) - the local context and character will be respected
- b) features including windows, doors, roof lights, chimneys, etc will have regard to surrounding character and materials used locally;
- c) appropriate landscaping has been incorporated into the scheme
- d) a sustainable drainage system has been incorporated
- e) measures have been incorporated to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light
- f) the proposed development does not result in significant adverse amenity impacts
- h) opportunities have been taken in the layout and building orientation to minimise energy consumption and maximise passive solar gain;
- i) the development will deliver measurable net-gains for biodiversity as above; and
- j) safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicle access is or can be made available

6.6 The development therefore will meet the sustainability principles set out in local planning policy. As sustainable development and in accordance with the NPPF it should be granted consent without delay.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This document supports the full planning application for the conversion and refurbishment of the former coach house and stables at Embleton Tower to form a self-contained residential annexe ancillary to the main house.

7.2 The proposed design of the conversion provides an annexe suitable for dependent relatives to a high quality of design without adversely affecting the character of the listed Embleton Tower or its Conservation Area setting or indeed the wider settlement and landscape character.

7.3 Indeed the proposed design has been conceived to give the building a secure and sustainable future and introduces quality residential space into the building.

7.4 The applicant is content to see conditions regarding materials and landscaping to be attached and understands that a S106 agreement is likely to be required for any permission to secure a financial contribution to the cost of coastal wardening and mitigation in the protected sites on the coast.

Argyle Planning Consultancy Ltd – September 2023