



Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Design And Access Statement

The Dower House Library, The Dower House, Chastleton

March 2024



Contact information

Harriet Pillman RIBA AABC (Associate)
E: harriet.pillman@insall-architects.co.uk

Cameron Stebbing (Architectural Assistant)
E: cameron.stebbing@insall-architects.co.uk

Oxford Office
118 High Street
Oxford
OX1 4BX

www.donaldinsallassociates.co.uk

This report and all intellectual property rights in it and arising from it are the property of or are under licence to Donald Insall Associates or the client. Neither the whole nor any part of this report, nor any drawing, plan, other document or any information contained within it may be reproduced in any form without the prior written consent of Donald Insall Associates or the client as appropriate. All material in which the intellectual property rights have been licensed to Donald Insall Associates or the client and such rights belong to third parties may not be published or reproduced at all in any form, and any request for consent to the use of such material for publication or reproduction should be made directly to the owner of the intellectual property rights therein.

Contents

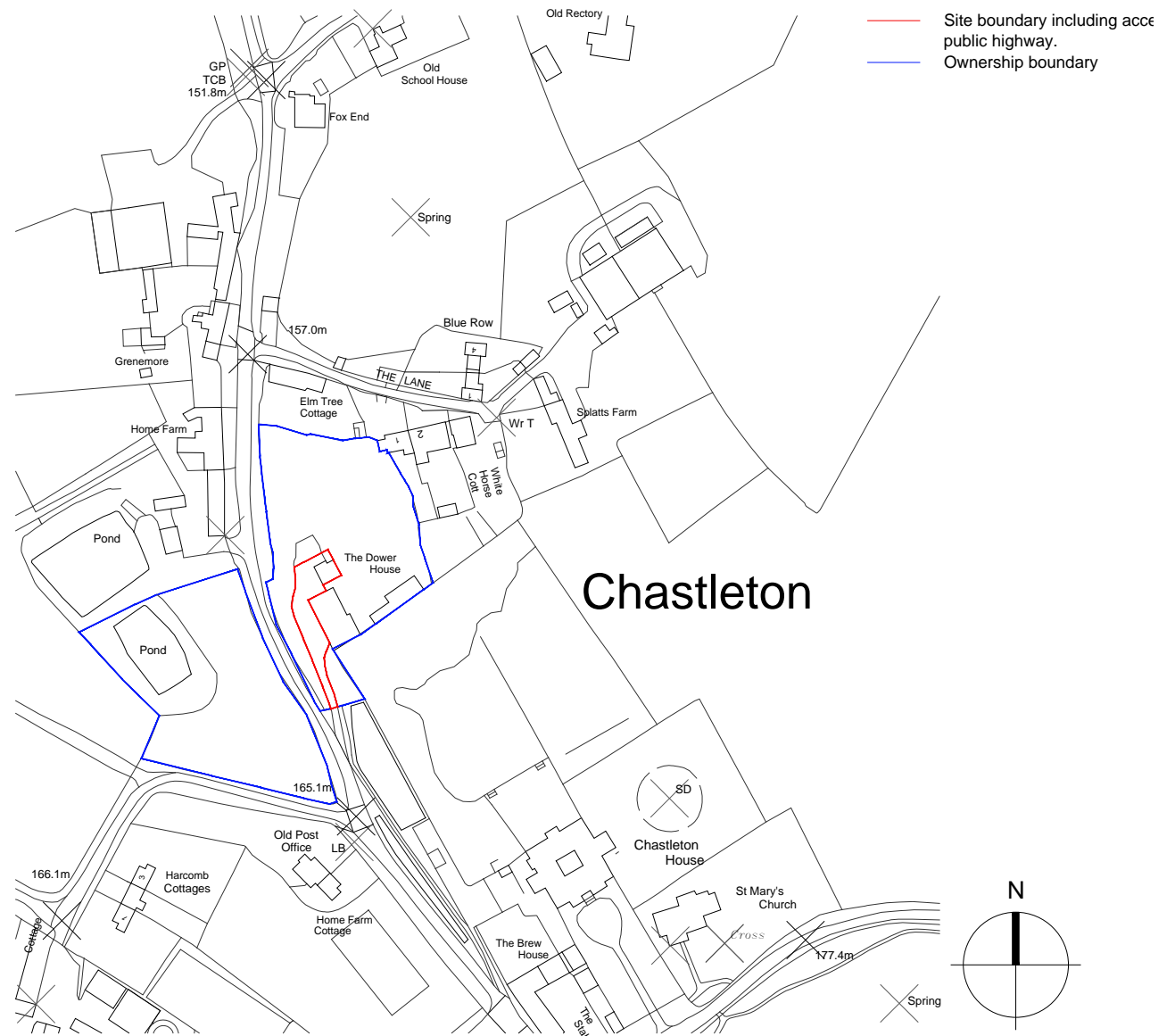
1. Introduction	4
2. Heritage Context	6
3. Proposals	7
4. Further Design and Access Considerations	9
5. Planning Statement	10
6. Conclusion	11
Appendix A	12
Appendix B	13

1. Introduction

i. Site Description

The Dower House is situated in the village of Chastleton, in the Cotswold Hills of Oxfordshire, approximately 4 miles northeast of Stow-on-the-Wold. The Dower House is a Grade II-listed building located in the Chastleton Conservation Area in the District of West Oxfordshire. The Dower House is adjacent to, and in the setting of, the Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (RPAG) of Chastleton House, itself a Grade I listed building.

The site location plan adjacent outlines in red the application area for the proposed works in the grounds of the Dower House to include access required to the site area from the public highway.



The Dower House - Site and Ownership Boundary

ii. Purpose of this Statement

This document has been prepared to accompany the planning consent application for works to propose a new garden store and library room in the grounds of the Dower House.

This document is to be read in conjunction with the planning application and Heritage Impact Assessment submitted as part of these proposals. It satisfies the requirements for a Design & Access Statement to be submitted as part of this application.

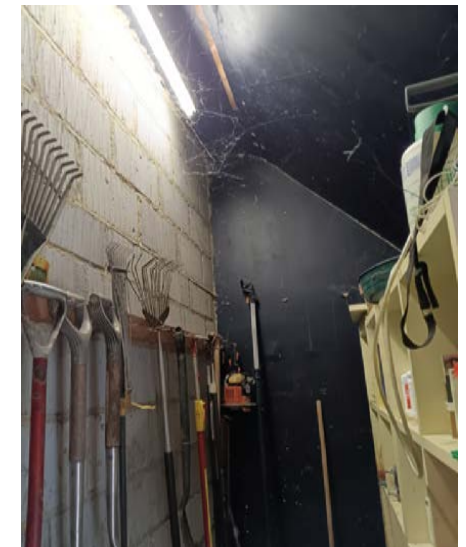
The works included within this Design and Access Statement has been developed by Donald Insall Associates working with the client, the homeowner of the Dower House.

iii. Scope of the project

Donald Insall Associates were commissioned by the client, Catriona Braybrooke to assist in developing proposals for a new garden store and library room to replace an existing garden store / garage adjacent to the Dower House, Chastleton.

The scope of the works can be summarised as;

- The careful demolition and removal of the existing mid-late 20th century garage.
- The works to create a new single-story outbuilding to house a library, garden store and plant room, with loft access above the garden store.
- Excavation of localised late 20th century landscaping and stone walling to allow the footprint of the new outbuilding.



External and internal images of the existing shed building where its modern construction is evident

2. Heritage Context

i. Outline Site Description and Significance

The Dower House is significant as a 17th century building which was altered and extended in the later 17th century and the 19th century. Its relationship and proximity to the Grade I listed Chastleton House, and the Grade II* listed RPAG for Chastleton House increases this significance. It also has significance in terms of its positive contribution to the Chastleton Conservation Area.

The current garage/ garden store in the grounds of the Dower House, visible in the image on p.5, was constructed in the early 1950s by previous owners, and designed to look like a much older building, with wany-edged timber cladding, a diamond leaded light window and a Stonesfield roof. Internally its provenance is clear: modern blockwork, modern softwood rafters and plasterboard, all sitting on a modern concrete base. It is of no significance.

Please refer to the Heritage Impact Assessment included within this application for a detailed description of the history of the Dower House, an assessment of its significance, and an assessment of the potential heritage impact of the proposed works.



Image of the Dower House c.1910-1940 showing the historic thatched and timber clad building which was demolished pre 1950s

3. Proposals

i. Outline Project Brief

The brief calls for the replacement of the existing garage with a new bespoke designed ancillary building. At present the existing garage represents a financial burden and would require considerable investment to make it weathertight. There is a significant hole in the roof and the walls and concrete plinth are deteriorating. Furthermore, whilst designed as a garage, the current building is not large enough to accommodate a modern car and the concrete access ramp is in too poor a condition to safely use the structure for this purpose.

Considering the two above points, the current building is no-longer fit for purpose. The owners are in no need of a garage or such a large garden store. However, they are in need of a library to store their extensive collection of books and still require a smaller garden storage area for gardening equipment used in maintaining the grounds. The existing garage also houses the boiler and associated plant for the main house.

It is logical for the client to create a new ancillary building fit for purpose to accommodate these three elements. Furthermore, the brief desires both a sensitive and high-quality design which utilises traditional materials, enhancing the setting of The Dower House.

ii. Architectural Proposals

The new ancillary accommodation is proposed to be located further away from the 17th century house than the current 20th century building seen in the image adjacent. The proposal features a library space to the south, with plant room and garden store positioned to the north at a slightly lower level due to the grading of the land. This marginal increase in height at the north end is used to accommodate additional storage capacity above the plant and garden store.

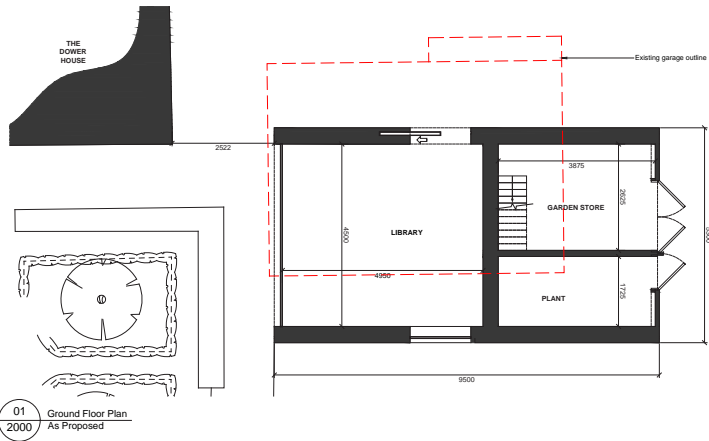
The design takes reference from simple vernacular architectures, prevalent in the area whilst adopting a minimal contemporary form which sits respectfully within the heritage setting and aims to enhance rather than compete with the listed building. The design is to reflect the architecture of the thatched barn extension evident in the 1940s photograph, refer to p.6, in a contemporary way using traditional local materials.

The materiality of the scheme supports this aim. The elevations will be lined externally with vertical timber boarding from ground level to the roof soffit. The windows will be of slim-line metal frames with no transom or mullion support, akin to accepted approaches in barn conversions where openings are legible as void spaces. The roof will be of thatch, a common local typology, also taking a minimal contemporary gabled form.

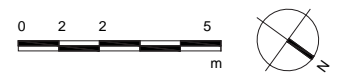
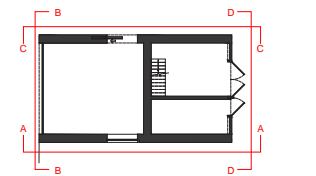
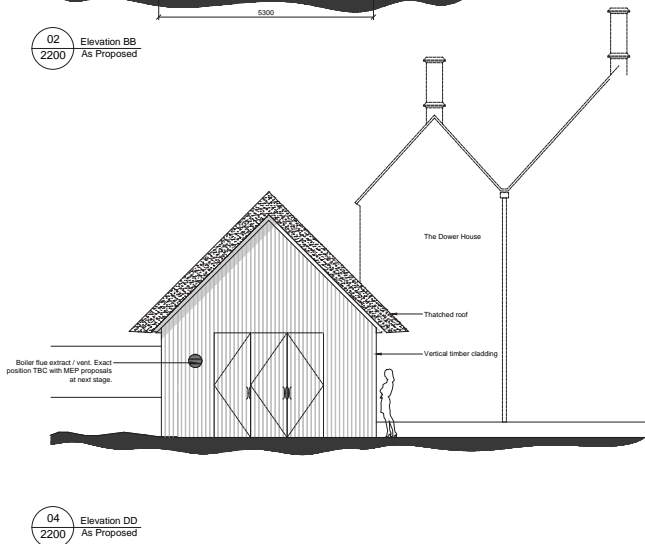
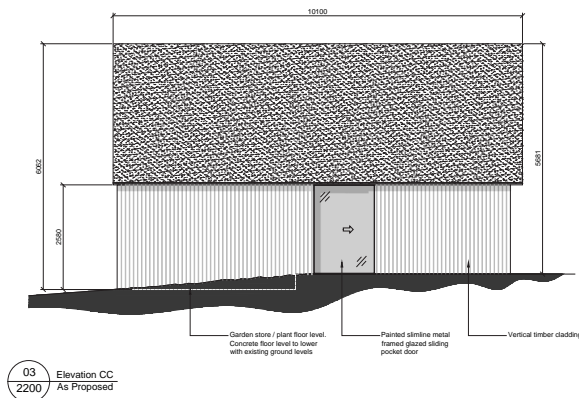
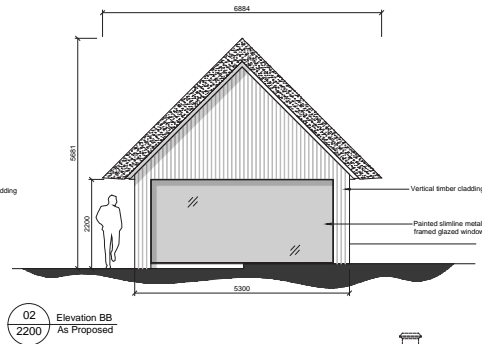
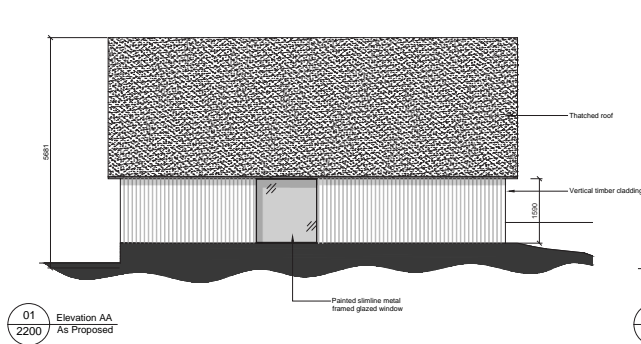
Proposed ground floor plan and elevations are shown on the following page. For further details regarding the design proposals, refer to drawings 2000, 2100, 2200 and 4001, included as part of this application.



The existing shed set back from the Dower House



Proposed Library Floor Plan



Proposed Library Elevations

4. Further Design and Access Considerations

i. Highways & Parking

There are no proposed alterations relating to access from public highways onto the site. The existing parking conditions will remain unchanged and the proposals do not require the formation of new parking spaces as no additional persons will dwell on the site as a result.

ii. Ecology

A bat activity survey was conducted in 2021 by Cotswold Wildlife Surveys, and the report is included in appendix B.

As part of these proposals a further, up to date, bat survey has been commissioned. Any recommendations will be taken into account and included within the proposals at the next stage, prior to any demolition.

The proposals do not entail any other ecological issues.

iii. Flood Risk

The proposal is located with a Flood Zone 1, which means that flooding from rivers and the sea is very unlikely. There is less than a 0.1% (1 in 1000) chance of flooding occurring each year.

iv. Access

No public access is required as part of these proposals. Access into the garden store, plant and library will all be level access. The first floor garden storage is used only for storage and not as an inhabited room. As a result a fixed ladder access is suitable as set out in Approved Document Part K: Protection from Falling Collision and Impact, para 1.31.

v. Sustainability Statement

Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

Thermal comfort and passive design measures have been prioritised in the proposed design. The proposed roof thatch aims to provide thermal mass to regulate internal temperature with eaves overhangs mitigating direct summer sunlight through the southern glazing to prevent over-heating.

All windows and doors will be to new-build standards and include double glazing, and all walls to the proposed habitable spaces will be thermally insulated. The structure will be constructed to minimise air leakage and subsequent heat loss.

Roofing and cladding materials have been selected for low embodied carbon. Both roofing thatch and timber cladding will be sourced from local and sustainable sources where possible.

Home working is supported as the structure has potential for future use as a home office space.

Site drainage is conducted via existing soak-aways and rainwater collection via a proposed water butt.

5. Planning Statement

As set-out in section '3, i) of this report the creation of a new ancillary building is logical due to the poor state of repair and unfit for purpose nature of the existing garage. Its inability to accommodate a modern car, and the lack of need for a garden store of this size by the applicant place the creation of a high-quality and well-built ancillary building as desirable.

i. The NPPF

The NPPF is explicit about the importance of good design and of understanding design in terms of context. **Paragraph 17 Core Planning Principles** details how planning should 'always secure a high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.'

Paragraph 56 understands that 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

The NPPF also recognises the need for specific local guidance, to which this application responds through reference to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

ii. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan

Policy H6 states that 'alterations, extensions of sub-division of existing dwellings will respect the character of the surrounding area and will not unacceptably affect the environment of people living in or visiting the area'.

Through its use of traditional materials and simple contemporary design these proposals satisfy **policy H6**.

Policy H2, which talks about ancillary accommodation, does not apply to this application as the proposal will remain ancillary to the main house, and no new dwelling units are created in the proposals.

Policy EH11 discusses proposals for additions and alterations to listed buildings. As mentioned in this policy, the proposals retain the special interest of the listed Dower House, being sympathetic to both its design and setting. The proposals respect the building's historic curtilage whilst referencing past thatched buildings which were formally present on site, prior to the current garage. That an ancillary building of some form has always been in this location, further respect the setting of the listed building.

For a more detailed commentary on the how the proposal adheres with local and national policy regarding listed buildings and heritage, refer to the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Donald Insall Associates as part of this application.

As per paragraph 4.36 of **Policy OS4**, the design is founded upon design analysis of the historic structures which were present on site. The thatched form is led by a previous ancillary structure which was demolished. It also refers to the **West Oxfordshire Design Guide (2015)** for further guidance on design principles.

iii. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide

The proposals have been designed in accordance with the principles of the West Oxfordshire Design Guide, including ensuring the new design reflects and enhances local character. Key points referenced within this document include **Design guide 2: Planning Policy, Design Guide 6: Conservation Areas, Design Guide 7: Listed Buildings, Registered Parks & Scheduled Monuments and Design Guide 12: Sustainable Building Design**.

The purpose of this design guide is to elucidate the qualities and characteristics which make West Oxfordshire special and describe ways in which design can protect and enrich these characters.

By following historic on-site precedents, using traditional materials and analysing the relationships between this proposal and the grade II listed Dower House, these proposals are in line with the information stated within the design guide.

6. Conclusion

This document, along with the heritage impact assessment, has demonstrated that the outlined proposals are in line with both local and national policy guidance, and are of an appropriate scale and materiality as well as posing no adverse impacts upon the setting of a listed asset.

Appendix A

The following drawings are to be provided:

- Existing Floor Plans : OXDHL-DR-1000-3P-0
- Proposed Floor Plans : OXDHL-DR-2000-3P-1
- Proposed Sections : OXDHL-DR-2100-3P-1
- Proposed Elevations : OXDHL-DR-2200-3P-1
- Existing Site Plan : OXDHL-DR-4000-3P-0
- Proposed Site Plan : OXDHL-DR-4001-3P-0
- Location Plan : OXDHL-DR-4002-3P-0

Appendix B

Bat Survey Report by Cotswold Wildlife Surveys, 2021

Donald Insall Associates