

Design and Access Statement

Proposed refurbishment & extension works to:
Dukes Cottage, Driffield, Cirencester, GL7 5QY

June 2023

1.0 Introduction

This design and access statement is written in support of the householder planning application for the proposed refurbishment and extension works to Dukes Cottage, Driffield, Cirencester, GL7 5QY. This report will set out the context of the site and describe the design proposals.

Dukes Cottage was purchased by the applicants Will & Christina Hibbs in April 2021. The cottage was in a poor state of repair and they have been faithfully renovating the cottage over the past two years. They now wish to reconfigure the layout and extend the property to accommodate their growing family and bring the property up to suitable modern living standards.

This document should be read with all other accompanying statements and drawings.

1.1 Summary of Proposals

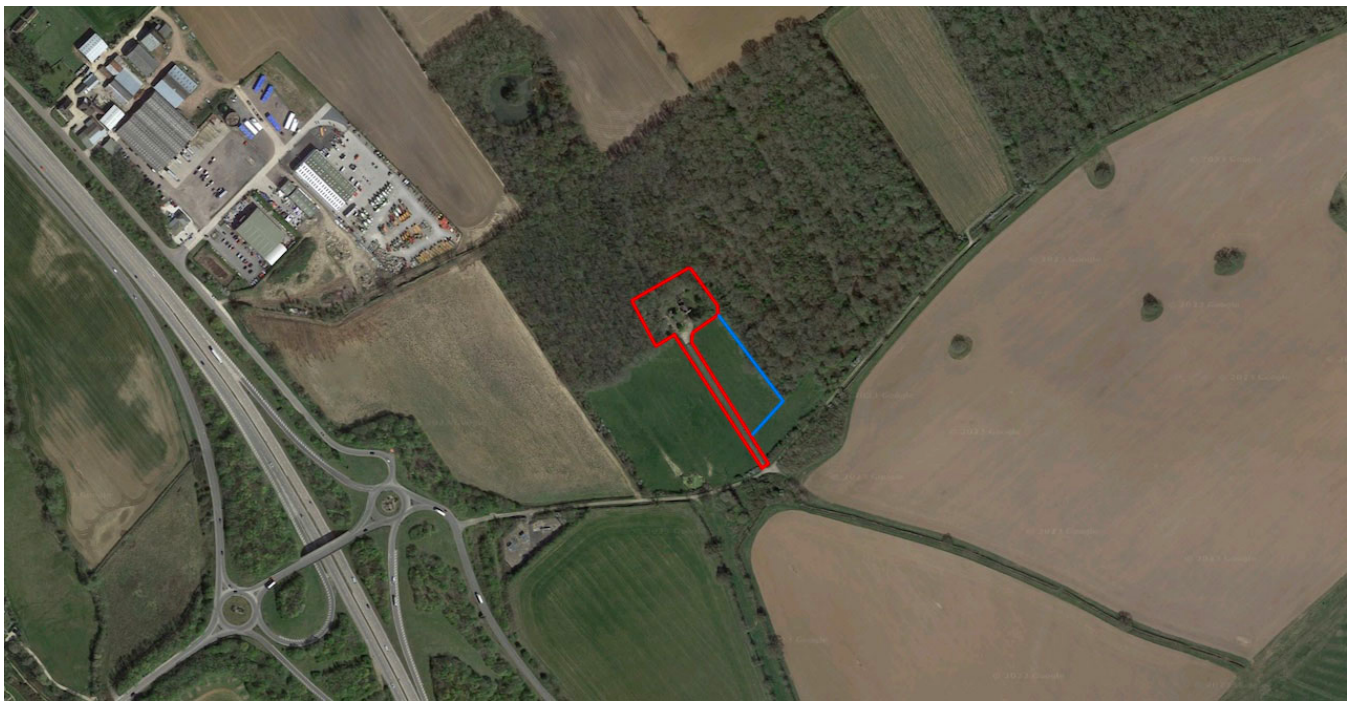
The application is for the demolition of an existing single storey extension to the north west elevation to be replaced by a double storey extension to provide increased utility space and bedroom above, the demolition of a number of dilapidated out buildings to be replaced with a three bay garage with living accommodation above, to the north east elevation a new double storey extension is proposed to provide an open plan kitchen / dining room and living room at ground floor with three double bedrooms and two ensuite bathrooms at first floor. New paving and enhanced soft landscaping is also proposed.

2.0 Location & Context

Dukes Cottage is a detached dwelling located within an extensive plot of land accessed via a private lane leading off Cirencester Road. The nearest settlements to the dwelling includes Latton, 1.5 miles to the south west, Driffield 2 miles to the north and South Cerney 1.5 miles to the west. The Cotswold Water Park including lakes, holiday lodges and activity centres are located close by but physically separated by the busy A419 duel carriageway located to the west of the property.

The dwelling cannot be seen from any public road or footpath and is well enclosed to the north, west and east by mature woodland. The property enjoys views out to the south over its own paddocks and fields beyond which are bordered by mature hedgerows.

The nearest built structures to the property are large industrial buildings and extensive hardstanding associated with Cotswold Agricultural Centre which includes Cirencester Livestock Market, Countrywide stores and CLAAS Western farm equipment supplier. Due to the distance and presence of the mature woodland located between the property and the Agricultural Centre there is no legible visual link between the two when viewed at ground level.



1. Aerial view of site demonstrating the properties secluded location in relation to surrounding settlements.

3.0 Existing Site

The dwelling sits to the northern quarter of the site with views out over the paddock to the south. A long driveway leading from the private lane to the front of the property provides a grand entrance to a modest sized property. A collection of dilapidated timber outbuildings including workshops, wood stores, garden sheds and garages visually detracts from the property. The site is flat and largely laid to grass with extensive gravelled area for parking.

The existing dwelling has windows facing to the south east and south west, however there are no windows facing to the north east or north west providing windowless elevations that limit views from within out to the surrounding woodland. The proposals aim to address this by providing a better relationship between the inside and surrounding landscape.

The property boundary is some 30m away from the sides and rear of the dwelling, providing ample space for extending without compromising the spatial relationship between the dwelling and boundary.

Whilst the property sits outside of the Cotswold Area of Natural Outstanding beauty, the architecture displays the classic Cotswold vernacular of a simple double frontage dwelling with limestone walls, steeply pitched roof and small painted timber windows with unpainted oak doors. As the dwelling sits independently of any surrounding settlements and cannot be seen from any public roads or footpaths there is a strong argument that any new additions to the property could adopt a more contemporary style and presents opportunities to deviate from restrictive design codes where wider settlement characteristics would normally need to be taken into account.



2. Existing driveway to property to remain as existing.



3. Existing dilapidated outbuildings to be demolished.



4. Existing windowless north east elevation inhibiting views out to surrounding landscape.



5. Existing south west elevation with single storey extension and outbuilding to be replaced with two storey extension and garage.

4.0 Proposal

4.1 Design

The proposed scheme seeks to create a home suitable for modern living that establishes a better connection with the surrounding landscape and woodland beyond. The applicants also wish to provide more spacious living accommodation and enhance the external elevations and quality of finish. The scheme aims to work with the existing main structure of the dwelling and maximise the potential of these. Initially the applicants had considered complete demolition of the property and rebuild but discovered there were charming features internally worth retaining, whilst also recognising the sustainable merits of retention over demolition.

The current ground floor layout does not provide a lobby between the main entrance door and living spaces which results in cold drafts and lacks a place to hang coats and store shoes etc. The kitchen to the front of the property is cramped and lacks adequate storage space. The existing stairs to the first floor are steeply pitched with narrow treads and dangerous for young children.

The proposals provide a new open plan kitchen / dining room which would act as the heart of the home and would have direct access out onto a patio that would enjoy views of the woodlands and field to the south. A new larger living room is proposed on the darker north facing elevation of the house providing a cosy space to retreat to with views out to the woodland. The existing living room becomes an entrance hall with plenty of space for storying shoes, coats and prams, which leads onto a larger utility space and shower room and internal access through to the garage. The existing kitchen would become a snug / playroom.

On the first floor a new master bedroom with walkthrough wardrobe and ensuite is created with two additional double bedrooms, one with ensuite for guests. A new double bedroom positioned over the new utility room will be accessed through the existing double bedroom which will become a home office.

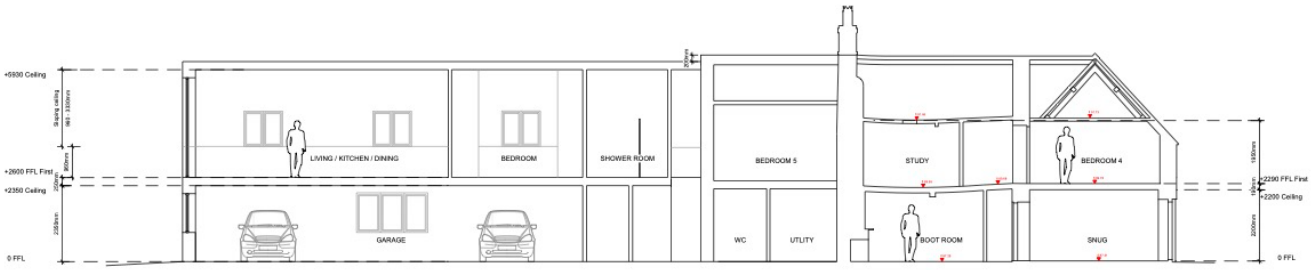
A three bay garage with living accommodation above is proposed to the north east of the property. The living accommodation has been designed with the future occupation of elderly relatives in mind. The garage provides workshop space and secure storage for garden equipment negating the need for external outbuildings and sheds, allowing a number of existing outbuildings to be demolished. This would result in a net reduction of buildings on the site improving the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape. The garage is located to the rear of the property in a position that is largely hidden from the approach to the dwelling ensuring that it does not detract from the principle south east elevation.

The existing floor to ceiling height in the property is very low with only 2.2m head height on the ground floor and 2.3m on the first floor. This creates some challenges when designing the extensions as the desire would be to create floor to ceiling heights more suitable for modern standard of living which would be closer to a minimum of 2.4m high. Whilst standard design convention is for new extensions to be subservient to existing buildings with lower ridge heights, this is difficult to achieve in this scenario without compromising internal head heights and usability of first floor rooms. The south east extensions is therefore set back from the existing dwelling to provide an element of subservience whilst allowing the old and new element of the building to be clearly expressed.

A 2.35m head height is achieved in the new kitchen / dining room by stepping up the first floor level from the existing house. This can only be achieved by providing a portal frame to the roof, providing vaulted ceilings to the new bedrooms which will help to make the bedrooms feel more spacious without having to raise the overall roof height.

The garage eaves and ridge height is set down from the eaves and ridge height of the main dwelling to give it an appearance of a single storey building with rooms in the roof. The use of differing materials between the garage and the main dwelling further emphasise the hierarchy between the main house and secondary accommodation. The material change also helps to break up the overall massing of the facades.

The scale and massing of the two storey extensions closely reflect the existing dwelling. The extensions follow the same architectural language by utilising the gable windows at first floor and repeating the same double pairing between the ground and first floor windows, echoing the symmetrical design of the existing dwelling. Due to the large plot in which the house exists and the commanding views that is looks out over, the increased size of the dwelling sits comfortably within its setting and arguably provides a much improved relationship between the surrounding property and landscape beyond.



1 Proposed Section A-A
Scale: 1:100



2 Proposed Section B-B
Scale: 1:100



3 Proposed Section C-C
Scale: 1:100

6. Proposed sections highlight the low floor to ceiling heights of existing dwelling and relationship between existing and proposed.

4.2 Materials

The proposed double storey extensions are to built using Cotswold limestone to match existing on the south east and south west elevations. Rough cast through colour render is proposed on the north east and north west elevations coloured to match the limestone. The roofs of the two storey extensions are to be imitation Cotswold stone tiles to match existing. Entrance doors will be unpainted timber whilst all new windows will be painted timber to match existing. The bifold doors will be dark grey aluminium.

The garage will be finished with vertical timber cladding left to naturally silver. The timber cladding has been chosen to reflect the dwellings location amongst the woodland whilst the roof will be finished with profile metal sheeting to echo the design of agricultural buildings found in the area. Contemporary simple detailing around the doors, windows and use of galvanised steel rainwater goods will provide a contemporary finish to the garage setting it apart from the traditional aesthetic of the main house.

The two differing architectural languages between the main house and garage will be brought together by utilising stainless steel metal rainwater goods throughout and constructing the roof of the new porch with the same profile metal sheeting used on the garage. Timber lintels above windows will also reflect the timber cladding on the garage. The simple robust material palette of stone, metal and timber used throughout reflects the character of its rural location and extensive agricultural buildings located in the area.

5.0 Environmental Assessment & Sustainability

There are no identified ecological issues. The existing trees on the property do not have any Tree Protection Orders on them. The trees located on the boundary are located at a suitable distance away from the proposed extensions and therefore will be unaffected by the proposals. There are no drainage or flooding issues. All new foul drainage will be directed towards a new biodigester septic tank located under the driveway which replaces an existing septic tank that has passed its design life. Rainwater will be directed towards newly laid soakaways.

It is the applicants intentions to be as self-sustaining as possible and live off grid where possible. It is therefore the intention to construct the extensions using a fabric first approach which includes high levels of insulation greater that current building regulations, and high airtightness with good quality windows and doors. The intention is to heat the house and hot water utilising a ground source heat pump. Further to this the applicant is exploring options to install Photovoltaics to provide electrical supply to the house. Any application for the PV's would be submitted under a separate planning application if required.

6.0 Access

Vehicle access to the site will utilise the existing driveway and will not have an impact on the entrance to the site or parking provision. Pedestrian access around the property will be improved from the current provision with gravel and paved paths proposed to link the front to the rear of the property.

7.0 Conclusion

It is considered that the scheme will improve the quality and appearance of the property and provide a better relationship between the dwelling, large plot in which is sits and wider landscape beyond. The internal layout will provide accommodation suitable for modern family living which will be able to adapt to the families changing future needs. It is considered that the proposed works fully accord with local policies and considers the character and context of its secluded rural location.

For the reasons set out in the Design & Access Statement, accompanying drawings and Planning Statement, we conclude that the proposed scheme accords with national and local planning policies and should therefore be granted permission.