



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT WITH SEQUENTIAL TEST

ERECTION OF A 2-STOREY 4-BED DWELLING
AT

LAND AT PLASH DROVE, THOLOMAS DROVE,
WISBECH, CAMBS, PE13 4SP

FOR

SIMS CONTRACT FURNITURE

Job No. SE-2046 Rev A

Jan 2024

Swann Edwards Architecture Limited - Registered in England & Wales No. 07943586.
Place of Business: Black Barn, Fen Road, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 4AA
t 01945 450694 e info@swannedwards.co.uk w www.swannedwards.co.uk
Registered Office: 22-26 King Street King's Lynn PE30 1HJ.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement supports the full planning application for the erection of a dwelling in connection with an existing enterprise, at land south of Plash Drove, Tholomas Drove, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 4SP.

2.0 CONTEXT & PROPOSAL

2.1 SITE CONTEXT

The application site is located west of the village of Tholomas Drove. The site fronts Plash Drove and is located on the southern side of the highway. The authorised use of the site is part commercial and part residential garden space. The boundaries to the site consist of a dwelling to the east, Plash Drove Road to the north, open boundary to agricultural land towards the south with Sims Contract Furniture directly to the west.

The site comprises the curtilage of an existing workshop building and features areas of hardstanding and grass. There is 1.1m fencing on the east boundary and hedging on the north and south boundaries.

The area is largely rural in character, however the sporadic housing within the vicinity of the site along Plash Drove appears tantamount to the form away from the host village of Tholomas Drove.

The established settlement which fronts Tholomas Drove is located to the west of the site.

There is a pole, power and telephone line which runs in a north/east – south/west direction within the east part of the site.

The site is located within Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency Flood Maps for Planning.



Figure 1: Aerial photograph

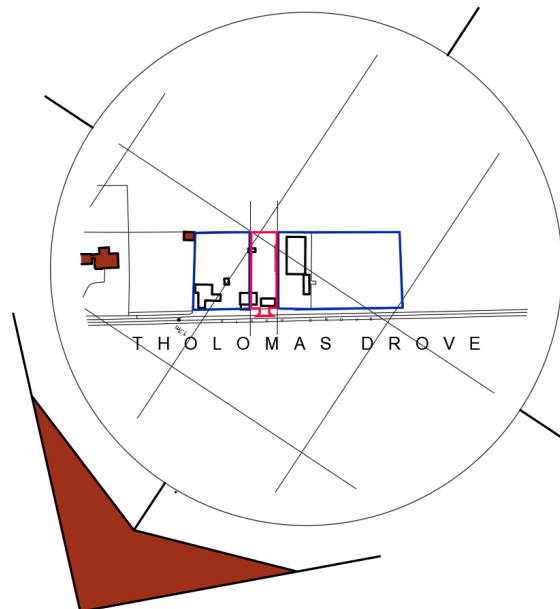


Figure 2: Location Plan NTS

2.2 HISTORY

F/YR23/0857/F – Change of use of land to form car park, erect an extension to existing building, formation of an access and relocation of office portacabin and container – APPROVED.

2.3 PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of a dwelling. The dwelling is required in connection with the Contract furniture manufacturing enterprise as there is an essential need for a worker to live on site for the proper functioning of the business. Sims contract Furniture designs and manufactures high end bespoke furniture. The business has grown rapidly and continues to do so, with the recent approval of an extension to the workshop. Maintaining security to the workshop is vital given the remote location and high value of the merchandise and craftsmanship.

The dwelling will be positioned directly to the east of the workshop, separated by a low level hedge and parking area. The dwelling will front Splash Drove and will be positioned roughly centrally within its curtilage allowing for generous front and rear gardens.

The dwelling will have 2-storeys and 4-bedrooms with a chalet bungalow design. It will have a relatively traditional appearance featuring a pitched roof and feature window headers to the front, not dissimilar in character to other properties along Splash drove. It will be finished in facing bricks and roof tiles which are outlined on the drawings.

2.4 PRINCIPLE

The site falls within the definition of previously developed land as set out in the NPPF. Section 11 of the NPPF promotes an effective use of land. The re use of this brownfield site, therefore, is supported by section 11 of the NPPF and this should weigh heavily in support of the application.

The site is in a countryside location for the purpose of policy LP3.

Policy LP12 part D sets out the criteria to support new dwellings in areas away from settlements as set out in Policy LP3. This includes:

- a) The existing functional need for the dwelling;
- b) The number of part time and full time workers to live in the dwelling;
- c) The length of time the activity has been established;
- d) The financial viability of the enterprise;
- e) The availability of other suitable accommodation on site or in the area;
- f) How the proposed size of the dwelling relates to the viability of the enterprise.

The existing business, Sims Contract Furniture, are Suppliers and Manufacturers of bespoke furniture for hotels, bars, clubs, pubs, restaurants, cafes and other leisure and care venues.

With 3 generations of experience in the furniture trade and their own in-house Upholsters and concept designers.

The typical operations carried out on site are between the hours 8am - 4.30pm Monday - Thursday, 8am -3pm Friday. However, Ms Sims is still required to be available 24hrs a day by the Business to tend to emergencies, deliveries or any security issues. She therefore needs to be residing on site so that she is able to consistently monitor the workshop.

As is clear from the requirement (approval F/YR23/0857) to extend the workshop, the business has grown considerably from when it first began in 1994 and the industry as a whole is much more competitive. There have been several security issues over the years, with thefts involving material, business items and even a trailer being stolen. Due to the nature of the bespoke furniture, the value of the goods on site can be excessive and it is therefore no longer feasible for Ms Sims to reside off site.

(a) Part time and full time workers to live in the dwelling

Sims Contract Furniture is a family business over 3 generations. The dwelling will provide accommodation for Ms Sims, a 50% majority Shareholder in the company (full time).

The dwelling will function as a family home for Ms Sims.

(b) Length of time the activity has been established

The business has been established since 2012. Although pre 2012, a furniture reupholstering service was run from the site dating back generations.

(c) Financial viability of the enterprise

The enterprise is clearly viable given that it has been in operation for 12 years and the owner is investing in the business by reasons of extending the workshop.

(d) Other suitable accommodation

A search of Rightmove has been undertaken (access on 01.25.2024), see appendix 1. The closest property available for sale within the vicinity is approximately 0.3km away from the application site close to the centre of Tholomas Drove Village. This still would not allow for immediate access to the site to respond to emergencies in time or the overlooking required to provide the aspect of security.

(e) Size of the dwelling

The proposal is for a modest 4-bed dwelling. The accommodation provided is what would typically be expected for a family home. It can clearly be sustained by the business given the length of time the business has been in operation and its capability for expansion.

The proposal will result in a new dwelling to support which will address the functional need for the existing business and allow it to continue to function properly and safely. The principle of the development is therefore consistent with Section 6 of the NPPF which seeks to support the rural economy. There is also relevant case law which supports the proposal where weight was also given to business expansion opportunity and the creation of a more sustainable pattern of travel.

The information above has demonstrated that there is justification to allow for an occupational dwelling in a countryside location. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable in accordance with policies LP3 and LP12 of the Local Plan.

2.5 FLOOD RISK

Section 14 of the NPPF and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan require a sequential approach, directing new development to land at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance unless it can be demonstrated that no land is available to accommodate the proposal.

The site is located in flood zone 3 of the Environment Agency Flood Maps for Planning. The works relate to an existing use and therefore there are no other alternative sites available. It is therefore in a sequentially preferable location in terms of flood risk in accordance with Section 14 of the NPPF.

In terms of the Exception Test, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment which accompanies the application proves that the development is technically safe from flooding. It seriously reduces the amount of vehicular movements to and from the site (and at unsociable hours) thereby demonstrating a sustainable benefit to the community.

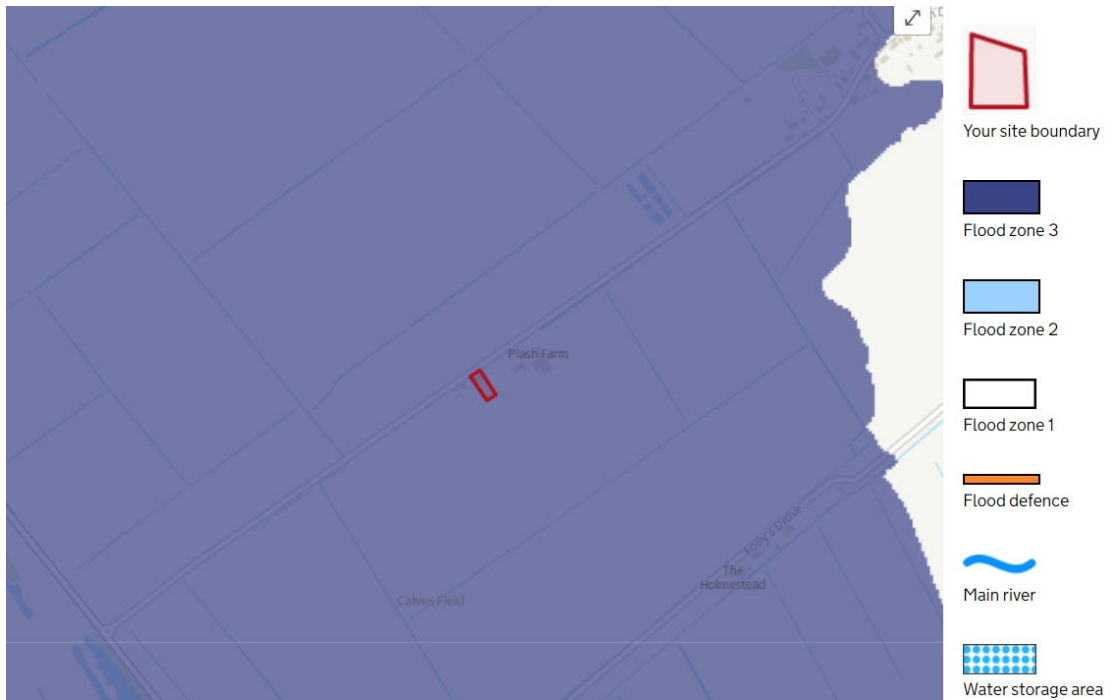


Figure 3: Extract from Environment Agency Flood Maps for Planning

3.0 DESIGN

3.1 USE & AMOUNT

The proposal is for residential development where there is sufficient space within the site for all dwellings to be provided with private garden land, which equates to at least one third of the area of the curtilage, and at least three parking spaces, thereby complying with Policy LP16 and the adopted parking standards.

The proposal involves the erection of a 2-storey 4-bed dwelling. The dwelling will be occupied in association with the adjoining business at Sims Contract Furniture.

In view of the character of the area and the existing use on site, the nature of the proposal is appropriate.

3.2 LAYOUT, SCALE AND APPEARANCE

The new dwelling will be positioned within the site to respect the pattern of development within the area. Large garden areas are provided to the front and rear, in accordance with the requirements of policy LP16, as is sufficient parking and turning for both the proposed dwelling and the existing workshop.

Due to the layout of the site and the position of the dwelling, neighbouring occupiers will not suffer from reduced levels of residential amenities by reasons of loss of privacy or overshadowing.

The proposed dwelling is of a modest scale and has a traditional appearance commensurate with that of other dwellings within the vicinity.

Due to the pattern of development within the area, which includes that of buildings positioned along the Splash Drove, the dwelling will not appear at odds with the surrounding area and will not appear as an incongruous feature within this 'village' location.

The site is clearly capable of accommodating the development whilst still providing the gaps between buildings which characterise this part of Tholomas Drove.

The development will therefore cause no harm to the character and appearance of the area and as such there is no conflict in this regard with policies LP12 and LP16 of the Local Plan.

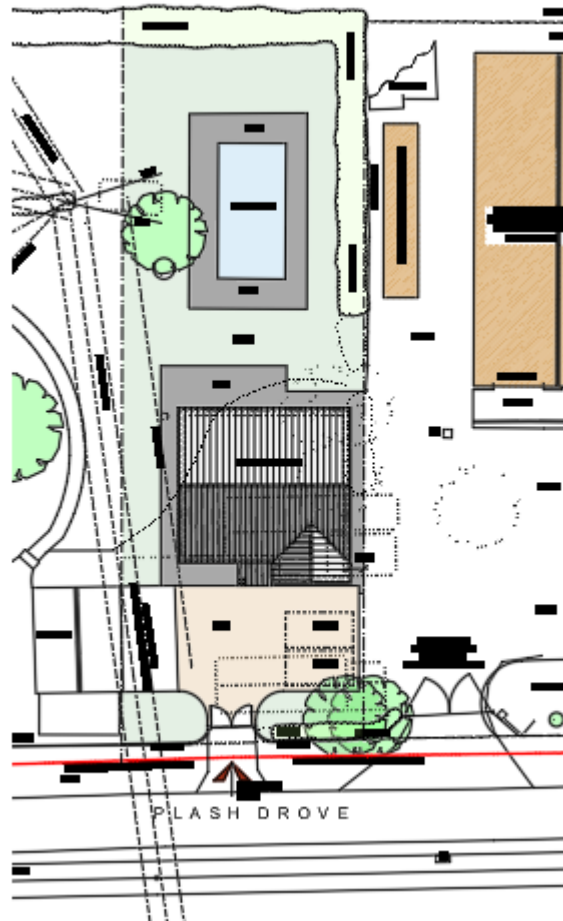


Figure 4: Proposed site plan

3.3 LANDSCAPING

The site is currently laid to grass with some areas of hardstanding. The application therefore presents an excellent opportunity to provide a well considered hard and soft landscaping scheme which will be to the visual benefits of the area whilst improving ecological and biodiversity interests within the immediate locality.

4.0 ACCESS

Access to the site will be via the a new access point at Plash Drove. There is a current access to the Workshop directly to the west of the proposed access that will be relocated under approved application F/YR23/0857/F.

Given the proposed dwelling will serve workers of the business, it will reduce the need to travel to the workshop from further afield, and will in fact improve the situation with regards to sustainability and reduced vehicular movements.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The application seeks full planning permission for a dwelling to allow for a worker to reside on site. This will aid in the growth of the business and prevent any security issues.

The re use of this brownfield site is supported by section 11 of the NPPF and this should weigh heavily in support of the application.

This document has demonstrated that there is an essential need for a worker to live on site for the effective operation of the business and to continue viability and security.

It is submitted that the proposal complies with policies of the Development Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.