

COMBINED DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

DETACHED OAK FRAMED POOL SIDE BUILDING AT
WESTWELLS FARMHOUSE, 40 WESTWELLS, NESTON,
CORSHAM, WILTSHIRE



Prime Oak,
The Millworks,
Heath Mill Road,
Wombourne,
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WV5 8AP

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Introduction

This combined Design & Access Statement and Heritage Statement has been prepared by Prime Oak to accompany a householder planning application for a proposed freestanding oak framed pool side building at Westwells Farmhouse, a detached dwelling located at Westwells to the south of the market town of Corsham.

Westwells Farmhouse is a listed building.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the drawings enclosed with the accompanying application, including:

- Location Plan (drg. 97412/01);
- Proposed Block Plan (drg. 97412/02);
- Existing Floor & Roof Plan (drg. 97412/03);
- Existing Elevations (drg. 97412/04);
- Existing Perspectives (drg. 97412/05);
- Proposed Floor & Roof Plan (drg. 97412/06);
- Proposed Elevations (drg. 97412/07);
- Proposed Perspectives (drg. 97412/08).

Prime Oak will be designing and constructing the proposal on behalf of the property owner. Prime Oak are one of the country's leading specialists in the design and construction of oak framed buildings for all kinds of domestic and other uses, utilising traditional mortise and tenon pegged joint carpentry techniques.

The Proposal

The proposal is to erect a detached freestanding outbuilding in the rear garden of the house. The new outbuilding would be located adjacent to an existing swimming pool and would provide a changing/drying area, as well as a garden room/summer house from which the property owners can enjoy the relatively large garden area.

The proposed building would be a modest single storey structure of a simple rectangular floorplan. It would retain and incorporate an existing stone wall which already partly encloses an area of hardstanding at the northern end of the existing swimming pool on three sides. Otherwise the new structure would be constructed using an oak frame clad in timber weatherboard. It would have a pitched roof with hips at either end finished in clay plain tiles.

Heritage Statement

Westwells Farmhouse dates from the early C17 and includes C18 alterations/extensions. It is, as its name suggests, a former farmhouse, but is now occupied as a dwelling. The house is one of four buildings, now occupied as dwellings, which historically occupied the former farmstead of Westwells Farm. A number of other former farm outbuildings, including former stables and dairy buildings, have been incorporated into the main house or survive as ancillary outbuildings.

The house is elongated in plan, with its wide south-east facing frontage facing over the former farmyard which is approached from Westwells further to the south-east. It is essentially a one-and-a-half storey design, with the first floor mainly lit by dormer windows. The building is constructed from rubble stone with stone tiled pitched roofs, coped gables and saddlestone ridges. Fenestration

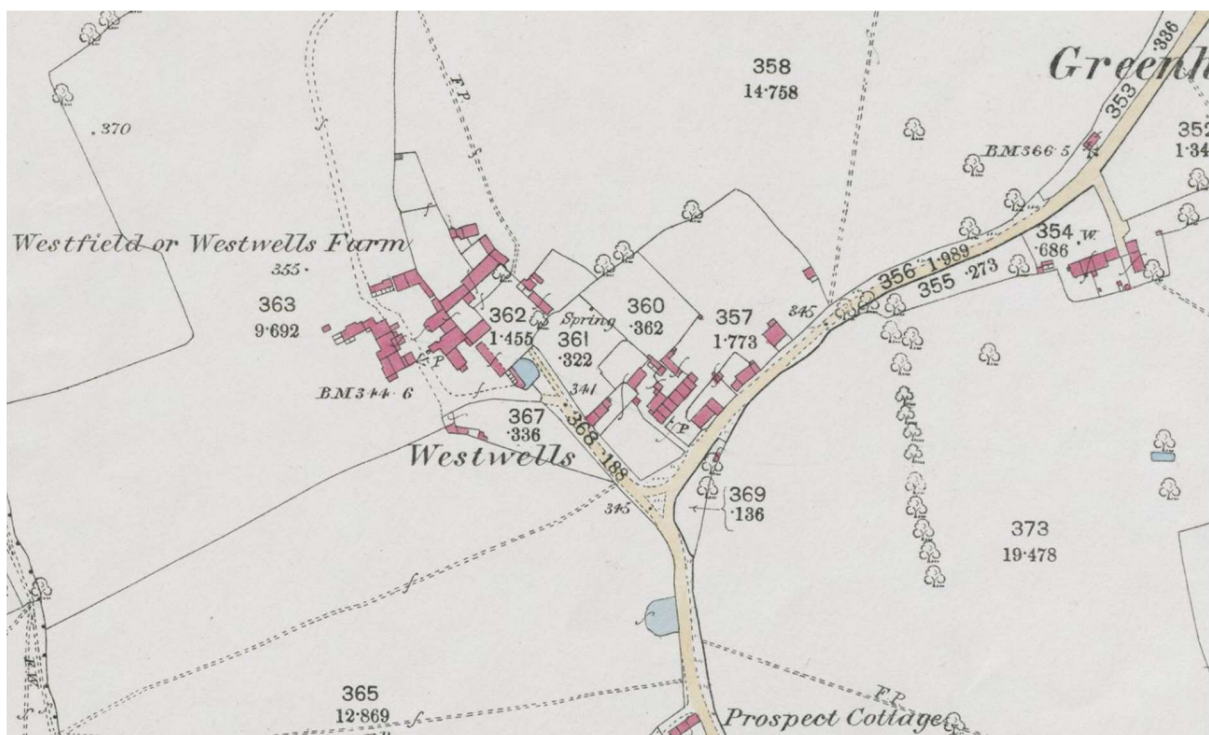
comprises mainly cyma-moulded mullion windows with steel critol inserts, whilst doors are constructed from timber.

Westwells Farmhouse was first listed Grade II on the 1st August 1986. For reference the statutory listing description reads as follows:

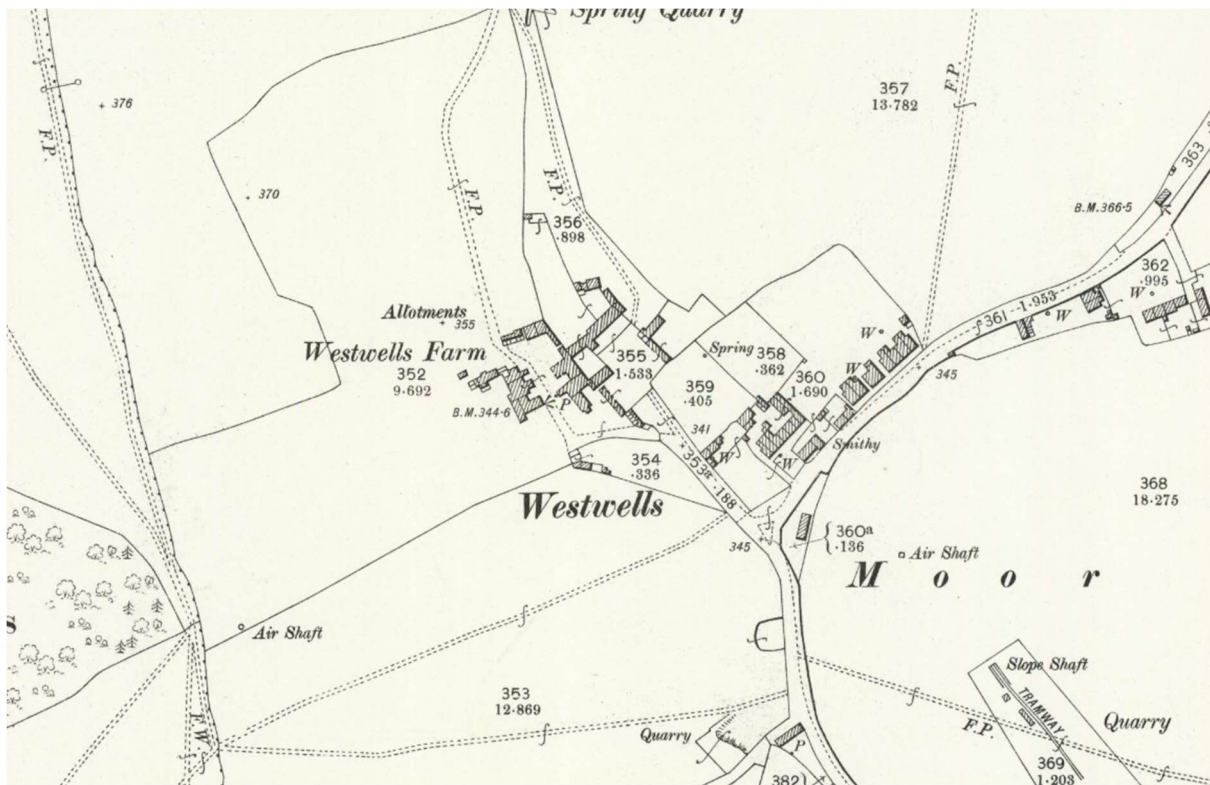
Farmhouse, C17 and C18, rubble stone with stone-tiled roof, coped east gable with saddlestone, ridge stack and west end stack to main range. Left end section with ridge stack. One and a half storeys. Long main range with straight joints each side of centre section. Right end has 2 dormer gables with 2-light recessed cyma-moulded mullion windows and C20 ground floor French window. To rear, gable, possibly former chimney gable and dormer gable adjoining with 3-light recessed cyma-moulded upper window and 3-light ovolo-moulded window below, both with hoodmoulds. Front centre section has eaves casement over door to right, and 3-light flush cyma-moulded ground floor window to left with small panes, hipped casement dormer over. Left section has similar 3-light small-paned window to ground floor and similar hipped casement dormer over. Wall-face stack to left. Left end range has gable to front and rear, front with Bridgwater-tiled lean-to. To left, one first floor boarded opening.

Two neighbouring buildings to the west, no's. 42-52 West Wells and no's. 62/64 Westwells are also Grade II listed buildings. The building housing no's. 42-52 is a former farmhouse dating from the C17 but is now occupied as flats. No's. 62-64 was originally an agricultural barn dating from the early C18 but was converted to a pair of cottages in the C19.

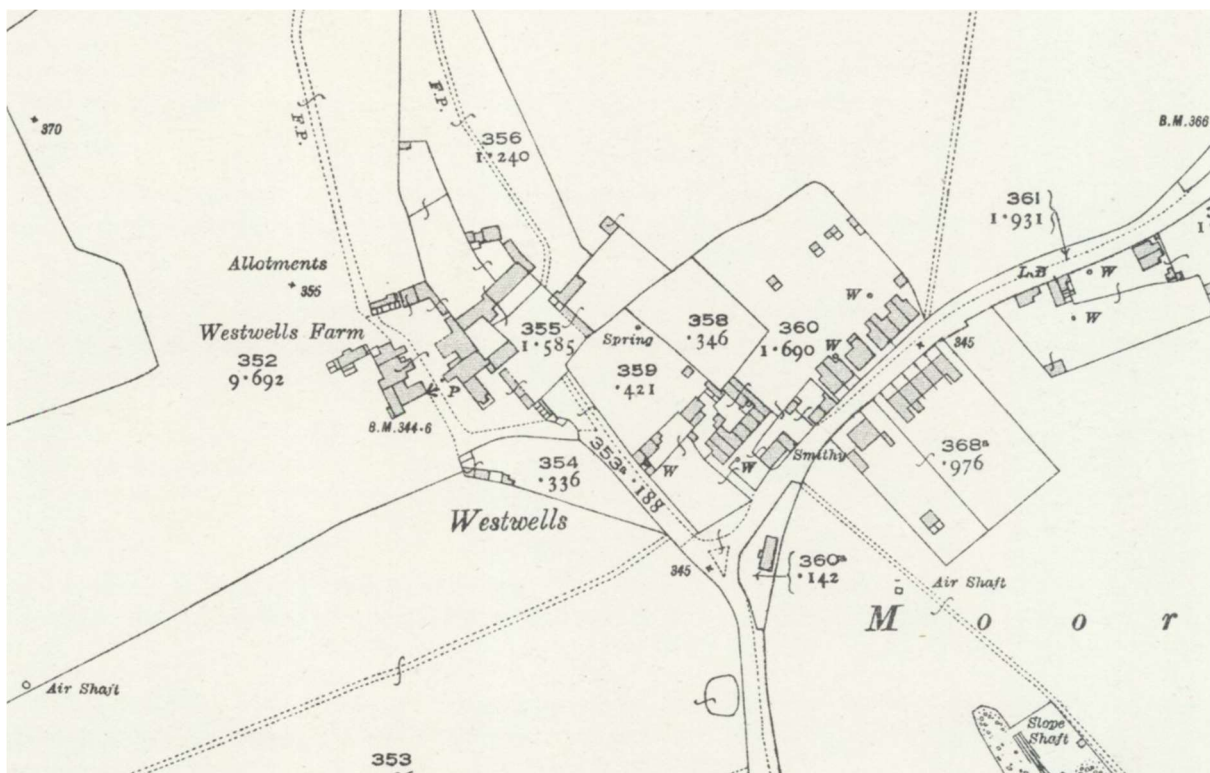
Historic map extracts are reproduced below.



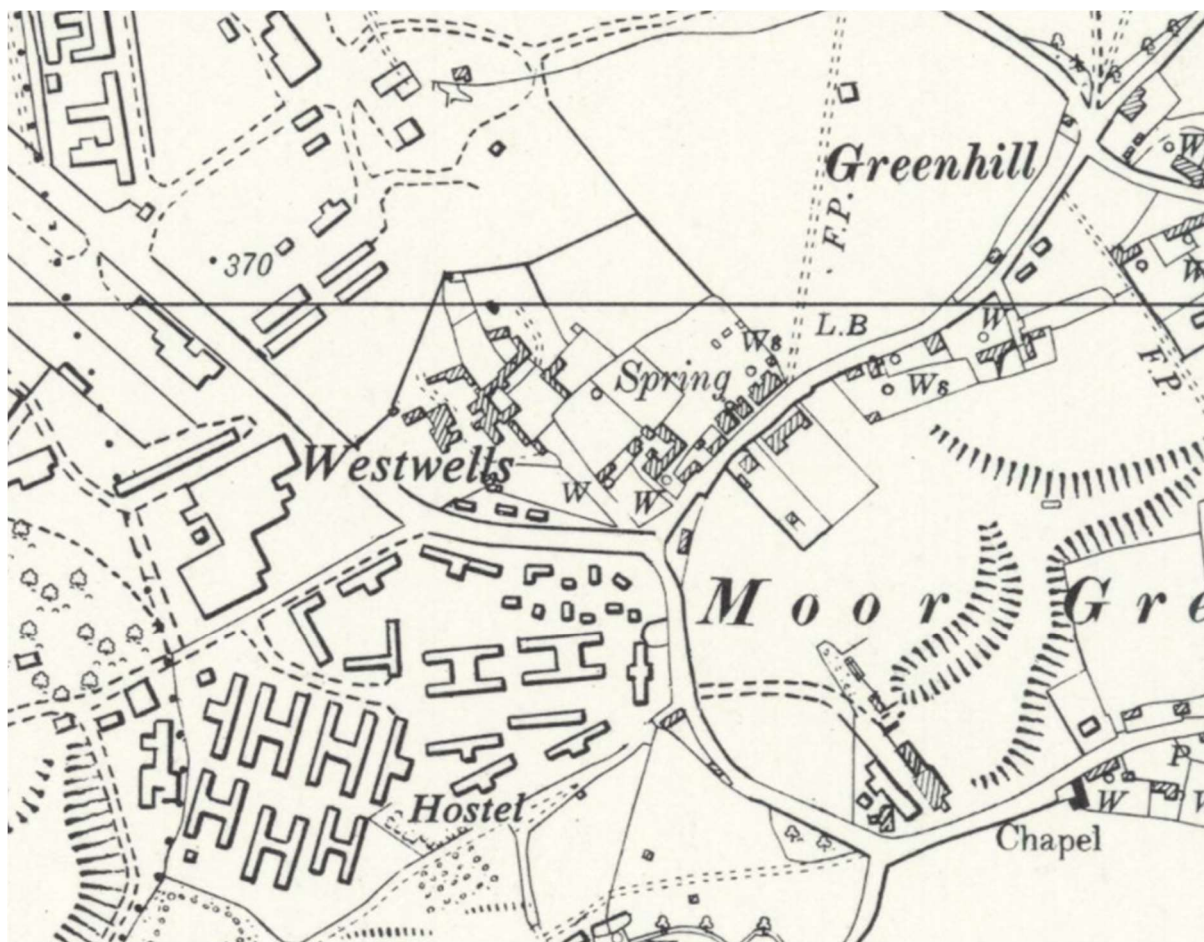
Extract from 1886 25 inch to the mile edition OS map (source: National Library of Scotland – maps.nls.uk).



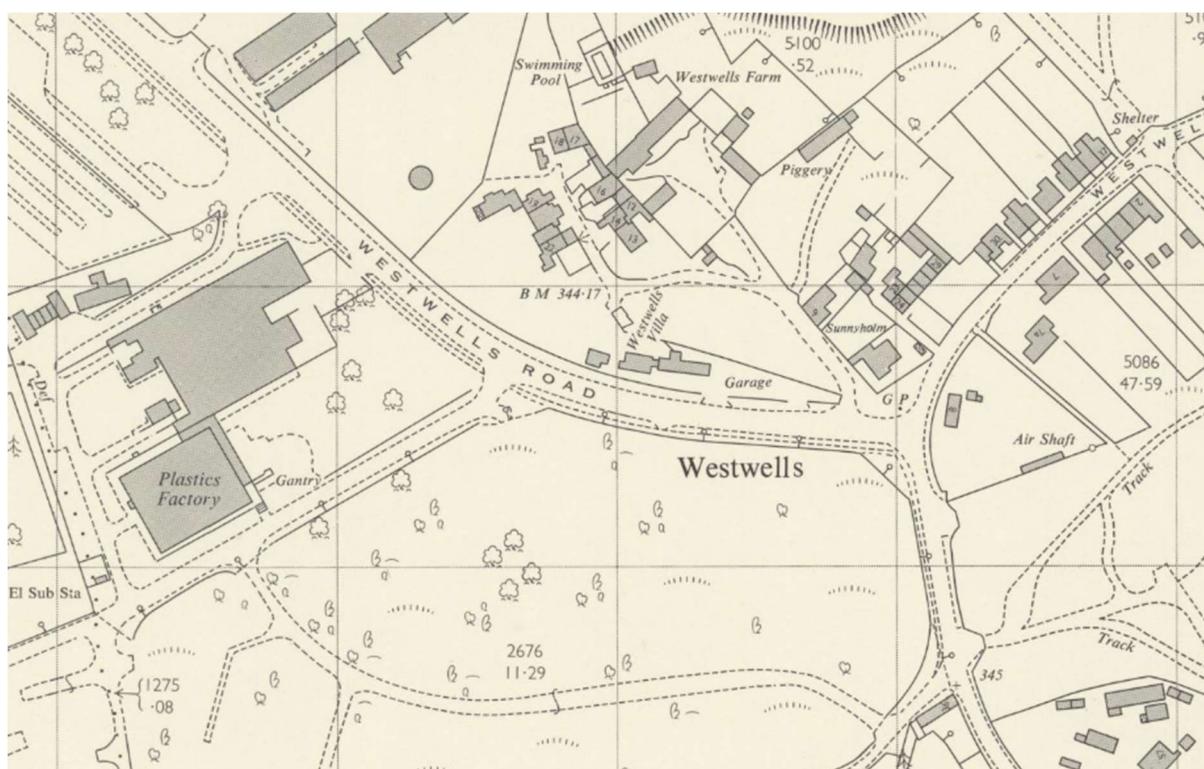
Extract from 1900 25 inch to the mile edition OS map (source: National Library of Scotland – maps.nls.uk).



Extract from 1921 25 inch to the mile edition OS map (source: National Library of Scotland – maps.nls.uk).



Extract from 1960 1:10,560 edition OS map (source: National Library of Scotland – maps.nls.uk).



Extract from 1969 1:2500 edition OS map (source: National Library of Scotland – maps.nls.uk).

What is evident from the historic map extracts above is how little the area around Westwells Farmhouse changed up until the mid-C20. Prior to then the area was rural in character, providing the farmland which would have formed part of the wider farmholding to Westwells Farm. Westwells Farm is specifically named on the maps up to the 1921 edition.

It is only from the 1960 edition map onwards that large scale development began to encroach onto the former farmland to the north and west following the construction of what is now the MOD Corsham estate and former barracks, along with other surrounding commercial development. So from the 1960s onwards the original open rural farmland setting of Westwells Farmhouse and its neighbouring C17/C18 buildings was lost. Westwells Farmhouse now sits surrounded by large scale modern military and commercial development to the north and west, and the gradual encroachment of housing development along Westwells to the east and south. So the surrounding character has in modern times become urbanised.

It is understood that the existing stone wall, which it is proposed to incorporate into the structure of the proposed pool side building, is the rebuilt/refurbished remains of a previous garden outbuilding which was in a poor state of repair and had largely collapsed. There is no evidence to suggest that any previous outbuilding was an historic structure or that the existing wall possesses any particular heritage merit. The wall's construction appears modern, albeit using reclaimed materials, whilst any previous associated outbuilding does not clearly appear on any of the historic map extracts above. A swimming pool appears on the 1969 edition map, with what could be an outbuilding at its northern end, so on the evidence available it appears that any outbuilding previously constructed in this location was a modern addition.

Having regard to the above, the proposal would not replace or incorporate the remains of a previous outbuilding of any particular heritage merit. It would, however, reflect the recent past siting of more modern garden outbuildings at this property adjacent to the existing swimming pool.

The proposed pool side building would be located in the rear garden of Westwells Farmhouse where it would not be readily visible from outside the site. It would therefore not affect the setting of the listed building, or neighbouring listed buildings, in key publicly available views from Westwells or Westwells Road which is now dominated by larger scale surrounding modern development. Viewed from inside the site the proposal would be a modest garden outbuilding, constructed from materials and of a scale that would be wholly subservient to the main listed building. It would also be constructed some distance away from the main house at the far end of an existing swimming pool. In terms of its siting, appearance and scale therefore, the proposal would not have any unduly harmful impact on the setting of the listed building or neighbouring listed buildings.

Taking the above into account, the following sections of this statement assess the impact of the proposal in further detail.

Use

The use proposed would be wholly incidental to the domestic residential enjoyment of the main house. This is a garden outbuilding that would be sited within the domestic curtilage of the existing house and which would be used for purposes wholly incidental to the existing dwelling, namely as a pool side shelter and garden room/summer house, for the benefit of the occupiers of the main house only.

As such the use of the proposal is entirely appropriate in principle for this existing residential property which lies within a mature residential area. The proposed use in itself would not have any impact on the appearance or setting of the listed building.

Amount

The proposed pool side building would be a modest single storey structure, of a width no greater than the existing hardsurfaced area surrounding the existing swimming pool and no greater than the extent of the existing stone wall to be incorporated into its structure. The proposal has therefore been designed to appear as a wholly subservient outbuilding in terms of the amount of development proposed, with no significantly greater impact than the existing swimming pool and wall. It would appear as a relatively minor feature within the garden and one that would not dominate the appearance of the listed building to any significantly greater degree over the existing situation, particularly as the proposed outbuilding would be sited some distance away.

Therefore in terms of the amount of development proposed, the proposed pool side building would not unduly harm the appearance or setting of the listed Westwells Farmhouse or any other nearby listed buildings. The amount of development proposed would not be visible from outside the site.

Layout

As described above, the proposed pool side building would be located at the northern end of the existing garden swimming pool, at the end of the swimming pool furthest away from the main house, and would incorporate an existing stone wall in this location. In this respect the layout of the site would not alter.

In its proposed position, the new pool side building would not be visible from outside the site and would leave all key views of Westwells Farmhouse and neighbouring listed buildings unchanged from surrounding roads. From within the site the proposal would be sited between 24m and 44m away from the main house, adjacent to the existing swimming pool area, so it would not dominate the appearance of the listed building in terms of its siting.

As stated in the Heritage section of this statement above, the siting of the proposal would appear to reflect the recent past siting of more modern garden outbuildings at this property.

In terms of layout, therefore, the proposal would have no undue impact on the appearance, character or setting of the listed Westwells Farmhouse or any other nearby listed buildings.

Access

The proposed pool side building would be located in the private rear garden of the existing house. There would be no change to the existing access arrangements to the property.

Scale

As described above, the proposed pool side building would be a relatively minor single storey structure and a minor garden outbuilding. It would be only a small fraction of the much greater existing floor areas of the main house and also well below its much greater height. The proposal would therefore clearly appear as a wholly subservient addition within the garden of Westwells Farmhouse.

Furthermore, the perceived bulk and scale of the new building would be reduced by its timber framed construction. This would give the new structure a visually more lightweight appearance appropriate to a garden outbuilding, contrasting markedly with the larger solid stone built form of the main house.

As such, the scale of the proposal would be wholly appropriate to its setting and would not dominate the appearance or character of the much larger listed Westwells Farmhouse or any other neighbouring listed buildings.

Appearance

The proposed pool side building would be a high quality traditional form of oak framed structure typical of the timber framed construction of historic outbuildings. The incorporation of the existing stone wall into the design would also reflect the facing materials of Westwells Farmhouse. The oak frame would naturally 'silver off' over time, further helping the structure to appear weathered-in to its surroundings.

The oak framed construction of the proposed pool side building would also mean that it would clearly appear as a subservient and visually lightweight outbuilding to the property, contrasting with the solid stone form of the main house. The visual legibility of the history and architecture of Westwells Farmhouse and other nearby listed buildings would remain easily perceivable.

The appearance and design of the proposal is therefore entirely appropriate to this setting and would not unduly harm the character or appearance of the listed Westwells Farmhouse or any other nearby existing listed buildings.

Landscape

No new landscaping is specifically proposed as part of this minor householder application. Where the new pool side building would be sited is a hardsurfaced area surrounding the existing swimming pool, so no existing areas of landscape/planting would have to be removed.

Therefore the landscape setting of the existing site and listed building would not be unduly affected.

Sustainable Development

The proposed poolside building would be constructed of oak sourced from well managed sustainable and renewable PEFC certified forests, whilst the traditional carpentry methods to be employed rely less on the use of modern power tools and would provide a structure that could be more easily dismantled and the materials reused elsewhere if required. The proposed construction method and materials to be used are therefore highly sustainable.

Surface water drainage would employ sustainable methods, such as the installation of a water butt for capturing and recycling rainwater around the garden.

Conclusions

The proposed pool side building would be a sustainable form of development, of a subservient scale and appearance in relation to the listed Westwells Farmhouse and other nearby listed buildings. It would be sited within the existing rear garden of the property, over an existing hardsurfaced area adjacent to an existing swimming pool and incorporating an existing section of stone wall. In this

location the proposal would not be visible from outside the site, so would have no impact on the wider setting of the listed building.

From within the site the proposal would be sited some distance from the main house and would be subservient to it in terms of scale and appearance. As a detached outbuilding the proposal would not attach to any existing historic building fabric.

The proposal would be sited adjacent to an existing garden swimming pool where in the recent past it appears as though a previous outbuilding existed. The layout of the site would therefore not change and the immediate setting of the listed Westwells Farmhouse would not be harmed.