

Mill Farm House, Oxspring

Design & Access Statement (15,10,20)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This design and access statement has been written to accompany an application for planning approval for the demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of a replacement dwelling at Mill Farm House, Bower Hill Road, Oxspring.

1.2 Mill Farm House is a detached dwelling set within a site of approximate area 0.5ha, situated to the east of Oxspring. The site slopes steeply from north to south and is well screened on all boundaries by planting. The site and existing dwelling are situated within the green belt

2.0 Existing Building

2.1 Mill Farm House is a detached dwelling situated on a sloping site to the east of Oxspring. The site slopes from north to south, dropping approximately 13m across a distance of 74m at its steepest point. The site is bordered to the east by Bower Hill Road and to the south by a private access track for a neighbouring dwelling. Paddock and private garden / open landscape sit along the north and west boundaries. All boundaries of the site are heavily planted with trees of a variety of sizes and species which provide a significant amount of screening both looking into and out of the site

2.2 The existing property is built from reproduction stone under concrete tile and is clearly relatively modern (a date stone on the south elevation showing 1966 as the year of construction). The house is built across three stories – a garage and undercroft storage at lower level, ground floor living accommodation at mid-level (accessed via level access to the rear due to the steepness of the site) and bedroom accommodation at first floor. In total the house has a gross internal area (including undercroft) of 446 SqM / 4800 SqFt.

2.3 The applicants are looking to create a long-term home for their young family and have considered options using Permitted Development rights to extend the existing property, which within the existing PD allowances would enable them to add a significant amount of area to the building. Furthermore, the applicants have also considered PD rights in the form of the construction of 2 additional detached structures in order to house a garaging / workshop facility and leisure suite respectively. These would meet the PD criteria of being for a purpose that is incidental to the enjoyment of the primary dwelling house.

2.4 Given the age of the existing building, and though the PD options detailed in 2.3 above are viable, there are general issues relating to the layout design and materials used which would be difficult to address while simply extending the property. The applicants also feel that the aesthetic appeal of the existing building is very limited and that through redevelopment, they would be able to build a property that responded better to the site and surroundings, using high quality materials and detailing. At the same time, they want to work with the topography of the site to develop a building that maximises the useable floor area without appearing out of proportion to the site and surrounding area.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The submitted application is for a new six-bedroom private family dwelling set across three storeys, with associated courtyard car parking. The building is set back into the slope of the site, enabling the lower storey to be basement accommodation and effectively meaning that the property reads as two-storey when viewed from the front and single storey when viewed from the rear.

3.2 At basement level is gym, changing rooms, entertainment suite, music room and associated plant room and storage. The total gross internal area for the basement is 330 SqM (3552 SqFt).

3.3 The ground floor provides the main living accommodation including kitchen, dining room, living room and study as well as ancillary accommodation. As with the existing property, given the topography of the site, the front of the property is raised up above the adjacent front ground level and there is stepped access from the driveway up to the front door. To the east of the building the internal ground floor level matches that of the external and to the rear of the property the ground floor accommodation is built into the slope of the site, with roof lights providing natural light and ventilation to the ancillary boot room and utility room. To the West of the building is an adjoining garage which is completely buried. This garaging has a grass lawn above and is accessible from the courtyard area. The total GIA for the ground floor is 411 SqM (4424 SqFt) + the buried garaging at 120SqM (1291SqFt).

3.4 At first floor there are six en-suite bedrooms and small gallery area overlooking the kitchen. As with the ground floor, the relationship of the external and internal floor levels varies, with the rooms along the rear of the building effectively at external ground level when viewed from the rear. The total GIA for the first floor is 271 SqM (2917 SqFt).

3.5 With regards to landscaping, the applicants are proposing to terrace some areas immediately around the property to facilitate access, however predominantly they are keen to keep the site as green as possible with lawns and planting. Where retaining structures are required to assist with the change in levels, these will be terraced and planted to soften their impact. The applicants recognise the importance of the trees on the site, not just for their impact on the surrounding area, but also for the visual benefit they bring the house and the screening that they provide. The layout of the property and landscaping has been designed to take into account root protection areas of the trees so as to not have any undue impact.

3.6 As can be seen from the proposed elevations, the applicants have high aspirations as to the design quality of the proposed building. The proposals are for the building to be built from local coursed rubble stone with ashlar detailing. The roof is proposed to be slate and windows and doors in painted timber. The design of the building is intended to be traditional but to provide flexible and well-lit internal spaces. Projecting gables and bay windows help to provide variety to the elevations and the stepping down of the roof over the single storey kitchen wing to the east also helps to ground the building in the landscape.

4.0 Policy and Massing

4.1 This application will be assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as the newly adopted Barnsley Local Plan and Oxspring Neighbourhood Development Plan.

4.2 It is recognised that the massing of the proposed property is larger than the property it has been designed to replace, however in this instance it is felt that it can be demonstrated that this is justifiable under current planning policy.

4.3 Given the scale of the proposals, pre-application advice was sort from Barnsley MBC before final proposals were developed, which consisted of a site meeting and written advice, with the key policy issue identified as size of development given the site's location within the green belt.

4.4 NPPF paragraph 145 allows the replacement of a building within the green belt 'provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces'. Similarly policy GB2 of the Barnsley local plan states the same objective adding that 'All such development will be

expected to be of a high standard of design and respect the character of ... its surroundings in its footprint, scale and massing, elevation design and materials and; Have no adverse effect on the amenity of local residents, the visual amenity of the area or highway safety.'

4.5 The applicant's site is unique in many ways and the topography, position and landscaping bring design challenges as well as opportunities to improve use of the site without having a materially negative impact. By moving the footprint of the property north, into the slope of the site, it has been possible to maximise the possible basement & adjoining garaging footprints without visual impact. Whilst the total gross internal area for the new dwelling is proposed at 1132 SqM (12184 SqFt) it should be recognised that 40% of that area is within the basement & buried garaging, leaving a remainder of 682 SqM (7341SqFt) of living accommodation above ground. When compared to the GIA of the existing building excluding undercroft (370 SqM / 3990 SqFt) the increase in visible building above ground equates to an additional 84% of the existing. The 2 additional ancillary buildings under PD rights (outlined in 2.3 & 2.4 above) would create a further 500 SqM (5382SqFt) of visible building, making the PD scheme much more sprawling than our replacement dwelling proposal.

4.6 Given the topography of the site and the significant amount of planting around the site boundary, views into the site are extremely limited, and the size and position of the building will not have a direct impact on the surrounding landscape. By building into the slope, the building is deliberately kept lower when viewed from the north so as to not impact on views from neighbouring properties.

4.7 Para 18.6 of the Barnsley Local Plan details that extensions will be allowed 'provided that cumulatively they would not amount to more than a doubling of the size of the original building'. It is understood from the wording later in this paragraph that this also relates to replacement dwellings. Whilst the proposed property is significantly larger than the existing, given that a large proportion of the new floor space is within the basement / buried garage and visually does not affect its surroundings it is felt that it is legitimate to argue that the proposals meet the intentions of the policy.

5.0 Access

5.1 Access to the property remains unchanged with vehicle access to and from the site onto Bower Hill Road at the south east corner of the site. Access from the road into the property is along a relatively steep driveway. The gradient of the driveway is one of the major factors that has governed the position and level of the house and for the most part this driveway is kept as is, widening and flattening out as it approaches the house to ease parking and turning.

5.2 Given the topography of the site, level pedestrian access into the property is difficult. Access to the front door is via series of steps within the front terrace, but there is level access out into the garden from the kitchen. Level access into the property is also available from the courtyard garaging, with a number of internal steps to enable access from courtyard to main ground floor level.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed development is for a new family house to replace the existing 1960's property on the site.

6.2 The applicants wish to develop a well-designed and high-quality family dwelling that makes the most of the potential of the existing site whilst not impacting on the surrounding area.

6.3 It is recognised that the scale of the proposed dwelling is significantly larger than the existing property, however it is felt that through use of a basement & buried garage to accommodate a large proportion of that floor area, the material increase in built form that will impact on the green belt and surrounding area is well within that permitted by national and local policy.