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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

DETAILED PLANNING SUBMISSION

BORROWDALE GATES, WHITWICK ROAD, MARKFIELD

LEICESTERSHIRE

PROPOSED GUEST HOUSE

FOR

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Design and Access statement has been prepared in respect of the proposed guest house, Borrowdale Gates, Whitwick Road, Markfield Leicestershire.

B K Architecture Ltd is committed to quality design. The Design and Access statement presented here is to supplement the planning application in respect of the aforementioned site in line with the government planning guidance and demonstrates the processes B K Architecture Ltd have followed in arriving at a scheme which, in our opinion, fits into its surroundings, helps to improve the built environment and makes a positive contribution to the locality of the site.

2.0 SITE APPRAISAL

2.1 Site Context

The application site is located within the Charnwood Forest, which is identified within the Hinckley & Bosworth District Council proposals map, as an area of particularly attractive countryside. The east boundary of the application site borders the Borough of Charnwood and is a continuation of the area of particularly attractive countryside.

The characteristic materials of the villages within the Charnwood Forest area are traditional stone with the addition of brick dressings, roofing slates and ornamental brick chimneys which, combined, gives Charnwood Forest a particular architectural appearance.

Markfield is set against a backdrop of a mixture of woodland and agricultural land with occasional granite outcrops.

2.2 Physical Context

The application site extends to approximately 20 acres, has established residential use and is situated to the north of the Whitwick Road and Priory Lane / Cottage Lane crossroads. The area surrounding the site is

predominately of a green nature interspersed with residential dwellings, typically being large houses on large areas of land, and agricultural / horticultural properties.

Around the perimeter and within the site are numerous young and mature trees, none of which are impacted by the proposed scheme, and which effectively screen the existing and proposed dwellings from Whitwick Road & Priory Lane.

The existing dwelling was constructed in the 1950's with stone external walls and a slate roof, both materials being characteristic of Charnwood Forest. The existing dwelling is 1 ½ storeys high with dormer windows formed within the roof.

2.3 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Guidance
Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPS 7 promotes policies at regional and local level that ensure that the local countryside character is respected or, where possible, enhanced by rural development through good quality design in accordance with PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

PPS7 states that development *'.should also contribute to a sense of local identity and regional diversity and be of an appropriate design and scale for its location...'*

Regional Guidance
Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8)

Policy 4: Promoting Better Design
Extract from policy:
Local Authorites should ensure standards of design and construction are constantly improved. This should be achieved by promoting:

- architectural design which is functional, yet which respects local natural and built character.

Local Planning Policy
Hinckley & Bosworth District Council

The application site is defined within the Proposals Map as being located within an Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside. The policies we consider relevant within the Local Plan are Policy NE9 Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside, Policy NE5 Development in the Countryside, Policy BE1 Design and Siting of Development and Policy REC21 Tourist Accommodation.

The Natural Environment

Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside - Policy NE9

In addition to this plan's general policies towards development in the countryside and conservation in the countryside, the following policies will apply:

i Development proposals will be considered in the light of the need to protect the landscape and any other features of scientific interest;
ii Visual intrusion from overhead power lines will be avoided wherever possible and practicable through the careful routing and landscaping of all the proposals;
iii Proposals for small scale built development for employment and leisure uses will only be permitted where there is no adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

Development in the Countryside - Policy NE5

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.

Design and Siting of Development – Policy BE1

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 to 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.

Tourist Accommodation – Policy REC21

Within the built-up area of settlements, as defined om the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted for overnight tourist accommodation to be provided by new build or conversion. In open countryside, planning permission will only be granted for new accommodation where it can be demonstrated that such accommodation makes use of existing property, or can be satisfactorily integrated with the scale of the existing buildings with which it is associated. In all cases the proposal should satisfy the relevant plan criteria for design, siting and highways considerations in respect of both residential and recreational development.

2.4 Evaluation of Information Gathered

The site's context has been appraised through numerous site visits involving a visual assessment of the site and its surroundings and a desk top study of relevant planning policy documents.
The proposal has been prepared following careful assessment of the relevant local development plan policies. From also assessing the site context & physical context the site presents the opportunity to provide a guest house that is not obtrusive or out of character with the surrounding built form and the rural setting.

When evaluating the gathered information it was considered that Policy NE9 – Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside, Policy NE5 – Development in the Countryside and Policy BE1 – Design and Siting of Development, were the most important in terms of having an impact on the design.

Policy NE9 states that development in the countryside should satisfy the following

i *States:*
The development proposals will be considered in the light of the need to protect the landscape and any other features of scientific interest;

The proposed 1 ½ storey dwelling will incorporate stone walls, a slate roof and dormer windows into the design, in order to match the existing residential dwelling and will be located in, relative, close proximity to the existing dwelling, forming an arrangement of buildings well related to one another.

The proposed dwelling will be well screened from properties on neighbouring sites and adjacent roads by the existing trees and sited in a location which provides the occupiers with a secluded and attractive aspect within the Charnwood Forest.

It is our opinion that the proposed dwelling's design and siting protects the surrounding landscape.

ii *States:*

Visual intrusion from overhead power lines will be avoided wherever possible and practicable through the careful routing and landscaping of all the proposals;

This is not applicable to the submitted application.

iii *States:*
Proposals for small scale built development for employment and leisure uses will only be permitted where there is no adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

The proposed dwelling is a small scale guest house, superbly situated for visitors to the Charnwood Forest and its attractions. The proposed dwelling will therefore benefit the area economically whilst maintaining a secluded presence within the Charnwood Forest.

The proposed use of the dwelling is for recreation / tourism purposes and therefore complies with Policy NE5 as an acceptable use.

Policy NE5 states that planning permission for development in the countryside will only be granted if the following criteria are met

i *States:*
It does not have an adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

The proposed dwelling will be sited within the established residential area of the site, screened from neighbouring sites and adjoining roads by mature trees and constructed in traditional Charnwood Forest materials.

ii *States:*
It is in keeping with the scale and character of existing buildings and the general surroundings.

The proposed dwelling has been designed to complement the existing dwelling with the incorporation of stones walls, slate roofs and dormer windows and at a comparable scale of 1 ½ storeys. The overall footprint and massing of the proposed dwelling will be very significantly less than the existing dwelling to ensure it is subordinate to the existing dwelling and does not detract from the existing dwelling.

iii *States:*
Where necessary it is effectively screened by landscaping or other methods.

The mass and form of the proposed dwelling will be absorbed into the landscape and avoids harm to the amenity of other properties in the vicinity, which are a considerable distance away. The property will be effectively screened by the existing mature trees on the site.

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

The proposal is for a small two bedroomed guest house, which will only generate one or perhaps two cars using the existing site access and will therefore not harm road safety or affect the capacity of the highway network.

Policy BE1 states that planning permission will be granted where the development standard satisfies the following

a *States:*
Complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;

The proposed dwelling has been designed to complement the existing dwelling with the incorporation of stones walls, slate roofs and dormer windows and at a comparable scale of 1 ½ storeys. The overall footprint and massing of the proposed dwelling will be very significantly less than the existing dwelling to ensure it is subordinate to the existing dwelling and does not detract from the existing dwelling.

b *States:*
Avoids the loss of open spaces, important gaps in development, vegetation and features which contribute to the quality of the local environment;

The area of the application site it is intended to locate the proposed dwelling is presently occupied by horse stables and ancillary storage and so will not result in the loss of open spaces which contribute to the quality of the local environment.

c *States;*
Has regard to the safety and security of both individuals and property;

The proposed design complies with this requirement.

d *States:*
Incorporates design features which reduce energy consumption, encourage recycling and minimise the impact of the development on the local environment;

The proposed design will comply with this requirement.

e *States:*
Incorporates landscaping to a high standard where this would add to the quality of the design and siting;

Landscaping will be provided locally around the proposed dwelling, however the site already comprises of landscaped gardens, open countryside and wooded areas. The proposed dwelling will be sited on existing hardstanding and so no loss of landscaping will occur.

f *States:*
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;

The proposed dwelling will incorporate design features, such as level thresholds, to allow the general public ease of access.

g *States:*
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;

The existing site access will be used and adequate parking for guests will be provided for the sole use of the guests to the proposed dwelling.

h *States:*
Is not adversely affected by activities in the vicinity of the site which are unlikely to cause a nuisance to the occupiers of the proposed development;

The proposed dwelling is sited within the Charnwood Forest and its remote location and surrounding neighbours will not cause a nuisance to the occupiers of the proposed dwelling.

i *States:*
Does not adversely affect the occupiers of neighbouring properties;

With the remote and secluded location of the proposed dwelling and surrounding woodlands the proposed dwelling will not be seen by occupiers of neighbouring properties and so will not affect them.

j *States:*
The development of the site is not prejudicial to the comprehensive development of the larger area of land of which the development forms part.

This is a one-off planning application for a single small scale guest house and will definitely not form part of a larger development.

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

i *States:*
Provides a strong common link between the proposed buildings, spaces and landscape features and the character of the local area;

The proposed 1 ½ storey guest house will incorporate stone walls, a slate roof and dormer windows into the design, in order to match the existing residential dwelling and will be located in, relative, close proximity to the existing dwelling, forming an arrangement of buildings well related to one another and the existing landscaping. The materials will be typical to the traditional vernacular of Charnwood Forest.

ii *States:*
Ensures an adequate degree of amenity and privacy is provided by the space between the buildings; and

The entrance into the proposed guest house will be from a single storey lobby & utility room incorporated into the north elevation which overlooks the adjoining field and away from the existing dwelling in order to achieve a degree of amenity and privacy.

iii *States:*
Provides sufficient garden area with boundary treatments that reflects existing features in the area.

Due to the nature of the proposal a small hardstanding & soft landscaped area adjacent to the proposed dwelling will be provided, which blends into the existing landscape. This will allow guests to sit outside and view the surrounding countryside whilst enjoying a degree of privacy.

Policy REC21 states that

'In open countryside, planning permission will only be granted for new accommodation where it can be demonstrated that such accommodation makes use of existing property, or can be satisfactorily integrated with the scale of the existing buildings with which it is associated. In all cases the proposal should satisfy the relevant plan criteria for design, siting and highways considerations in respect of both residential and recreational development.'

For the reasons given elsewhere within this statement, in relation to other policies, it is our opinion that the proposed small scale guest house satisfies this policy.

3.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.1 Use of Development

This is a detailed planning application submission for the construction of a guest house for the purposes of recreation / tourism.
The proposed dwelling will be constructed and operated by the present owners of Borrowdale Gates as they consider the application site, located within the Charnwood Forest with its visitor attractions and situated a short distance away from junction 22 of the M1 motorway, is ideally suited for such a discreet and secluded development.
The owners are also prepared to accept a condition to a planning permission which prevents the proposed dwelling from being sold separately to the existing dwelling.

The proposed dwelling has been considered and designed to reflect the character and appearance of the surrounding area whilst protecting the amenity of the locality and the neighbouring properties.

3.2 Layout

The layout of the proposed dwelling is very simple which, we consider, is appropriate for the intended short stay use of the dwelling. The ground floor plan comprises of open plan kitchen, dining & living area, utility room, wc and bedroom with en suite. The ground floor bedroom allows wheelchair users to use the dwelling. At first floor level is a bedroom, bathroom and sitting area.

3.3 Scale

The scale of the proposed dwelling reflects the existing 1 ½ storey dwelling with an overall footprint and massing which is very significantly less than the existing dwelling in order to ensure it is subordinate to the existing dwelling and does not detract from the existing dwelling.

3.4 Landscaping

All of the existing landscaping and trees to the application site will be retained, with new hard & soft landscaping areas which complements the existing landscaping, provided adjacent to the proposed dwelling for the sole use of the occupiers. The proposed dwelling will be sited on existing hardstanding and so no loss of landscaping will occur.
Sympathetic surfacing materials will be used to complement the high quality materials proposed for the external elevations of the proposed dwelling.

3.5 Appearance & Architectural Detailing

One of the primary objectives of the proposed guest dwelling is to achieve an appearance which is in keeping with the character of the site's locality and existing dwelling. Construction details i.e. window cills, timber window frames & eaves etc, will be detailed to reflect the existing dwelling in order to maintain a coherent architectural style.

The materials will be typical to the traditional vernacular of Charnwood Forest. The following materials / detailing will be used
Stone work to external walls
Roofing slates
Painted joinery

4.0 ACCESS

Pedestrian & vehicular access to the site is gained by the existing entrance off Whitwick Road.

With the limited site area to be taken by the proposed dwelling and the existing vehicular standing areas, vehicles will still be able to enter and leave the site in a forward direction.

With the possibility of disabled people using the proposed dwelling the ground floor layout has been designed to allow wheelchair users and disabled people entry and use of the dwelling without restriction.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The use of the proposed guest house for the purposes of recreation / tourism / leisure within the countryside is acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy NE5 & Policy NE9 and, in our opinion, the proposed small scale & screened house will have no adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape or the existing dwelling, whilst contributing to the local economy.

6.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Detailed drawings by B K Architecture Ltd