

Design & Access Statement

Hillside, Quarry Hill, Box, Wiltshire

Proposal: Widen existing gable of rear first floor extension (1.75m) to improve room layout, removal of hipped/lean to roof areas to south-west and north-west elevations above single storey addition.

1. Introduction and Background

This Design & Access Statement accompanies an application for the extension to 'Hillside'; a dwelling located within the Green Belt* (now meeting the Grey Belt test see below) and the Cotswolds National Landscape Area. The proposal has been carefully designed to respect the sensitive landscape setting and comply with national and local planning policy, including PPG2 and Wiltshire Core Strategy policies.

'Hillside' occupies an elevated position on Quarry Hill, outside the defined settlement framework of Box. The property is set within a rural landscape characterised by sloping topography, mature vegetation, and traditional vernacular architecture. The site's location within both the Green Belt and the National Landscape therefore necessitates a restrained and contextually sensitive approach to development.

2. Use

The site is residential and will remain so, the purpose of the application is to remodel bedroom one and ensuite accommodation on the first floor.

The existing implemented permissions (15/07627/FUL and N/98/01106/FUL) established the principal massing and fenestration. The immediate context comprises neighbouring houses of similar scale and domestic character. The proposed changes retain the approved building line and general proportions, so the development remains consistent with the surrounding pattern of development.

3. Amount

The scope is limited to enlargement of the existing first-floor rear extension only and the replacement of the side lean-to roof with a flat roof; no other external changes are proposed.

The amount of development is therefore small being approx. 3.85 sq.m. floor area or 11.77 cu.m., increasing the gable elevation width by an additional 1.75m in matching stone.

4. Layout

The layout has been designed to:

- increase in plan area by a small amount (as above) to provide improved internal layout and circulation at first floor. The increase is modest and set within the existing rear elevation, with gable width and ridge/ eaves heights matching earlier permissions.
 - Side roof detail: replace the existing lean-to roof detail with a flat roof over the side projection, maintaining the same eaves/ridge relationship to avoid additional bulk.
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5. Scale

- Scale and massing: The enlargement is minor in overall scale and subordinate to the main house, preserving the approved scale and roofline.
- Visual impact: A flat roof on the side projection reduces visible roof slope complexity and can be finished with a concealed rubberised material, resulting in a neat, contemporary detail that sits comfortably with the approved scheme.

The scale remains consistent with the rural character of Hillside and Quarry Hill.

6. Appearance

The appearance of the host building will be preserved. Scale and massing - the enlargement is minor and subordinate to the main house, preserving the approved scale and roofline.

- Visual impact: A flat roof on the side projection reduces visible roof slope, enlarging the rear gable extension is now matching the two-storey rear extension but set back.
- Materials: Proposed materials will match or complement the existing dwelling: matching stonework, matching roof covering, and a high-quality flat roof finish with appropriate upstands and drainage, maintaining its local vernacular character.
- Sustainability: The flat roof offers an opportunity for discreet installation of higher performance insulation and potential for a green or photovoltaic roof if desired.

The building will continue to read as a traditional stone-built dwelling within the street scene with no change to the frontage and little change to the rear elevation.

7. Daylight and neighbour amenity

- Daylight and privacy: The small first-floor gable end increase does not extend beyond the previously approved envelope in a way that materially affects neighbouring daylight or privacy. Window positions will respect existing sightlines and privacy distances by ensuring the side rooflight is well above any vision point internally to avoid any overlooking.
 - Noise and disturbance: Construction impacts will be managed by standard site controls and working hours.
 - While the extension may be just visible from the adjacent cottage to the south-west, its mass and bulk are not considered harmful to neighbouring outlook. The design ensures that the development integrates into the landscape and does not detract from the character or amenity of the area.
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8. Landscaping

No new landscaping is proposed.

Existing hard and soft landscaping will be retained, ensuring the development integrates seamlessly with the established setting.

9. Disproportionate additions test:

To demonstrate compliance with national Green Belt guidance (PPG2) and Wiltshire Core Strategy policies regarding proportionality, the earlier approved application 15/07627/FUL used historical mapping and assumptions to establish the size of the original cottage and I quote the agents letter at the time here:

'... several historic maps have been acquired for comparison and to ascertain the developments that taken place in the past. The oldest plan (3183-05) that we have been able to obtain is dated 1886 and is therefore the closest we can show to the original sizes of the cottage. When this historic map is compared to the 2014 Site Plan (3183-09), it becomes

evident that despite a rear extension to the North-East corner and a side extension to the East of the property, the footprint has not been extended to the degree that might be first anticipated. We have concluded that the footprint of the property has grown, albeit with replacement of certain areas of the property of the years, to 50% in total of the original cottage taking into account the proposed scheme. We are unaware, and believe it is unable to be proved with regards to the increase in volume of the property throughout it's history but due to the size of the land, the open surroundings and the character and size of what is left of the original cottage we feel it is safe to believe that the original footprint as shown in 1886 would have been two storey.'

The new position: Grey Belt changes the policy test entirely, the “disproportionate additions” test no longer applies. Therefore, the proposal now is **not inappropriate development**, so the old 50% rule of thumb becomes irrelevant, no longer constrained by the “original building” calculation, and the extension is judged on normal planning merits.

Under the updated NPPF (Dec 2024) and updated PPG (Feb 2025), land that qualifies as **Grey Belt** is treated differently:

Grey Belt definition: Grey Belt is land within the Green Belt that **does not strongly contribute** to purposes (a), (b), or (d) of the Green Belt. If a site is Grey Belt **and** meets the criteria in NPPF paragraph 155, then: **Development on Grey Belt is *not* treated as inappropriate development.**

This is the crucial shift.

In design terms it is also helpful in this case to demonstrate and outline the small scale of the works. A volumetric analysis has been undertaken comparing the existing dwelling, including extensions already permitted and built, with the new work/reductions proposed.

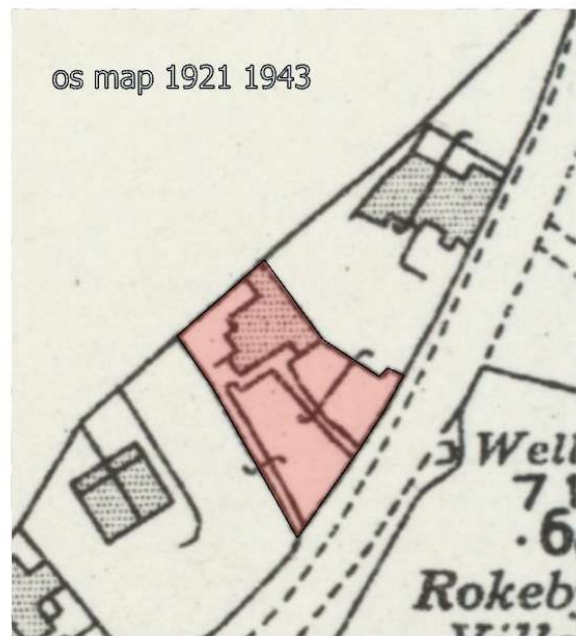
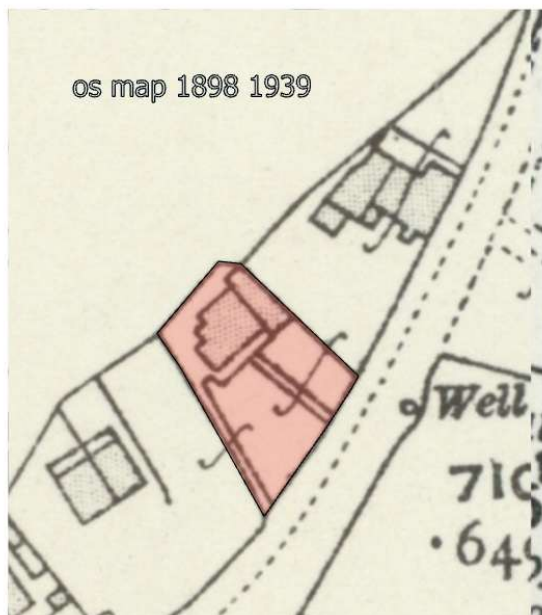
Component	Volume (m³)
Existing extensions (pre-2026)	166.88
Proposed changes (new area less removed roof)	-11.77
Total (existing – proposed changes)	156.26

Key Points:

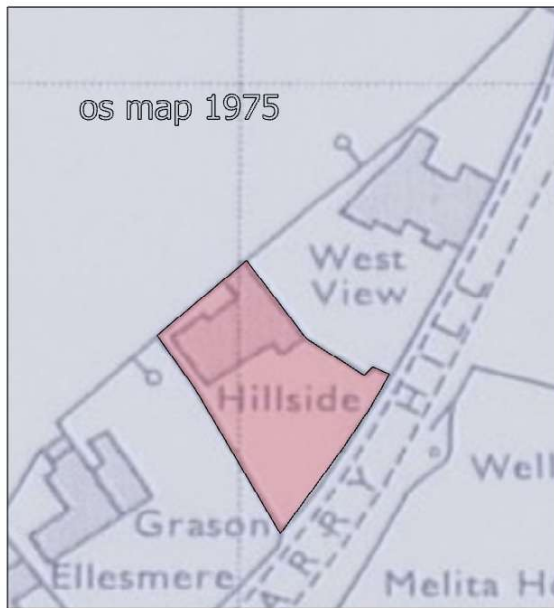
- The proposed extension and roof removal reduces approximately **11.77cu.m.** to the volume as built currently.
- The massing and siting ensure the development remains subordinate to the original dwelling, preserving its character and scale.

This measured approach supports the conclusion that the proposal does **not** constitute a disproportionate addition when considered against the already accepted volumes approved and is therefore acceptable within policy parameters. It also aligns with the visual containment principles expected in the National Landscape

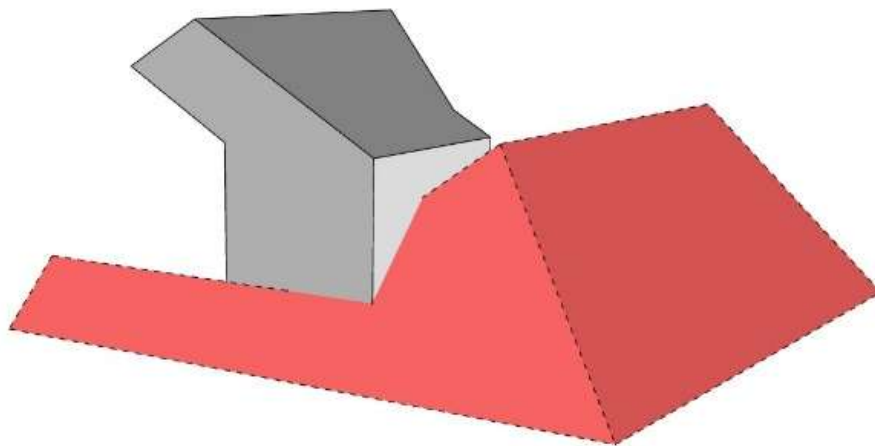
To demonstrate this further please refer to 1) the historical maps below and 2) the scaled elevations below illustrating the changes to the building.



The above maps show the side and rear extensions to the main house (to 2 sides & rear).



The 2 most recent maps above show the extensions now built.



The proposed enlargement in grey and the roof area to be removed is depicted in red (overall 11.77 cu.m reduction over existing).



Rear and south side elevations (as existing to left hand side, proposed on right hand side).



Computer generated to scale image of the proposed changes.

10. Conclusion

The proposed alterations are considered to be minor, well-considered and consistent with the character of the earlier approved alterations. It improves internal functionality while protecting neighbour amenity and the visual appearance of the dwelling. The changes represent a sensitive and proportionate refinement of the earlier approved schemes.

- Minimises external change
- Improves the functioning of the dwelling
- Preserves the rural character and appearance
- Complies with Wiltshire Core Strategy design and rural development policies

When considering the earlier approved application 15/07627/FUL the Planning Officer stated in the Pre-Application advice at the time that they were of the opinion that the proposed extension would not have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt with the only impact arising from the identified 'disproportionate additions' over and above the size of the original building.

The proposed extension at Hillside, Quarry Hill, Box is policy-compliant, sensitively designed, and appropriately scaled. It does not result in a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling and contributes positively to the conservation of the Cotswolds National Landscape.

A computer-generated image of exact scale has been produced to justify the relationship (see previous page) and the considered minor impact this will have to both the building, the Green Belt as well as the National Landscape area.

Planning permission is therefore respectfully sought for the changes.