Design and Access Statement in relation to Proposed Conversion and Extension of Former Telephone Exchange to form a Dwelling on land off Halifax Road, Thurgoland, Barnsley

Design

Use

At present the application site constitutes a rectangular shaped piece of land extending to 0.05 ha that accommodates a rectangular shaped essentially single storey building which was formerly utilised as a telephone exchange but is now vacant as it is surplus to operational requirements. The site is adjacent to a bungalow property associated with a farm complex and on the opposite side of Halifax Road there is a row of primarily detached dwellings set within quite extensive garden curtilages.

In association with its previous use, the site has an established vehicular access from Halifax Road and part of it forms a hard standing which was formerly used to accommodate vehicles visiting the telephone exchange facility. Accordingly, at the present time the site although constituting previously developed land has no beneficial use or purpose, although planning permission was granted on 5 March 2007, under application reference 2007/0182 for the conversion of the building, with only minor external alteration to form a very small single bedroom dwelling unit.

The site is outside of any established settlement but clearly, both physically and visually is contained within a distinct established cluster of development at a position known locally as *'Top o' th' Height'.*

Amount

The amount of development which is proposed is one modest dwelling only which will accommodate two/three bedrooms. The present shell of the building will be extended to achieve this accommodation. The dwelling will remain, however, a long and narrow property reflecting the character of the present building on the site.

Scale

One dwelling with parking and manoeuvring facilities on site is proposed and by virtue of the configuration of the existing building and the generous internal height to ridge level it is proposed to lower the ground levels around the building by approximately 500mm, this in conjunction with the generous internal height of the building could provide a future loft area of accommodation utilising the roof void. It is clear that the present site is capable of accommodating both the dwelling itself together with the normal and usual facilities i.e. off street parking space as well as a private garden area, normally associated with a modest residential property of this nature.

Appearance

Although this is a change of use and extension proposal, the design and appearance of the resultant dwelling in general terms is already pre-determined by the form of the existing building previously utilised as a telephone exchange. In this context no alteration to its height is proposed although it is proposed that the roof profile will be altered to allow extension of the roof slope to the new outer edge of the extension to the north-west facing elevation. The mass of the building will also be altered by the addition of an extension to the south-west creating a lounge area.

In undertaking the extension of the building, the existing wall materials of brickwork will be removed and replaced with stone to create a building more appropriate to its setting.

The only other changes to the external appearance of the present building will be the introduction of replacement doors and window openings. Because the present fenestration is extremely utilitarian, reflecting the former use of the property, it is intended that these will be replaced with more appropriate door and window fittings. In addition, the positions of the existing window openings will be adjusted generally, to bring them down from their present position immediately below the eaves line to a height which is more practically appropriate for residential use.

In general terms, although the opportunity is being taken to extend the building in order to provide modest family accommodation, the resultant property will continue to reflect the long low, linear format of the present building but render it more attractive in the local landscape and appropriate to use as a small family home.

Layout

In its existing position, the building already enjoys a harmonious relationship with those close to it insofar as it only directly adjoins one property, the bungalow at *'St Marks'* and is set across Halifax Road from the others at *'Pen-y-Bryn'* etc. Consequently because of the separating distance, together with them being off set, there is no danger of the use of the property creating a detrimental effect on the present residential amenity enjoyed by the occupants of the dwellings on the other side of the road.

In relation to the directly adjoining property there is already a mature hedgerow along the boundary which provides clear and distinct separation between this building and that bungalow. Consequently and similarly the use of the building as a dwelling, even though its existing position is close to the common boundary (and obviously this is fixed and cannot be changed) will not cause any detriment to the residential amenity of the occupants of *'St Marks'*. Moreover in this respect the elevation which will face that property will be modified to include small window openings (one of which exists at present) along with a door to a utility room.

The position of the existing building on the site also determines that primarily the frontage area between it and Halifax Road can be utilised for the practical purposes of parking and manoeuvring etc whereas the remainder of the curtilage can be utilised to provide private amenity space around and associated with the proposed dwelling.

Landscaping

Because of the historic use of the property the site itself is featureless in terms of landscaping save for the existing mature hedgerow boundary between it and the adjoining bungalow on Halifax Road.

Similarly as it is limited in extent it is intended that a scheme of normal domestic type planting will be introduced, but this is unlikely to contain large trees etc as it would be impractical to do so.

Access

The vehicular and pedestrian access arrangement to the proposed property is already fixed as this utilizes the present arrangement. Similarly, the existing hard standing area in part alongside and at the front of the building would be re-utilised for vehicular parking and manoeuvring, the parking standard being in accordance with the usual requirement of 2 permanent spaces and one visitor space for this scale of property.

Access gradients along the driveway and footpaths to the building will therefore also be as existing but these are suitable for use by disabled persons and those with limited mobility. Also, although these are incorporated the subsequent necessary Building Regulations application will require all of the appropriate disabled access standards in terms of the actual conversion of the property to be incorporated within it.