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Cheney Cottage, Ditteridge, Wiltshire, SN13 8QF

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1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in order to explain the proposals for rationalisation, enhancement and improvement of the openness of areas to the East of Cheney Cottage

The main subject of this application for planning consent comprises 4 separate but interrelated areas

1. The enhancement of the existing building, Stable Cottage.

2. The removal of a significant number of outbuildings, which detract from the overall setting of the site and its surroundings.

3. The replacement of non native Cypress trees to the east of the site, with indigenous hedgerow and supplementary fruit tree planting improving the biodiversity of the site and enhancing its overall character and setting.

4. The rationalisation of outbuildings and a significant reduction in overall building volume, by 1/3, thus improving the openness of the greenbelt.

2.0 Description of Property

The proposal site lies over 400m west of the centre of Ditteridge, a hamlet in the parish of Box. Its eastern boundary is 150 metres beyond the Ditteridge Conservation Area, which includes much of the village and parts of Grade II* listed Cheyney Court.

The site lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Western Wiltshire Green Belt.

The proposal removes a number of features that are harmful to the local landscape and context, such as extensive stands of tall non-native Cypress trees, and aims to improve the landscape setting and biodiversity by numerous measures including the reinstatement of native planting

SITE AND SETTING

The hamlet of Ditteridge lies on the north side of By Brook. The Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment classifies this landscape as By Brook Limestone Valley (10A), which is one of the limestone valleys forming part of the western edge of the Cotswolds AONB.

Ditteridge is reached by Road Hill, which runs along the north slope of the valley between the A4 at Box 1.2km to the! east and Roman Road 2.4km to the west. Ditteridge is the largest settlement along Road Hill.

Road Hill runs mostly through agricultural land. Breaks in the hedgerows either side of the road occasionally afford long views upslope, down towards By Brook and across the valley, or diagonally across undulating fields and boundary hedges. Apart from the collection of buildings at Ditteridge there are a few informal groups of buildings which occur along Road Hill at junctions with subsidiary roads.

The site itself comprises, Cheney Cottage as the main house, with a number of outbuildings to its East.

CHENEY COTTAGE

Cheney Cottage is a two storey, 4 bedroom house dating from 1939. The house is thatched and built in an arts and crafts style.

It is understood that the house was built for a Mr Northey and is a close copy of The Thatched House, in Esher, Surrey, which is the house Mr Northey lived in prior to having Cheney Cottage built.

LITTLE CHENEY COTTAGE
Two storey ancillary accommodation, converted in 1993 from garage, comprising 2 bedrooms, occasional (3rd) bedroom mezzanine, living room, kitchen, wc, bathroom, painted brickwork walls, thatched roof.

STABLE COTTAGE/CAR PORT
Two storey ancillary accommodation, built circa 1995 on site of former stable building, comprising 3 bedrooms, bathroom, 2 shower rooms, adjoining car port (used by Little Cheney residents for car parking and bin storage). Unpainted and un-rendered concrete block walls, part overclad in timber and bark, tile roof.
Flat roof to car port.

STORAGE SHED
Single storey flat roofed construction, part enclosed in timber and plastic sidings. Used as wood store, for gardening equipment and excess furniture from Little Cheney Cottage. Exact date of construction unknown.

ELECTRICS SHED
Fully-enclosed timber shed sited within the larger storage shed. Contains Little Cheney electrical equipment. Exact date of construction unknown.

GARDEN SHED
Single storey timber building. Containing gardening equipment for Cheney cottage. Exact date of construction unknown.

PREFABRICATED BUILDING
Single storey prefabricated building, originally a caravan but established on site without wheels and mounted on block foundations. Plastic and metal walling, aluminium windows, flat roof. Used circa 1981 - 2000 as office for A. Evans building business in connection with builder's yard in garden adjacent. Since 2002, used as storage and workshop.

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3.0 The Proposals

In essence, the proposals are to rationalise the existing collection of random structures, associated walls/fences and hard landscaping to produce a cohesive and well organised site, centred around Cheney Cottage, as the main house, whilst maintaining the vernacular character of the site by retaining Little Cheney Cottage the Stable Cottage ancillary building and the introduction of a garden studio.

In doing so, this will allow the creation of a courtyard garden area, to the east of Cheney Cottage, bordered by Stable Cottage and Little Cheney Cottage to the north and the new garden studio to the south.

This garden area will follow the contours of the existing land without the need for any raised beds or terracing.

By demolishing storage sheds and a prefabricated caravan which currently are of no architectural interest, introducing simple hard and soft landscaping and the siting of a proposed garden studio adjacent to Cheney cottage to the East, the proposal aims to unify Cheney cottage with it's ancillary buildings and allow a harmonious juxtaposition between all elements of the site as a whole.

The proposed garden studio east of Cheney cottage, allows for the creation of a level garden between the two existing buildings at the North of the site (Little Cheney Cottage/ Stable Cottage) and the proposed new Garden Studio to the South.

In addition, it is proposed to remove a 65m band of non-native Cypress trees directly east of the existing collection of buildings running North/South. This collection of trees smother the site to the east and forms a prohibitive barrier to the countryside beyond. The intention of removing these trees would allow the site to open up and take advantage of the outstanding views to the east. It would also improve the quality of natural light to Eastern side of the site where, currently, overshadowing is an issue.

Following the removal of these trees, the intention is to replace with a hedgerow of indigenous species of trees and shrubs. These will be more in keeping with the setting of the host building and a measure which will assist in improving the overall biodiversity of the site. Supplementary fruit tree planting will also be provided to the north of the eastern paddock.

3.1 PROPOSALS FOR STABLE COTTAGE.

As existing, Stable Cottage is a small two storey building providing ancillary accommodation to the principle building on the application site - Cheney Cottage. It is currently in a state of disrepair and in need of refurbishment to meet modern standards.

The use of the building will remain as ancillary accommodation for guests of the applicants.

In the interests of sustainability and minimising the carbon footprint of Cheney Cottage as a whole, it is proposed to retain the external walls to the main rectangular footprint of the structure, but modify the eastern side of the building by replacing the existing inadequate lean-to and providing a new 2.3m deep lean-to extension to the full extent of the eastern elevation. This will facilitate a more functional ground floor area providing an open plan Kitchen/Living/ Dining space whilst still retaining the modest character of the existing building. A relocated staircase position allows for a reconfigured first floor accommodating a good sized double bedroom and bathroom.

The existing roof will need to be overhauled and reconstructed to meet current regulations, however the general form to the West facing elevation will remain as existing - the roof to the east facing elevation is proposed to be adjusted to form a 'cat slide' roof over the new extension. New dormers are also proposed to this east elevation to grant better headroom and improved daylight to these first floor rooms.

The ridge height of the building will remain as existing.

Materials.

It is intended to retain the vernacular character of the existing aesthetic whilst making modest interventions to rationalise the appearance of the building , which, in it's current condition, looks a little dishevelled. It is essential that this ancillary accommodation retains a modest aesthetic, making it clear that it is subservient in hierarchy to the host building of Cheney Cottage, yet clearly integral to the site as a whole.

At ground floor level, the existing external concrete block walls will be clad with brick to match areas of brick on other buildings within the application site. To the North and South gable elevations waney edged horizontal timber cladding will be used, again to tie in with materials employed elsewhere about the site. The roof will remain as double roman clay tiles.

Existing windows will be upgraded using new steel framed casements in timber sub-frames as existing. Where new glazing is proposed, modern Polyester powder coated framed double glazed units will be introduced.

3.2 GARDEN STUDIO

Siting and Location.

The proposed Garden Studio is located in the approximate position of an existing prefabricated caravan structure directly east of Cheney Cottage.

As previously discussed, this proposed ancillary building facilitates an elegant courtyard and completes the more rational arrangement of buildings in relation to Cheney cottage. From the Northern Boundary adjacent to Road Hill to the Southern most boundary the site is extremely deep.

The proposed Garden Studio provides a sense of enclosure to the Cheney Cottage garden space allowing more intimacy within the courtyard. The positioning of the Garden Studio maintains vistas from the northern end of the site to the spectacular views to the south.

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Scale and Massing.

Following feedback from the local planning authority, the scale of the garden studio has been significantly reduced from that previously proposed.

The scale of the building is intended to be visually subservient to that of Cheney cottage. The massing of the Garden studio aims to be as modest as practically possible.

Design considerations.

The proposed Garden Studio will be a multi-purpose space for the owners of Cheney Cottage. A place for exercise and wellness. It also serves as a pavilion/sun terrace area over looking the existing tennis court to the Southern end of the site.

It is intended that the design of this building is a modern interpretation of a vernacular outbuilding in keeping with the rural nature of the site. Every effort has been made to design a building which has an interesting architectural form, eccentric enough to reflect the sometimes unconventional nature of rural barns, yet minimal enough in it's detailing to ensure that it remains subservient to the host building to the West. The proposed use of natural materials where possible aims to keep the building rooted in it's simplicity whilst providing an elegant and dynamic space internally.

The external walls are proposed to be clad in natural timber butt-jointed vertical cladding. This attempts to reflect the classic open slatted vertical timber walls to many sheds and barns in rural areas.

The flat roof over the building will be concealed behing a parapet wall.

Polyester powder coated aluminium framed modern glazing is proposed throughout the building to give views into the courtyard garden and also to the extensive views to the south and east of the site. A glass to glass corner window seat to the east elevation provides a quiet reading space with views across the East.

The South side of the Garden Studio building is recessed with a section of over hanging roof providing sun shading to the studio. This covered area provides a terrace over looking the tennis court to the south. Large sliding doors open to give the option of internal/external open space in the warm months.

3.3 EXISTING AND PROPOSED RELEVANT BUILDING VOLUMES

Existing Building Volumes

Car port - 40.32m^3
Stable Cottage - 164.20m^3
Garden Shed - 6.70m^3
Electrics Shed - 18.30m^3
Storage Buildings - 317.60m^3
Pre-fab/ Caravan - 119.60m^3

Total Existing Building Volume - 666.72m^3

Proposed Building Volumes

Stable Cottage - 204.30m^3
Garden Studio - 132.30m^3

Total Proposed Building Volume - 336.60m^3

Reduction in Overall Building Volume - 330.12m^3

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposals represent positive step to significantly improve the character, appearance and setting of Cheney Cottage and how this sits within the wider rural setting.

This is proposed by way of a number of different interrelated elements:

1. The enhancement of the existing building, Stable Cottage. Following further assessment of this building, it is considered to be more environmentally friendly to keep and enhance the core building in terms of its appearance, functionality and energy efficiency, rather than to demolish and re-build.

2. The removal of a significant number of outbuildings, which detract from the overall setting of the site and its surroundings.

3. The replacement of non native Cypress trees, with indigenous hedgerow and supplementary fruit tree planting, improving the biodiversity of the site and enhancing its overall character and setting.

4. Through the rationalisation of outbuildings and a significant reduction in overall building volume.

The proposals have been modified and revised following feedback from the local planning authority and take account of the advice given.

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Photo 1. Cheney Cottage in foreground, with overbearing Cypress trees in background. Prefab building midground.



Photo 2. Little Cheney Cottage in foreground with Stable Cottage and carport behind.



Photo 3. Prefab building behind garden shed.



Photo 4. Storage buildings.



Photo 5. Prefab building viewed from the north.



Photo 6. Tennis court which will be served by new garden studio.

5.0 Photos

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