

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Ref 21.05
Job **Highcroft**
Author JD
Date 26-01-2024



Details: This project is for the demolition of an existing cottage, garage, and outbuildings before the construction of a new four-bedroom house, garage, and study space.



Figure 1: Highcroft, Darsham Road, Westleton

SUBMITTED INFORMATION

This Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the following information:

Architectural Drawings and Reports:

- 00 Existing Drawings Binder – Plans, Sections & Elevations
- 01 Proposed Drawings Binder [SK06] – Plans, Sections & Elevations
- 06 Design and Access & Fire Strategy Statements

Ligna Consultants - Arboreal Report

- P2673_AIA01_V3 - Arboreal Impact Assessment
- P2673_AMS01_V3 – Tree Protection Scheme



OVERVIEW

A site-specific development, the Applicant's desire is for a more efficient and sustainably designed property that is integrated with the mature vegetation of the site, is respectful of the settlement plan and neighbouring properties and that can accommodate the future residential occupation of this home by a modern family and their busy onsite working needs.

The proposals have been developed in site of the East Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 and broader Nation Planning Policy Framework.

PLANNING HISTORY

A planning submission ref: DC/22/4613/FUL was submitted in November 2022. Following non-determination of this submission the Applicant chose to withdraw the application in August 2022 and submit a pre-application advice submission for an unchanged scheme. Pre-application written advice ref: DC/23/3771/PREAPP was received in December 2023 following a site meeting with the Planning Officer Jamie Behling on the 24/11/2023.

THE EXISTING PROPERTY

Highcroft is a detached single storey three-bedroom hipped roof bungalow set within a 1730sq.m mature leafy site in the village of Westleton. The property sits within the Settlement boundary of the village; however, it is not located within the conservation zone. Westleton is identified as a small village in the settlement hierarchy.

JDA



Figure 2: Existing Front Elevation



Figure 3: Existing Rear Elevation

The property which is believed to have been built in the early 1970's, is poorly constructed relative to modern standards. The footprint of the property is small relative to the size of the plot, offering three small bedrooms, a single bathroom and combined kitchen and living accommodation. The property which only just meets the minimum space standards no longer meets the needs of the Applicant's family and new remote working requirements.

RESPONSE TO PRE-APP

The Applicant took a very measured approach when preparing designs for the proposed property, making the protection of vegetation that exists on the site a priority. This is why the proposed development sits largely on the footprint of the existing structure, the development spreads across the site as it does is because the existing structure does. Were the Applicant to go down a permitted development route they would be entitled to construct a proposal with a larger footprint that would be far more detrimental to the greening on site and amenity to others.

We have made a couple of small but effective revisions to our application in order to provide comfort on points raised within the pre-application advice, namely:

- We have reduced the width of the proposed dining room to the south elevation. The structure now aligns with the footprint of the existing conservatory and therefore does not extend any further toward the property to the south than the existing scheme.
- We have amended the Arboricultural Impact Assessment to better identify the retention of existing Hedging, Shrubs and Trees along boundary line, preserving existing screening between neighbouring properties.

The dining room extension on the southern elevation has been scaled back by 240mm to now align with the existing building line. Although the eaves edge of the roof is 400mm higher than the existing conservatory the datum is still 300mm below the 3m datum that is accepted under permitted development. In addition, replacing a

conservatory in favour of a solid structure will offer a small improvement in amenity. In maintaining the existing building line, we can ensure that the existing hedging along the boundary is retained and can be fully re-established.

The Southern and Northern boundaries were closely inspected with Planning Officer Jamie Behling during his site visit on 24th November 2023. It was apparent that the boundary fence to the north was positioned within the middle of the hedge and not against the garage wall as previously thought. The original deeds drawing from 1972 ref: SK188626 [Figure 4] illustrates that the boundary to the North sits approximately one meter beyond the position of the garage, consistent with the position of the existing boundary fence. The scheme does not extend up to the boundary, therefore the hedging and shrubs that are prolific in these areas can be retained on the Applicants' side as well as those areas on adjoining properties.

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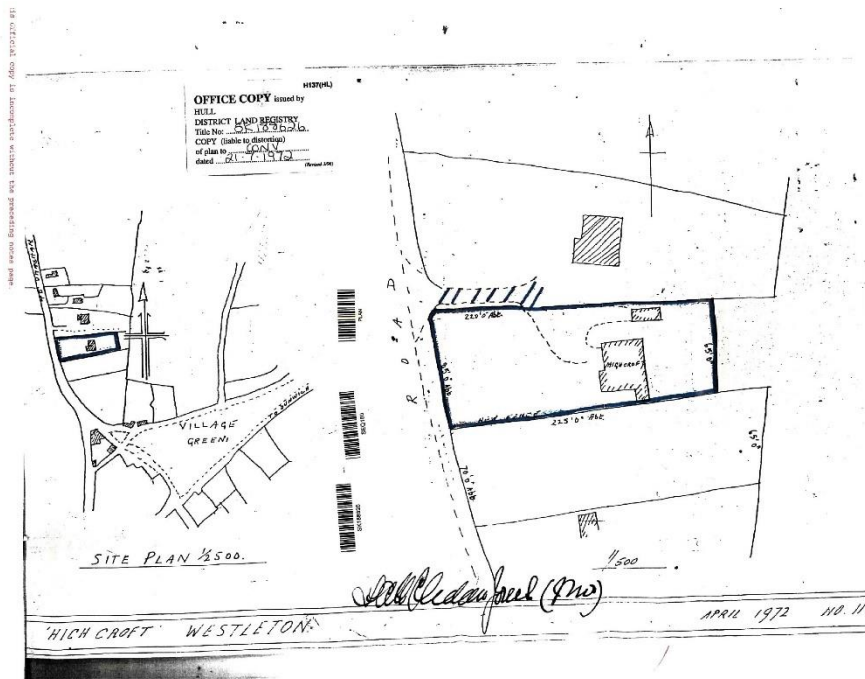


Figure 2 - Deeds Plan ref SK188626

Changes to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment illustrate these points. T19, G7 and H2 will now be retained with minimal pruning to enable the works. Likewise, T17 will be retained but subject to a Root Protection Area for the duration of the works. These changes will retain greening along the boundary line, providing screening to the works, and ensuring that the hedging and shrubs can recover and be fully re-established once the structures are complete.

The revised Arboricultural Site Plan, Appendix 3 of the Arboriculture Impact Assessment has been updated to include colour which helps to illustrate how greening along the boundaries will be retained relative to the existing. The architectural drawing packages have also been updated to illustrate screening along neighbouring boundaries. T18, G3 and G6 will be removed to enable the works, these trees are in areas that will not be detrimental to either the amenity and or greening of direct neighbours.

The Arboreal Impact Assessment includes mitigation measures that will be implemented during the works to ensure protection of existing growth as well as proposed planting of new. The Arboreal Method Statement provides technical information on how mitigation will be implemented.

When assessed in accordance with British Standard BS 5837:2012 [Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction – recommendations] the proposed development's Arboricultural impact is assessed as being **negligible**.

THE PROPOSED NEW DWELLING

The Applicant has owned Highcroft since 2015, utilising the property as a holiday home. In that time, they have become familiar with the site. They now wish for the property to become their principal home and in doing so wish to create a modern, sustainable property that is in harmony with its natural surroundings and that meets the requirements of their expanded family and busy working and outdoor lifestyles.

Principally the design seeks to create a contemporary home that connects the occupant with the mature garden, to form visual connections between the front and rear gardens and protect the amenity of both the applicant and direct neighbours.

Siting of the New Dwelling and Proportion

The new dwelling largely adopts the footprint of the existing dwelling, extending further into the rear garden and in areas also beyond the existing front building line into the front garden. The double storey element of the new dwelling is kept centrally within the plot with single storey dining and garage / study areas with low eaves set along boundary areas.

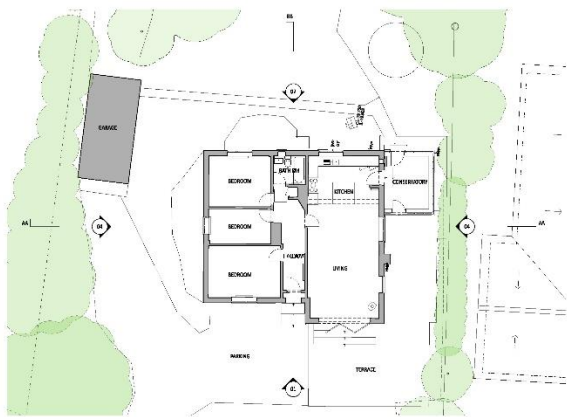


Figure 3: Existing GF Plan

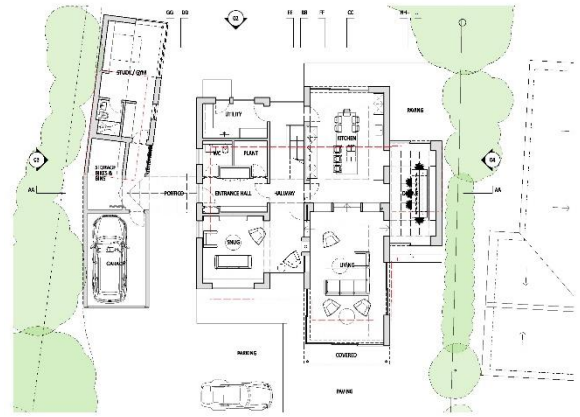


Figure 4: Proposed GF Plan

The dining room addition is proposed on the footprint of the existing conservatory, we have adopted a stepped roof detail to ensure the massing and eaves line of this area along the southern boundary remains largely unchanged.

Likewise, the proposed study and bike storage sit largely on the footprint of the existing garage although extending further into the rear garden. The proposed new garage is angled away from the boundary to align with the front elevation of the property, to help balance the form of the stepped front elevation as well as making parking in the garage easier than the current angled entry.

Adopting the existing footprint for the new dwelling enables us to largely avoid Root Protection Areas [RPA] of existing mature trees, ensures that the form and position of the proposed dwelling is consistent with the settlement plan and ad hoc building line of houses along Darsham Road.

Portico

The Portico forms a covered entrance as well as connecting the external garage and study to the main dwelling. The Portico, which frames the view to the rear garden is designed to draw focus to anyone approaching the property toward the main entrance which is located on the side elevation enabling the floorplan of the main living spaces to remain unbroken along the front southwest facing elevation.

Transparency and Connection

The floorplate of the proposed dwelling is configured of four linear elements running front to rear, focusing views down the site and in turn protecting neighbourly amenity. Full glazing to the east and west elevations enables the capture of natural sunlight throughout the day as well as providing the transparency required to bridge the connect between the front and rear garden spaces.



Figure 5: Proposed front elevation

A central, lightweight glazed hallway and stairwell is flanked on either side by the two main living elements. On the South side is the kitchen and living areas which are stepped reflecting the sloping nature of the site. The change in level enables a generous ceiling height to the living space, emphasised by the full height openable glazing that allows the living to spill out onto the front garden. The principal bedroom suite and guest bedroom are accommodated above, together with a second work from home space.



The principal bedroom extends out beyond the living room to create a Brise soleil, limiting the solar gain to South-West facing glazing below.

The Entrance Hall, Cloakroom, Plant, and Utility rooms together with the Snug are located on the North side of the central hallway. Two compact children's rooms are found above at FF level together with a single-family bathroom.

The main circulation path intersects the main floorplate cutting a direct line from the Portico through to the Dining room, a central visible line that is also mirrored at SF level. A carefully placed rooflight above the dining space will capture south facing sunlight for much of the day illuminating the focal point of this design element at ground floor level. A cranked eaves rooflight mirrors the concept at second floor level.



The Garage and Study

The proposed garage is sized to accommodate a modern family car, new EV charging point will be sited within the garage with a second point externally. A generous storage area is accommodated between the garage and study with room for eight bicycles as well as canoes and refuge storage. The study area will be utilised predominantly as a work from home space but has potential to double as a second guest bedroom, a compact shower room is therefore included.

Materials

A traditional Suffolk White mottled brick is proposed for the GF Walls with a lighter weight Factory-Stained Western Red Cedar Cladding proposed for the FF walls and above. At roof level we propose to adopt a standing seam roof with hidden gutters. Aluminium faced glazing is proposed throughout.

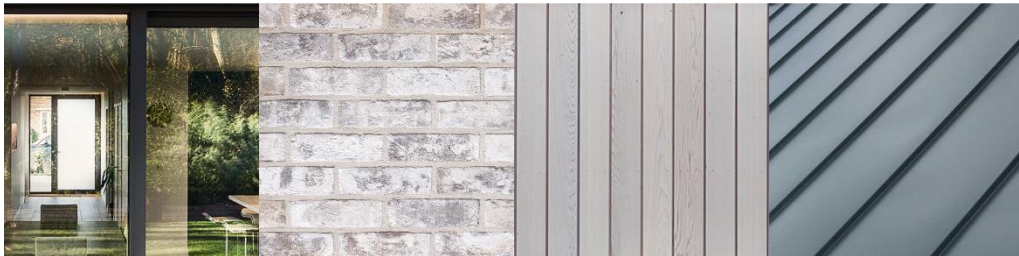


Figure 6: Proposed Materials [Aluminium framed glass, Suffolk White Bricks, Factory-Stained Red Cedar & standing seam roof]

Boundary Treatments

The boundary treatments will remain largely unchanged with existing hedging, shrubs and trees to be retained along the boundaries. An existing timber fence to the southern elevation will be replaced with new to the extent of the terraced area along the boundary with the Lynedoch property. New planting against this structure will create a new living wall.



Access

Vehicle access to the new dwelling will remain unchanged, made from Darsham Road via a shared driveway with the neighbouring Fieldcroft property. Parking provision will be sufficient to enable a minimum of two vehicles to park comfortably turn and exit in a forward gear. A new dual electric vehicle charging point is proposed, to be located on the side elevation of the Garage.

Pedestrian and Disabled access to the new property will be significantly improved. The new dwelling will meet and exceed the requirement M4(1): Category 1 – Visitable dwellings.

Step free level access to the habitable rooms and GF WC can be made via the principal entrance. Level access to the rear garden is feasible from both the kitchen and utility rooms. The main living space and front garden which is set 300mm below the level of the principal entrance can be accessed via a separate external garden entrance.

The Garage and Study will also have a covered step free level access, the Portico structure makes dry access to this space possible during inclement weather. The study space is designed to make future adaptation to fully accessible sleeping accommodation possible should it be required.

Services & Controls

Switches and sockets, including doorbells, entry phones, light switches, power sockets, TV aerials and telephone jacks, serving habitable rooms throughout the dwelling have their centre line 450-1200mm above floor level. Consumer units are mounted so that the switches are 1350-1450mm above floor level.

Environmental

The proposal will be subject to a Standard Assessment Procedure [SAP] to determine the building's total energy performance. We propose the target 'actual dwelling' performance be a 20% improvement on the standard 'notional dwelling' performance.

The Applicant proposes to construct a high efficiency building that exceeds the existing requirements of Part L 2021 to ensure that absolute minimum heating input is required to ensure that energy consumed, and dwelling CO2 emission rate are kept to an absolute minimum. The proposed use of Air-Source Heat pumps to assist heating and hot water production will further reduce emission rates.

The building envelope and heating and hot water design will be constructed to the highest standards to ensure minimal heat loss, features of the design will include:

- Continuity of insulation for whole home protection
- U-value performance will seek to improve on current Part-L values by 20%
- Thermal Bridging will be designed out during technical design stage
- The timber frame vapour and air permeability barrier will extend to blockwork to ensure continuity
- Insulation and air-permeability barrier will extend to and connect with all openings

- All primary and secondary hot water and heating pipes will have sealed insulation
- A Heat Recovery and Mechanical Ventilation [HRMV] system will be adopted for the property
- Thermostatic heating controls will be provided for each room, relayed to a central hub for remote app control.

It is proposed to construct the building from traditional building materials that are sustainably sourced.

TREES

Protection of the existing mature vegetation on site was one of the key drivers for the design. Siting the new dwelling largely on the footprint of the existing property has negated any unnecessary damage or upheaval to the existing trees.

The revised Arboreal Report has identified two less significant shrubs / trees that require removal, as mitigation for this the Applicant proposes to plant a new 3m+ mature sapling/tree. The report also recommends utilising a no dig 3D Cellular system below the proposed paving to the rear terrace as mitigation for this being set within the RPA of Trees 7&8, measures that are easily adopted.

FLOOD RISK

The site is in a Flood Risk Zone 1, Low Probability of risk of flooding from river or sea. Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding. This is equivalent to less than a 0.1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) of river and tidal flooding.

The property is elevated on a sloping site, therefore the chance of flooding from surface water run-off is also minimal. Although runoff surfaces are marginally increased under the new scheme the footprint of the development remains marginal relative to the site which will largely remain as sustainable grass and gravel surfaces.

FIRE STRATEGY

Means of Escape

The principle for means of escape from the upper levels of the proposed dwelling is out the main entrance door on the side elevation via the protected stair that extends to the final exit. In the event that the main exit is blocked, three alternate routes for means of escape are possible, via the utility room to the rear, or via the kitchen or living rooms to both the front and rear.

The central stairwell and entrance hall will be protected. All doors leading off from these areas will be 30min compliant. Special attention should be made during construction to ensure that internal glazed doors at ground floor level meet this standard.

In extreme circumstances where the main escape route is blocked at ground floor level, secondary escape would be possible from the first floor via escape windows, each of the Second Floor Bedrooms will host an escape window compliant aperture.



The proposed assembly point is in the front garden.

Passive safety measures

The fire integrity of the stair compartment will be 30min, doors to the compartment will be 30min rated with intumescent strips set into the frames.

New glazing within the protected stair will comply with the Part K4 of the building regulations on safe breakage and robustness. The location of this glass within a protected stair may be disregarded for separation distance purposes.

The building envelope will meet all the requirements of Approved Document B Volume:1 for fire safety and the internal, structural and external spread of flame.



Active Safety Measures

Our proposals include for the installation of a new LD2 fully wired and interlinked fire alarm system. This system will incorporate detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling, and in all specified rooms and areas that present a high fire risk to occupants. In addition, we shall include optical detection in areas of low risk but with either inner room provision or longer escape routes.

Access and facilities for the fire and rescue service

The proposals will meet the requirements of Approved Document B1. Access to the new dwelling for the purposes of firefighting are improved with the introduction of a new minimum 3.1m wide entrance gate which will now enable a fire appliance to access the front garden parking area. Access to the rear of the property is gained by passing under the Portico. The 45m access threshold can be achieved to all points inside the dwellinghouse.

Building Information & The 'Golden Thread' of information

Details of the fire strategy will be included in the O&M folder for the property and will include details of how the building was designed, built, and should be maintained and operated.

The O&M folder should be considered as a live document and updated along with any changes in the building or its maintenance.

CONCLUSION

The proposed new dwelling will offer a significant improvement on the existing, maximise the occupation of the site relative to the existing and offer an efficient building with reduced emissions, suitable for the modern working practice and living requirements of a modern family.

The Applicant's sensitive approach to the design ensures that the amenities of the occupants and neighbours alike will be protected and that the new dwelling will sit harmoniously within the context of the site and broader settlement.