Design and Access Statement

For
Planning Application to remodel and partially replace an existing dwelling
at
'Hawthorns', Thornton Lane, Markfield



September 2007

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Section 42 of the 2004 Act requires that Design and Access Statements be submitted with planning applications of this nature, setting out design concepts and principles and access issues. The aim of the statement is to demonstrate a commitment to good design in accordance with PPS1and the Council's own guidance set out in 'Design Statements' (adopted July 2002), to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way.

1.2 A major role of this statement is to demonstrate how the local context within which the proposal will be located has influenced the design.

1.3 The proposal subject to this planning application relates to a scheme for the partial replacement of an existing dwelling on land at 'Hawthorns', Thornton Lane, Markfield.

2.0 The Site and its surroundings

2.1 The site comprises approximately 0.3 hectare of domestic curtilage. An existing three storey house, constructed in the 1990's, is located on the site, fronting Thornton Lane.

2.2 The site is bounded on three sides by other residential properties, the fourth side of the property being bounded by Thornton Lane.

2.3 There is no particular architectural style of dwelling along Thornton Lane, although the majority of properties comprise substantial dwellings within reasonably large gardens.

3.0 Planning Policy

3.1 The site is located on Thornton Lane in Markfield, in an area of the village which lies outside defined limits to development. Whilst the proposal relates to only a partial demolition and rebuild it is considered that the criteria in Policy RES 10 relating to size and footprint could be relevant in this instance.

3.2 **Policy RES10** refers to replacement dwellings and states that: Planning permission for replacement dwellings in the countryside will initially be considered in terms of the countryside policies of the plan. Where the borough council is satisfied that there is special justification for the development of a replacement dwelling, it will only be permitted where:

a) it is of a similar size and scale to that of the original dwelling, and

b) it is built on a similar footprint or, where appropriate and less detrimental to the character or appearance of the countryside, within the curtilage of the original dwelling.

3.3 **Policy NE5** relates to development in the countryside and states that: The countryside will be protected for its own sake. Planning permission will be granted for built and other forms of development in the countryside provided that the development is either:

a important to the local economy and cannot be provided within or adjacent to an existing settlement; or

b for the change of use, reuse or extension of existing buildings, particularly those of historic value; or

c for sport or recreation purposes.

and only where the following criteria are met:

i) it does not have an adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

ii) it is in keeping with the scale and character of existing buildings and the general surroundings

iii) where necessary it is effectively screened by landscaping or other methods.

iv) the proposed development will not generate traffic likely to exceed the capacity of the highway network or impair road safety.

3.4 **Policy BE1** relates to the design and siting of development and states that the Borough Council will seek to ensure a high standard of design in order to secure attractive development and to safeguard and enhance the existing environment. Planning permission will be granted where the development:

a) complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;

b) avoids the loss of open spaces, important gaps in development, vegetation and features which contribute to the quality of the local environment;

c) has regard to the safety and security of both individuals and property;

d) incorporates design features which reduce energy consumption, encourage recycling and minimise the impact of the development on the local environment;

e) incorporates landscaping to a high standard where this would add to the quality of the design and siting;

f) to which the general public would have access, has regard to the needs of wheelchair users, other people with disabilities, elderly people and those with young children;

g) ensures that there is adequate highway visibility for road users and adequate provision for on and off street parking for residents and visitors, and manoeuvring facilities;

h) is not adversely affected by activities in the vicinity of the site which are unlikely to cause a nuisance t the occupiers of the proposed development.

i) does not adversely affect the occupiers of neighbouring properties; and

j) the development of the site is not prejudicial to the comprehensive development of the larger area of land of which the development forms part.

In addition for residential proposals, planning permission will be granted where the development:

i) provides a strong common link between the proposed buildings, spaces and landscape features and the character of the local area;

ii) ensures an adequate degree of amenity and privacy is provided by the space between the buildings; and

iii) provides sufficient garden area with boundary treatments that reflects existing features in the area.

3.5 The Council's SPG, 'New Residential Development', sets out design guidance relating to new dwellings. Whilst this proposal does not strictly comprise a 'new' dwelling, the standards relating to distances between habitable rooms within this document are considered relevant: 25 metres between principal windows on neighbouring properties; 14 metres between blank elevations and principal windows on two or more storey dwellings.

4.0 Detailed Description of the Scheme

4.1 The proposal subject to this application relates to a scheme to partially demolish, remodel and rebuild an existing dwelling. The existing house dates from 1994 and was purpose designed for the present owners. The house has been extended with a series of conservatories, which have added some semi habitable space and pool, which they intend to retain, however, extensive remodelling of the existing house is required to achieve a more satisfactory layout and appearance.

4.2 The proposed remodelled house will remain oriented towards Thornton Lane and will result in a footprint approximately one third larger than the existing dwelling.

4.3 The proposed remodelled house would reflect a Georgian or early Victorian Leicestershire farmhouse with a more contemporary domestic space to the rear for the kitchen/dining area forming a link with the existing pool. The proposal uses traditional materials and seeks to achieve a traditional appearance, more so than the existing early 1990s house, which is more of a pastiche of a traditional brick vernacular house with pre-cast concrete rather than reconstituted stone details, details which are not particularly traditional or historically accurate.

4.4 In designing the property, we have sought to keep the height of the ridge similar to the existing; the proposal has a basement and a ground and first floor above. The house has been broken into different ridge heights and widths, to reduce the overall mass and scale of the building.

4.5 The proposal seeks to consolidate the ground floor around the existing footprint, which recedes in and out. The revised property will be approximately one third greater in footprint than the existing house, mainly due to the squaring off of the many 'nooks and crannies' of the existing footprint.

4.6 The remodelled dwelling is to be constructed of traditional materials in orange/red brick (a feature in Leicestershire), with slate roofing. Exterior woodwork will be painted white. The property will also feature some reconstituted stone dressings, cornice and rear balustrade.

4.7 There are no principal windows to the side elevations.

4.8 Access to the site will remain as existing.

4.9 The proposal will not result in the removal of any trees on the site.

4.10 In summary the scheme seeks to achieve a traditional design with integrity, which, given its suburban setting, will assimilate into the character of an established settlement and the Leicestershire countryside.

5.0 Justification of the Scheme

5.1 The revised layout of the proposal makes far better use of the site and will result in a more traditional and better designed dwelling on the site, making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, and a more interesting and sympathetic addition to the village, in accordance with policies of the Local Plan.

5.2 The site is not located within open countryside but is set in what could be considered more a suburban setting. It is surrounded by residential development on all sides, a factor which has been taken into account when redesigning the property, to ensure that the amenity of adjacent residents are not detrimentally affected.

5.2 The purpose of this proposal is to provide a more functional dwelling. The current dwelling comprises a tortuous arrangement of rooms and unusable spaces, which would be difficult to rectify by internal alterations and extensions. The existing rooflines, particularly at single storey level, make it difficult to extend the property in places. Accordingly the scheme proposes a partial demolition, reusing part of the existing building and adding a new, better designed element in place of the three storey part of the dwelling.

5.3 The proposal is of a similar size and scale to that of the original dwelling, and is built on a similar footprint, within the curtilage of the original dwelling.

5.4 There will be no additional overlooking than the original property caused by the proposal, which is built in a location similar to the existing dwelling. No principal windows are proposed in the side elevations to ensure neighbours' privacy is retained.

5.5 Accessibility to the property is not considered to be an issue in this particular instance as this is a one off bespoke and existing property.

5.6 Access to the site as existing and there should be no highway implications to the proposal.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The principle of a dwelling on this site already exists. The proposal represents a considerable improvement on the existing dwelling on the site in terms of layout, design and in its ability to assimilate into its context within an existing area of the settlement of Markfield. It is considered that this scheme will comply with the relevant Policies of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance.