

Hillbrook

Design and Access Statement

Introduction:

This statement has been prepared in support of the enclosed Planning in Principle application to add 3 no. dwellings at Hillbrook.

Existing context:

The site lies to the north of the A4 Bath Road between Box House to the east, and the Nissan garage to the west. To the north is the Bybrook, a tributary of the River Avon. It is within the Cotswold AONB and Green Belt.

On the south side of the A4, opposite the site, is a row of detached private houses, each centrally set in medium sized gardens. There is also a Shell filling station, a cemetery, and further houses that link Box with Ashley, forming continuous ribbon development.

On the north side, this development is also present in the Northey Arms public house, the Nissan garage, and a range of buildings associated with Box House. There is a small gap in this north side development; this is the site.



Shell Filling Station on the south side of the A4



Dense hedgerow and trees to south of the site



Detached private houses on the south side of the A4, opposite the site



Existing:

Immediately adjacent to the east of the site is a storage yard that has extant planning consent for a new roof to create a large store (reference I4/07756/FUL and I4/07876/LBC). On the site itself, under the same planning permission reference, there is extant planning permission for 3m high and 32m long concrete clamps. The extant permission also includes the formation of a new access off the A4 in the position now proposed, with appropriate visibility splays, and a 6m wide road serving the store.

The site slopes to the north from the A4 down to the Bybrook. There are mature trees and hedging along the A4 and dense planting on either side of the Bybrook, including individual trees on the level land below the site. The Bybrook forms a natural boundary between built development and open countryside.

Proposed:

The site size, defined by the red line boundary, is 4999m², i.e. under half a hectare. The site lies entirely outside flood risk zones 2 and 3.

On the site, it is proposed to add three detached houses. These would be similarly sized to the existing houses opposite and would be centrally set within similar sized gardens.



Proposed Site Location Plan

From the north, when viewed from the public footpath in the field to north of the Bybrook, the new houses would be generally screened by the existing mature planting along the Bybrook. New native species hedges and trees planted on the garden perimeters would increase this screening. The

houses do not break the skyline and are seen against the backdrop of the slope. They are less visible than the existing buildings in the more elevated positions on the south side of the A4. The weathered coursed random rubble stone walls are darker in tone and therefore less visible in the landscape than the light painted rendered walls of some of the existing buildings in the area. The north facing walls are also generally in shadow, further merging the buildings into the dark planting.



Existing view from footpath in field to the north of Bybrook



Proposed view from footpath in field to the north of Bybrook

To the west and east, the views into the site are obscured by dense planting. From the south, the existing mature tall hedge and trees along the A4 mask views into the site. The 8m high houses are set approximately 8.5m below the existing houses on the south side of the A4 (i.e. the proposed ridges are approximately 500mm below the ground floor levels of the existing houses). These existing houses' north views are generally screened, particularly at ground floor level, by their existing garden hedges and trees to protect them from the A4.



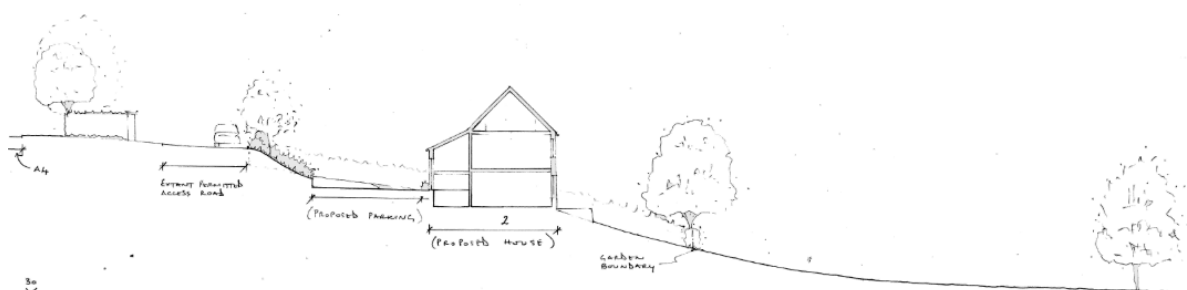
Existing Site Photos – Dense Planting to the West



Dense Planting to the East

The existing slope would be altered locally within the red line boundary to allow for car access and a level parking area from each house. The houses' ground floors would be set approximately 1200mm below the parking area and front door. This allows the kitchen/dining room and living room to open directly at the same level, onto level, east and west gardens. The houses run parallel to the existing contours.

As a solution to siting houses on a steep slope, the slight compromise of setting the primary rooms 1200mm below the front door, is considerably preferable to the inconveniences associated with “upside down” houses where the primary rooms are remote from the gardens, and bedrooms feel vulnerable on the ground floor.



Proposed Site Section

The primary rooms are on the north side, with views across the countryside. Windows in the gable walls admit morning sun from the east and afternoon sun from the west. The secondary rooms, on the south side, are the entrance hall, utility room, study and above them, bathrooms. These also have windows to the east and west. Along with the slope and planting, the secondary rooms protect the primary rooms from the A4 traffic noise.

The houses' external walls are of coursed natural stone. The pitched roofs are of natural slate or terracotta clay tiles. The materials are chosen to be of the local vernacular, which will weather beautifully and are sympathetic to the surroundings.

Practical pitched roofs, that shed water efficiently, are used in preference to flat roofs. In appearance, large flat roofs are alien in their landscape. Their materials, either metal or membrane,

exacerbate this. Even sedum roofs are generally not convincing, as a visually sympathetic finish. The overall appearance is aimed to be politely understated and appropriate to the character of the area.

The traditionally sized and proportioned, deep set windows are chosen to be preferable to large, glazed openings that are less thermally efficient and attract more visible attention through reflected light in the day, and if uncurtained, or without blinds, light pollution at night.

Access:

The houses would be accessed off the extant permitted access and road. Each house would have its own drive, parking for three cars and bicycles, with space to manoeuvre, so that cars can access the road in a forward gear. The parked cars would be generally unseen from outside the site, tucked behind the houses and concealed by the slope and planting.

A pavement passes the site, accompanying the A4 to Box. This provides a short walk to two bus stops and pedestrian access to the shops, schools, surgery, and other services, in Box.

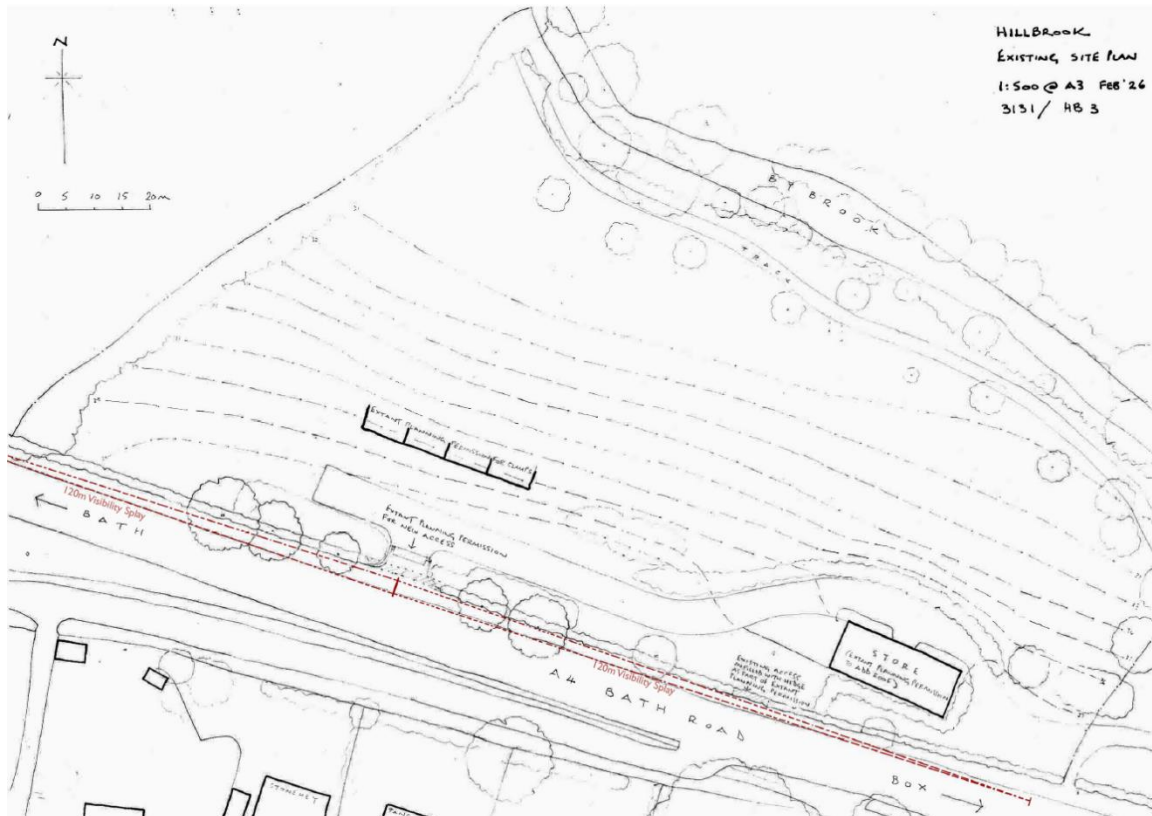
Sustainability and Energy Strategy:

The thermal mass of the stone walls and the long-lasting, locally sourced natural materials ensure positive sustainability. The BRE Green Guide to Specification would be used to evaluate the environmental credentials procured from further afield. The south facing roof pitches are ideal for the positioning of photovoltaic panels.

All new dwellings will include provision for an electric vehicle charging point.

The windows have deep reveals and are modest in scale and number where facing south thus mitigating the risk of overheating. The arrangement of opening windows on all sides of the buildings allow for natural cross ventilation, which in summer will help to maintain even, comfortable temperatures.

The simple compact built forms are traditional in scale, proportion and detailing. These compact forms are easy to maintain and have an energy efficient ratio of large internal volume to small external surface area.



Proposed Site Plan

Conclusion:

The 3 no. new energy efficient modestly sized houses will fit discreetly into the landscape and will complete the historic development in the area along the A4.