

# Design and Access Statement

Proposed replacement windows to  
Pear Tree Cottage, Rack Hill, Chalford, Stroud  
Gloucestershire GL6 8LA

for

Dan Exton Esq



## The Proposal

This application seeks permission to replace windows to existing cottage.

## The Physical Context.



The Parish of Chalford occupies one of several steep-sided heavily wooded valleys incised into the northern flank of the main scarp slope of the Cotswolds dropping down into the valley of the river Frome, which runs roughly east-west from the Cotswolds down through Stroud and discharges into the river Severn.

The geology of the area consists mainly of inferior oolite and great oolite limestone layered with lias clay. This gives rise to spring lines running across the landscape.

Landscape assessment by the AONB divides the Parish into three main areas - Settled Valleys, Escarpment and High Wold.

The Parish is renowned for its steep hillsides and scarp edges as well as its narrow roads and footpaths many of which have a gradient between 10% and 25%. The valley road through Chalford was first developed in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. From the later 18th century, when the valley bottom offered no further sites, cottages were built on the hillsides above, an area sometimes referred to as Little Switzerland.

The Parish is composed of five historic settlements, plus the newer Manor Village. All five historic settlements have Conservation Areas at their cores and the application site sits within the Chalford Vale Conservation Area.

The Chalford Vale Conservation Area differs from its neighbouring Conservation Areas having a considerable valley area with a strong industrial heritage. Part of the area is in the Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area with its special controls and planning guidance.

High Street, towards the east of the Vale, is narrow but filled with properties built on the edge of the road. The gradient rises steeply to the north, and cottages and houses, such as those in Rack Hill, cling to the slope.

Rack Hill has been likened to a quarry with sheer drops and narrow platforms running parallel to the valley bottom where cottages and their gardens are perched on narrow strips of level ground previously used to dry cloth. These are retained by high walls.

Though access for cars is difficult or non-existent in places, the south facing plots have views in a wide arc across to the opposite side of the valley and this compensates for the inconvenience and these are popular areas in which to live.

Pear Tree Cottage fits within the historic setting of the area characterised by houses and cottages in the Cotswold Vernacular style, built of local Cotswold stone with steep sloping roofs, and aligned alongside the roads and lanes.

The cottage is oriented east/west on its plot and it would appear that the property is an amalgamation of two smaller cottages built into the sloping hillside.

The accommodation comprises a living room, kitchen, with a utility room in a single storey annexe, on the ground floor, two bedrooms and bathrooms on the first floor and a third bedroom in the attic.

The proposed alterations to the property seek to build over the existing single storey annexe to create an additional bedroom.

### **The Social Context**

The immediate neighbourhood is almost exclusively residential.

### **The Economic Context**

The proposed site is categorised as being within the settlement development limits of the Chalford and in this regard is viewed as a sustainable location despite the comparative lack of local services and facilities.

### **Flood Risk**

The Environment Agency long term flood risk information search identifies that for Pear Tree Cottage the flood risk from rivers or the sea or from surface water is very low.

### **The Planning Policy Context**

Pear Tree Cottage sits within the Chalford Vale Conservation Area, within the Cotswold AONB and within the settlement development limits of Chalford.

The current Stroud District Local Plan was adopted in 2015 following the implementation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

NPPF(7) stresses the importance of quality design.

The Chalford Parish Council have prepared a Design Statement to provide locally specific guidance to accompany the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 and the Stroud District Council Residential Design Guide.

The Chalford Design Statement sets out design guidance for development within the Conservation Areas

#### “4.2.2 Materials

C10: In the Conservation Area, replacement windows and doors should be constructed using traditional materials, detailing and design. UPVC is not generally appropriate. It is important that replacement windows and doors give a similar visual appearance to those in the existing house in terms of overall shape, colour and size of frame.”

Historic England advise

“We will support the removal of non-historic windows provided it is clear that they are not of historic or architectural interest and that the new windows are of an appropriate style that enhances the building. Replacement windows will have to comply with building regulations under Approved Document L, which requires new windows to be of the same or better energy efficiency.”

The Stroud District Council’s policy that covers development within Conservation Areas is Delivery Policy ES10 ‘Valuing our historic environment and assets’

Stroud District’s historic environment will be preserved, protected or enhanced, in accordance with the principles set out below:

1. Any proposals involving a historic asset shall require a description of the heritage asset significance including any contribution made by its setting, and an assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance, using appropriate expertise. This can be a desk based assessment and a field evaluation prior to determination where necessary and should include the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record.
2. Proposals and initiatives will be supported which conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance and setting of the Districts heritage assets, especially those elements which contribute to the distinct identity of the District.
3. Proposals will be supported which protect and, where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance and setting of locally identified heritage assets, such as buildings of local architectural or historic interest, locally important archaeological sites and parks and gardens of local interest.
4. Proposals will be supported which protect and, where appropriate, enhance key views and vistas, especially of the spires and towers of historic churches and mills.
5. Any harm or loss would require clear and convincing justification to the relevant decision-maker as to why the heritage interest should be overridden.

## **Assessment**

The proposals seek to meet the guidance of Chalford Design Statement “to give a similar visual appearance to those in the existing house in terms of overall shape, colour and size of frame.”