

Proposed Works

The Old Chapel,

The Street, Regil

Design & Access Statement

August 2023

dz architecture

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Introduction

This document is presented as part of the planning application for the following, proposed works:

- The removal of the existing gates and rear porch
- The construction of a new single storey rear extension and a new two storey side extension.
- The formation of a new gable bonnet in place of the existing rooflight in the end bedroom at the south end.
- The raising of new gates at the entrance to the site

The purpose of the proposal is to provide essential additional living accommodation for a growing family, who are active in the community and wish to remain, together with ground floor storage. It is not a speculative development.

This statement sets out the background and justification for the proposed development and should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings

Site Context and the Surrounding Area

The site lies in the village of Regil, North Somerset, adjacent to Winford. The village is a linear development along The Street with other infill housing. The houses range in age and style. Along The Street, the main road through the village, houses are varied, sitting onto and away from the highway mostly with spacious plots. Older frontages are straight on to The Street or set back slightly. Modern infill housing is from the twentieth century.

The Existing Site

The site comprises a single residential dwelling, a converted former chapel that has off road parking and front and rear gardens. Adjoining the site is a horse paddock with a detached stable building that, together with the application site, is also part of the applicants' property.

The dwelling is orientated on a north to south axis with a ridged roof running parallel with The Street. It has a simple rectangular plan form with robust stone walls below a tiled roof with uPVC rainwater goods. The building is set back more than 3 metres from the road. A stone wall and wall top metal railings enclose the front garden. The rear garden is spacious and largely concealed from view by the dwelling, entrance gates and a roadside hedgerow.

The site is not subject to any statutory historic designations. The dwelling is not listed. It is, however, identified as a Chapel on the Council's Historic Environment Record (HER).

The site is outside flood zone 2 and 3. Long term flood risk data on gov.uk also shows that the site is not in a medium or high risk area of surface water flooding.

An ecological survey report by Abricon Ltd is included with the application. To avoid unnecessary duplication, we will not repeat the detail that is contained in that report in this statement.

The site is within the designated Green Belt.

Planning History

Recent Planning History

Ref. No: 23/P/1030/LDE

Certificate of lawfulness for the existing use of land as a residential garden at the Old Chapel, The Street, Regil, North Somerset BS40 8BD.

Ref. No: 12/P/0208/F

Change of use of agricultural land to garden curtilage and erection of a single storey rear extension. The extension was not built but the delegated planning application report relating to the consent stated that the proposed change of use from agriculture to domestic use was retrospective. Therefore, this planning permission remains extant.



Aerial Photo of the site

View of The Old Chapel looking east from The Street



The Proposal

The proposal is for the removal of the existing gates and rear porch and the construction of a new single storey extension to the rear and a new two storey side extension onto the gable facing north. The existing rooflight in the bedroom at the southern end is replaced with a new bonnet and window to match the adjacent windows and bonnets.

The rear extension sits across part of the width of the chapel with low lying eaves and provides a new entrance hall, home office, living and dining spaces. The elevation is articulated by the introduction of structural oak posts which result in the set back of the new extension glazing. The roof is finished with clay pantiles to match the existing and three new rooflights. The home office is clad in stone with lime mortar pointing to replicate the walls of the chapel. The home office window head will be finished with a planted oak lintel as elsewhere.

The side extension provides much needed secure storage for a growing family on the ground floor and a new bedroom above. Walls and roof match the existing with a new pair of French doors sitting behind a new Juliet balcony for the new bedroom. The doors to the store are to be painted to match the remainder of the doors and fenestration with a planted oak lintel above. Glazing patterns match those in place. A new, recessed alcove is integrated into the front elevation to match the façade pattern of doors and windows.

As noted in the 2012 application (12/P/0208/F), the existing floor space is 117 square metres. The new extensions will add 53 square metres on the ground floor and 19 square metres on the first floor. The additions are not disproportionate in mass or scale.

The 2012 application notes that the dwelling was created from the reuse of an existing building has many shortcomings as a domestic residence. Internally, the scale of the existing building is diminutive despite its external appearance. The existing open plan Kitchen/Dining/Lounge area is not ideal and the bedrooms with sloping ceilings are very small and restricted in height. The smallest bedroom is approximately 7.4 square metres and, therefore, does not comply with the technical housing standards¹– nationally described space standard of 7.5 square metres for a single bedroom. The middle bedroom at approximately 9.3 square metres and the current master bedroom at approximately 11.3 square metres also do not comply with the standard of 11.5 square metres for double bedrooms. The retention of the original wooden A-Frames and positions of original gable ends further undermines the utility of these rooms as adult bedrooms, making the positioning of a standard double bed awkward. It is clear that improved and extended accommodation is essential for this growing family. In particular, a separate dining area and living/ family room and home office, needed as both parents work partially from home, together with a bedroom large enough for two adults are required.

Making use of existing buildings and adapting them incrementally to meet changing requirements is part of the visual language of the countryside. Indeed it is essential to sustaining rural communities.

The rear extension has no impact on visual amenity and the design helps to reduce the bulk and mass of the elevation.

The side extension works as a continuation of the lower side entrance to the former chapel. The new extension of the roof line helps to marry the two parts (old and new) together and the use of matching materials and the repetition of the main façade pattern language does not detract from the existing building. Further, the new width of the left hand side does not dominate or compete with the main elevation of the central part of the chapel. It is subservient to it.

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard>



View of The Old Chapel looking east from The Street

View of the East and North elevations as existing showing the existing rear porch.



The Proposal (cont.)

Materials and Appearance

The materials to the front will reflect stonework on the rest of the building, The east facing façade will incorporate structural oak posts and planted oak lintels. Smaller scale windows will match the existing.

The Green Belt

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.²

As with previous policy, the NPPF also states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.³ The starting point regarding the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is that they should be regarded as inappropriate development save for a list of exceptions that include the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.⁴ What constitutes a disproportionate addition is not defined within the NPPF.

In the case of this proposal, the two extensions individually and cumulatively are modest in terms of scale and mass and built form. The two-storey extension will continue the rectangular form of the existing building, projecting only 4.5 metres to the north of the gable end. The single-storey rear extension will extend 4.0 metres to the east. The impact of the development on the existing dwelling will be limited and it will not result in a disproportionate addition to the building. Visually, the rear extension will also be concealed behind the building inside the developed line to the east of The Street.

The Historic Environment

The NPPF states that for proposals affecting heritage assets, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, and that 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 its significance.⁵

The proposal will not affect any designated heritage assets. As a former Chapel and a building that is identified on the Council's HER, the building is however of historic interest. The arched windows, which are gothic in style with stone surrounds, are the most distinctive and architecturally significant features. The robust external appearance of the building with locally distinctive materials (natural stone and tiles) also contributes to its significance and its importance is derived from the record that it provides of formerly being a Chapel. Its importance is increased by its prominent position next to the highway. The stone wall and wall top metal railings that enclose the front garden that would have once defined the extent of the curtilage of Chapel and also contribute positively to its significance.

Internally, the entrance hallways are unchanged and the main room was where chapel was held. The building, however, has few fittings to note. This reflects the change of use of the building to a dwelling involving significant internal works, which included, among others, installing a first floor and altering and cutting out sections of the roof structure. The previous owner informed the applicants that the chapel font was where there is now a downstairs bathroom. The font was removed either before or during the conversion works as was a timber platform from which sermons were delivered during services. Together with introducing a residential use, this diminished the historic value of the building.

In our opinion, taken as a whole, the building is of local significance. This is reflected from it being documented in the HER.

So far as the impact of this proposal on the building is concerned, the design scheme has been developed to respect the fabric of the building and its historic significance. Internal access to the first floor of the two-storey extension will involve creating a new opening in what is not an original wall but one that was built when the building was converted to a dwelling. In the rear wall, only one new opening will be formed in the original building and one existing window will be removed and its opening extended to the ground to provide access to the proposed single storey extension. All features of historic significance will be retained, including the arched windows and roadside wall and metal railings. In addition to retaining those features, careful consideration has been given to the appearance of the extensions with materials that mirror those of the existing building. A new roadside arched stone recess that will complement the existing windows is proposed on this elevation. The retention of a step in the roof will continue to provide an element of architectural distinctiveness to allow the relative ages of the original and altered building to be identified.

Environment and Sustainability

The proposal looks to construct low energy, sustainable extensions ensuring energy security and the use of environmentally certified materials and techniques for a comfortable, energy efficient internal environment.

During the construction, any demolition materials will be separated for recycling, efficient water use will be promoted and contractors will be considerate to neighbours.

New materials, timber, etc, will be sourced locally where possible. A local contractor will build the scheme, so keeping money in the local economy and preventing large journeys to site, and the extra emissions generated.

The extensions will be fitted with led lighting throughout, water efficient taps and white goods and new, efficient air ventilation systems for the correct indoor air quality. East facing windows and the new rooflights will allow light in to the plan of the building and give the benefit of winter solar gain for the occupants.

Refuse and Recycling

A small area to the side of the proposed drive will house all refuse and recycling bins as at present.

Ecology and Protected Species

A survey has been carried out and the survey ecological report forms part of this application. This confirms that the roof is used as a day roost by common pipistrelle bats and, therefore, a bat mitigation licence (BML) or registration under a bat mitigation class licence (BMCL) will be required. It will not be possible to apply for a BML or register for a BMCL until after planning permission has been granted. Mitigation measures include the timing of works and addition of raised tiles to allow bat access to the new portion of roof. The installation of a bird box is recommended to provide an ecological enhancement. The proposed development will be carried out in accordance with the ecological survey report.

The Proposal

Landscaping

The site landscaping has an opportunity for enhancement for several reasons: for benefit and enjoyment of the occupants, to serve as resources and benefit to wildlife and pollinators, and to help to reduce the radiant heat load on the building by the use of trees providing shelter and shade.

Flood Risk

The property does not lie in a flood risk area

Stormwater Disposal

All roof storm water will be disposed to a soakaway, all to LABC and water company approval.

Access

The access from The Street will be moved north of the existing entrance with adequate off street parking space for the size of the enlarged house and visitors. There will also be ample room within the site for vehicles to manoeuvre so that they are able to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. Compared to the existing entrance, the proposed arrangement will provide drivers with better visibility of the highway and afford people using the highway with better visibility of the entrance.

Conclusion

The proposal provides new low energy accommodation as extensions to the existing family home.

It does not harm or create the loss of space or facilities which contribute to the character of the village. It is of appropriate scale, design and character for its setting and will not harm neighbouring amenity of other properties.

The siting of the works has been carefully considered so that they are not overly dominant in the landscape. The design is sympathetic to the existing and nearby buildings and they are subservient to the existing property.

The off street parking complies with planning policy guidance and will have no effect on current parking either on the site or off of it.

There will not be any adverse amenity or highway effects. Vehicles will have adequate visibility for manoeuvring.

All stormwater drainage will be discharged to a brand new soakaway. Run off from the drive ramp will be collected by a new drainage channel at the back edge of the road. All infrastructure and utilities are available to service the new proposal.

In conclusion, the proposal presents a sympathetic, visually appropriate, attractive, characterful design in keeping with its surroundings and the landscape. The proposal therefore complies with government policy which states planning decisions should ensure that developments are designed to add to the quality of an area not just for the short term but over the lifetime of a development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. ⁶

Notes

- 2 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF
- 3 Paragraph 147 of the NPPF
- 4 Paragraph 149 of the NPPF
- 5 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF
- 6 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF

