



## PLANNING STATEMENT

**Sheafhouse cottage, Draycott Road, Blockley, GL56 9DY | March 2024**

*Change of use of existing self-contained annexe to 1No. dwelling*

*On behalf of David Lovely*

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by SF Planning Ltd on behalf of David Lovely in support of a planning application to Cotswold District Council for the change of use of an existing self-contained annexe to 1No. dwelling. This will effectively result in the subdivision of one dwelling into two dwellings.
- 1.2 In addition to this Planning Statement, the application is supported by the following:
- Planning application forms;
  - Existing site plan & location plan;
  - Proposed site plan & block plan;
  - Proposed plans & elevations, and;
  - Highway visibility plans.
- 1.3 This statement identifies the site within its local context, reviews the planning history in the vicinity and details how the proposed development is in accordance with national and local planning policy.

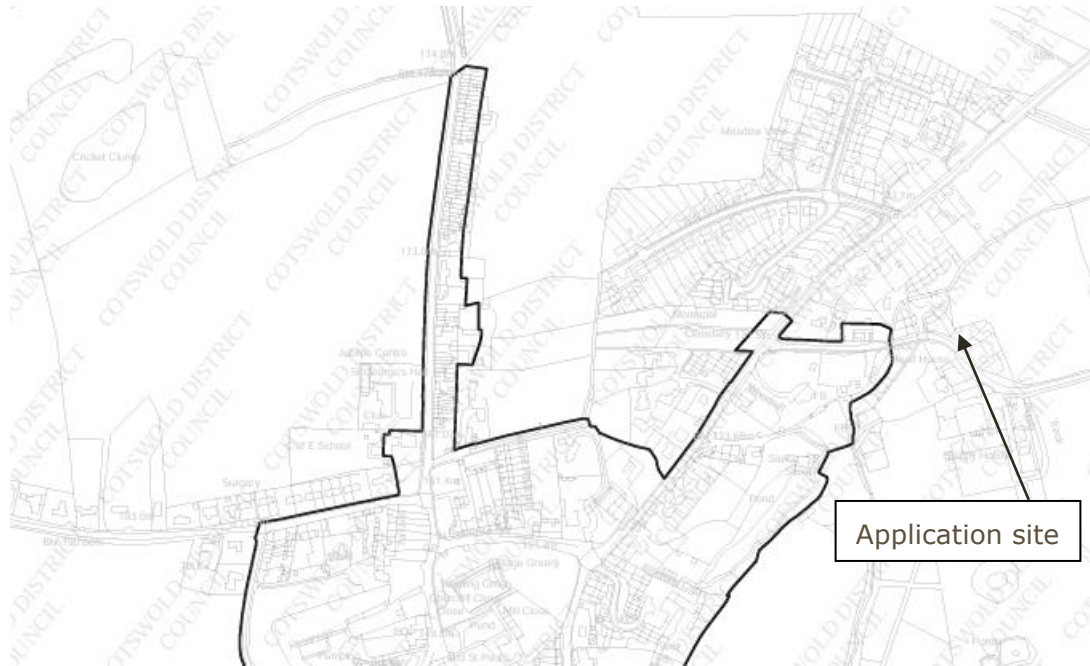
## 2.0 The application site & proposed development

- 2.1 The application site currently comprises of a self-contained annexe, physically attached to (and part of) an existing dwelling. The application site is well related to the settlement of Blockley. The existing annexe is self-contained, with the original house already having separate garden areas (to the rear), with a joint space for parking needs to the front.



Aerial photograph illustrating the site and the wider context.

- 2.2 The site has a (subdivided) rear garden, with a large parking area to the front. This large graveled area provides ample room for parking. The site sits entirely within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, but outside the Blockley Conservation Area.
- 2.3 Blockley benefits from some everyday local services including a public house, church, café, sports and social club, gym, primary school, all of which are within walking distance of the site. There is also a bus stop, a short distance from the application site, with services to Mickelton, Cheltenham, Stratford-upon-Avon (service 2, 2A, 608). There is also a national railway station not far from the village, at Moreton-in-Marsh.



The application site relative to the Blockley Conservation Area

## 3.0 Planning history

3.1 The following information provides planning history for the site:

- **Extension to provide utility room.** Ref. No: **95.01025** | Status: **Application Permitted**
- **Subdivision and extension of an existing dwelling to form two dwellinghouses, and erection of detached garage.** Ref. No: **21/02006/FUL** | Status: **Application Refused**
- **First floor extension.** Ref. No: **22/00804/FUL** | Status: **Application Permitted**
- **Erection of two-bay garage with home office above following demolition of existing garage and workshop.** Ref. No: **22/03515/FUL** | Status: **Application Withdrawn**

3.2 Application ref. 22/00804/FUL permitted the completed self-contained annexe extension the subject of this application. The approved plans clearly illustrate a separate kitchen, living room, and two bedrooms. Its occupancy is restricted by condition 5 of the permission (as being ancillary to the main house), but given that the application was approved through a householder planning application, the condition isn't necessary as full planning permission is required to change the use of the self-contained annexe to a dwelling anyway.

3.3 In addition to the above, it is worth referencing application ref. 21/02006/FUL submitted and determined prior to the application for the annexe. This was a full planning application for extension and subdivision of the existing dwelling. This application included dormer windows, and a replacement garage to the front of the property as well. It was refused for the following reasons:

1. *By virtue of the unsympathetic form of the proposed extension and the scale, form and siting of the garage, the proposal is considered to harm the character and appearance of the site and streetscene, as well as the setting of Blockley Conservation Area. The extensions and dormer window would result in a cluttered appearance, without the simplicity of the existing property. It would compete with and detract from the appearance of the dwellinghouse, diminishing the positive contribution the property currently makes to the streetscene. The large double garage to the front of the dwellinghouse would be out of keeping with the character of the cottage. Given its sitting and scale, whilst not blocking main views*

*of the principal elevation of the main dwellinghouse, it would dominate the area to the front of the site. Again, detracting from the appearance of the site. Overall, the additions would result in a cramped form of development which would represent an overdevelopment of the site. The proposal would have an adverse impact on the approach into Blockley Conservation Area. As a result the proposal is harmful to the setting of the Conservation Area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the requirements of Cotswold District Local Plan Policies EN2, EN10 and EN11, and Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

2. *Due to the limited internal and garden space available for the properties created, and addition of dormer windows, the proposal would result in an unacceptable level of amenity for any future occupiers of the site, as well as loss of privacy to neighbouring residents. As such, the proposal is contrary to the residential amenity considerations of Local Plan Policies H1 and EN2.*
3. *Insufficient information has been submitted to establish whether the access and parking arrangements on site would be safe for the additional use of the entrance and driveway resulting from the creation of a second residential unit. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Cotswold District Local Plan Policies INF4 and INF5.*

3.4 Not only is the current application different to this previous application, the circumstances on site are also different. However, some of the points raised in the Notice of Decision for application ref. 21/02006/FUL will be explored further in section 4. This will detail how the current proposal is different, also where there are any similarities, as well as how the current proposal overcomes any issues still relevant.

3.5 Elsewhere in the village, application ref. 17/01439/FUL for the '*Erection of a single dwelling and garage with new access and driveway*' off the Station Road was approved in August 2017. The decision notice found that Blockley was "*a sustainable location in terms of accessibility to services and facilities*". The principle of the development was therefore supported, and permission was granted.

## 4.0 Planning policy context and justification

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The development plan for the area comprises the Cotswold District Local Plan which was adopted in August 2018. The Local Plan is in the process of being reviewed, however, this is at a very early stage of preparation, with two regulation 18 consultations, with one happening in March 2024. Therefore, very limited weight can be afforded to these emerging policies.
- 4.3 Other material considerations that may be relevant to the proposals should also be considered and these include national planning policy and guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG).
- 4.4 The remainder of this Statement will demonstrate how this proposal accords with both local and national planning policies such that planning permission should be granted.

### **Principle of development**

- 4.5 Blockley is considered to be a principal settlement, as per the officer report in application number 21/02006/FUL (previously submitted for this site), the officer details *"the property is located within the development boundary for Blockley, which is designated as a Principal Settlement ... the Local Planning Authority have considered that the location is sustainable. As such, the erection of an open market dwelling on the site is acceptable in principle."* The principle of new housing in this location is therefore seen as acceptable.

### **Design and Layout**

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises at paragraph 135 that, development should be: *'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change'.*



- 4.7 Local Policy contained within the Cotswold District Local Plan, addresses design in Policy EN2 which states that development should accord with the Cotswold Design Code, and that proposals should respect the character and distinctive appearance of the locality.
- 4.8 The design of the annex, as built, under approved application 22/00804/FUL, was described by the planning officer as follows:

*"The development would therefore appear as an appropriately subservient and sympathetic addition that would not compete with the host dwelling. The matching design and incorporation of matching materials would result in an integrated appearance, further emphasising the subservience of the extension. Whilst the addition would interrupt the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached dwellings, the design would not interrupt the overall character of the two buildings, which is derived from the prominent principal elevations and high eaves. The addition would appear sympathetic to this character, and would be set back from the principal elevations, thus not interrupting, or competing with the principal façades"*

For this reason, the change of use, due to no physical change, will not impact on the character or history of the area.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 4.9 Within a previous application under 21/02006/FUL, for the subdivision of the property, one of the refusal reasons related to amenity space internally. Since that application, the self-contained annexe has already been completed. This has already resulted in the original dwelling being reduced in size. It is therefore suggested that the floor space of the original dwelling is irrelevant to this application given that the council has already deemed this acceptable by granting permission for the self-contained annexe.
- 4.10 The proposed change of use of the annexe would result in the creation of a two bedroom dwelling, and the original house is already now a two bedroom dwelling.
- 4.11 Even with the annexe in place, the existing dwelling already meets all the criteria associated with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS), and so will the new dwelling. This is all in accordance with Local Plan Policy H1 of the Local Plan as calculated below.

Dwelling	Number of bedrooms	Minimum NDSS floor area (based on maximum occupancy of 3 people) in square metres	Floor Area as proposed in square metres
Sheafhouse Cottage	2	70	75
New dwelling	2	70	73.4

NDSS Compliance

**Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

- 4.12 The site lies within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and paragraph 182 of the NPPF highlights how great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in AONB. This is supported at a local level through Policy EN5: Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.13 Although the proposed development will be visible from the public realm, the shell of the building already exists. Given that there are no proposed additions, this would not impact on the special character of the AONB.

**Heritage - Blockley Conservation Area**

- 4.14 The site is outside of the Conservation Area, and sufficiently far away to have little to no impact on its setting. However, it is submitted that the change of use will not alter the character of area as the existing built development will not be physically changed.
- 4.15 In terms of the property’s heritage significance, as per the officer’s report submitted under application 22/00804/FUL, *“The host dwelling is present on the 1843-1893 OS maps, and is of therefore of some historic interest. The matter relating to the buildings designation was considered in 2021, however; it was determined that by virtue of alterations to the fenestrations and existing modern extensions to the property, it is not considered to meet the tests set out within Local Plan Policy EN12. The building is not therefore considered to constitute a Non-Designated Heritage Asset.”*
- 4.16 It is therefore submitted that given that this proposal will have no impact on the external appearance of the building, there will be no further impact on the dwelling itself (or any heritage significance).

***Neighbouring amenity***

- 4.17 The neighbouring property to the south, known as Sunny Huckle Cottage, would have no change in the amount of overlooking within the site nor overlooking into their amenity space. The new recently built dwelling, located to the north of the site, is a single storey bungalow. Through the approval of this application, there is a hedge due to be planted to screen the development. This will provide more than adequate screening between the two existing garden areas.

***Highway Safety***

- 4.18 In respect of any highway impact, the access to the site has not changed and the parking area is substantial in size. As can be seen on the plans, there is sufficient space for four cars with maneuverability.
- 4.19 The application includes tracking and the appropriate visibility splays. This demonstrates that more than adequate parking, maneuvering and visibility is achievable.

***Other matters***

- 4.20 Although there is not only a change in circumstance since the previous refusal at this site and this proposal is a physically different form of development, it is worth just comparing the current application to the refused proposal associated with application ref. 21/02006/FUL.
- 4.21 With regard to the first reason for refusal at paragraph 3.3 above, this no longer applies. This current application does not include a garage (the principal matter of concern through reason 1), and neither does it include dormer windows. It is a simple change of use of what already exists. This current application has therefore overcome the issues associated with previous reason for refusal 1 based on the fact that no additional built form is proposed.
- 4.22 With regard to the second reason for refusal at paragraph 3.3 above, the council's concerns were regarding three main matters:
- Lack of compliance with the NDSS (internal space)
  - Concern regarding the size of the garden spaces proposed through subdivision, and
  - Loss of privacy to neighbours because of overlooking.

- 4.23 With regard to the NDSS, see paragraph 4.11 above and the associated table. This matter is therefore resolved. In relation to the garden spaces, the council has already granted planning permission for the extension to be a self-contained annexe. The owner of the property has already therefore subdivided the garden using a fence which is permitted development by virtue of Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended). This situation therefore exists, and on the balance of probabilities, will not be changed back.
- 4.24 The only relevant consideration is therefore in relation to the size of the garden for the new dwelling to be created through the change of use application. The new dwelling would have a wrap around garden, extending to the front of the property. The parking area will not be altered physically, and will remain open. The proposed private amenity space to the rear of the proposed dwelling is more than adequate for a small 2 bed 3 person house – at over 70 sq m. There is also a further sitting out area to the front of the proposed property at 27 sq m.
- 4.25 Even if it could be argued that the private amenity space to the original house is a relevant consideration for this application, it has a more than adequate fenced rear garden, and will retain a garden to the front. There is ample external amenity space for 2no. 2 bed (3 person) dwellings (see photograph below). Indeed, the existing rear garden space for Sheafhouse isn't far off the size of the garden space associated with the neighbouring property known as Sunny Huckle Cottage (even though this property is significantly larger).



Existing rear garden to Sheafhouse cottage (with the self-contained annexe to the right of the photo)



Front garden amenity spaces

4.26 From officers' previous comments on application 21/02006/FUL, regarding outside amenity space, this has now been much more carefully thought out with the subsequent reduction of a bedroom (in both the annexe, and the original dwelling), making the amenity space more suitable for future occupiers of the now smaller than previously proposed dwellings. In addition, the proposal doesn't include the previously proposed dormer windows, so this matter is no longer of concern with regard to overlooking.



Previously refused rear elevation including dormer windows



The existing rear elevation which will remain unchanged

4.27 This current proposal has therefore overcome the issues associated with previous reason for refusal 2. This is because the current proposal complies with internal space standards, the garden areas are entirely suitable for 2 bedroom, 3 person dwellings, and there is no additional overlooking as there are no dormer windows proposed.

4.28 In relation to the final reason for refusal on application ref. 21/02006/FUL, the concern was that insufficient information had been submitted to establish whether the access and parking arrangements on site would be safe for the additional use of the entrance and driveway. This current application includes full information on maneuverability, and the appropriate level of visibility on the entrance. This matter is therefore fully resolved.

## 5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed change of use of the existing self-contained annexe fully accords with the latest national planning policy objectives within the NPPF, as well as those of the adopted development plan and those within the emerging local plan.
- 5.2 The principle of development as detailed above is supported by the NPPF and the adopted Local Plan and, the proposed development will not change the character and appearance of area, nor the AONB and the wider settlement. The highway information also demonstrates that the development will be safe in highway terms.
- 5.3 On this basis, it is respectfully requested that the Council supports this application and grants planning permission accordingly.



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