



Shell Brook

Design & Access Statement

Introduction

This statement is written in support of the Full Planning Application for the demolition of the existing dwelling, to be replaced with a new four-bedroom dwelling with a double garage, annex and associated landscaping. This application has been developed with the client to address the concerns raised with the initial application (DM/22/0547) in conjunction with Whaleback Planning, Haworth McCall, and Nu Planet, to ensure the site is sensitively developed to further enhance the site and the setting of Ardingly. The site is situated within the Ardingly Conservation Area and High Weald AONB, and in response to this, every aspect of the proposed development has been carefully considered. This submission also includes a full arboricultural assessment, to facilitate the protection and enhancement of all high quality trees on the site.

Site Context

The application site runs parallel with High Street (B2028) in Ardingly, with the main access located from this road to the west. It is bordered by Cobb Lane to the North, woodland to the east and further residential housing to the south. The village of Ardingly is served by a small amount of local amenities, with sports fields and The South England Show Ground located close to the site. There are good connections to wider areas with bus links and Balcombe station a short (11 min) drive away. The existing site currently hosts a derelict and severely fire damaged dwelling. The site is well screened from public view, with the boundaries formed by dense hedgerows and mature trees.

- The site is located within the Ardingly Conservation Area.
- The site is located within the High Weald National Landscape.
- The site is located within the Ashdown Forest 7km Zone.
- There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site.
- The site is not located in a flood risk area.
- There are no public rights of way across the site.
- The existing building is not listed.

Character Study

The village of Ardingly has a typical English / Sussex vernacular with the use of brick, stone, wall hung tiles, with traditional tiled pitched roofs across both single and two storey mass. There are a range of typologies such as Georgian and Victorian style with a number of later period properties as well. Please refer to the Materiality Appraisal.

Key features and details in Ardingly are as follows:

- The village has a predominately red or brown palette but red multis and contrasting brick / cladding colours are regularly employed.
- Brick detailing, such as voussoirs, arched headers, quoining, banding, projecting / recessed headers and brick patterns.
- Other materials present are tile hanging and timber detailing.
- The roofs treatments are generally tiled, with details such as bonnet hips, exposed eaves and rafter feet, chimneys are also on most properties.

The village can be characterised as having no single dominating appearance with an eclectic mix of architectural features. However, its commonalities are the materials which lend a cohesive harmony to the street scenes despite differences in details and forms.

National and Local Planning Policy

This section provides information on both the National and Local Planning Policies which are relevant to the consideration of the proposed development and the determination of the submitted planning application.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Mid Sussex District Plan (Adopted March 2018)

DP4 - Housing

DPI2 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

DPI6 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

DP26 - Character and Design

DP35 - Conservation Areas

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024

Planning and AONB's

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development" The proposal represents a sustainable development seeking to replace an existing dilapidated dwelling with a modern take on a traditional dwelling constructed with multiple sustainable features which will provide longevity for the dwelling. The existing dwelling is in complete ruin following a devastating fire, there is no prospect of refurbishing the property. The proposed dwelling seeks to bring the site back into use without increasing the number of dwellings on the site. It represents an improvement to the area that will provide a high quality dwelling transforming the current site and preserving the surrounding character. The proposed layout is discreet in nature - well screened from the wider area with an appropriate scale and appearance to match the AONB.

Settlement

The management plan provides details of common characteristics associated with settlements in the AONB, a number of which are relevant to the proposal:

- *"Farmsteads typically arranged around routeways, with loose courtyard plan-types common and dispersed plan-types particularly characteristic."* Although not a farmstead, the proposal has adopted typical layout features such as a central courtyard screened from the road. The layout can be seen to mimic the arrangements historically present in the area further enhancing its association to the AONB.
- *"A limited palette of local materials: clay as tiles and brick, timber as weatherboard and framing, and some localised instances of stone."* A simple palette of materials has been chosen for the new dwelling with just three materials, timber; clay tile hanging and local natural stone. This matches the characteristics of the area and demonstrates the design's commitment to enhancing the AONB.

All other aspects of the Management Plan are not considered to be as relevant to the proposal considering the nature of this planning application.

Mid Sussex Design Guide

6.2 Sustainable buildings DG37

The proposal will be designed to a high level of sustainability, featuring a number of technical additions and fabric alterations to ensure it provides a sustainable new dwelling. The building envelope will achieve high levels of insulation including materials such as stone to achieve high thermal mass. A water retention system will be utilised on some roofs to assist in water conservation. An air source heat pump will be installed to provide the main heating source and it is also proposed the house will be run entirely on electrics to avoid the use of fossil fuels. This is further enhanced with solar panels which are positioned discreetly on the flat roof of the annex.

6.3 Principle DG38 Design Buildings with Architectural Integrity and a Sense Of Place

The design takes inspiration from the surrounding area through its materiality, form and detailing. The proposal has sought to meet the requirements of principle DG38 by incorporating:

- A well proportioned scale with varied but simple elevations in a small material palette.
- Careful placement of openings to provide daylight but not create huge areas of glazing that may cause overlooking or overheating.
- Limited use of balconies which are also recessed to limit overlooking and provide shade.
- A simple roofscape drawing from the many gable ended pitched roofs in the area.
- Careful inclusion of small dormers that assist the design in minimising scale but providing good outlook.
- A high quality palette of materials sympathetic to the context of Ardingly and the site.

The proposal seeks to strike a balance between drawing from the local area but not mimicking to provide a contemporary addition to the character of Ardingly.

6.4 Principle DG39: Deliver Appropriately Scale Buildings

The existing building has a very simple pitched form running east-west with gabled ends, a small gabled projection and a dormer. The garage also had simple gable form but running north to south. The proposal seeks to emulate the existing building with the same orientation for the main building however the new proposal integrates the garage in the same orientation and creates articulation through a smaller scale garage and smaller dormers. The step down in scale to the garage and annex accommodation helps break the mass down at the site boundaries and improves the relationship with High Street.

Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan was made in March 2015. It forms part of the Development Plan for the District and was an important document to consider when resolving the design and site layout.

Policy ARD 5: Housing Design

The plan requires “*all developments...to be sympathetic of the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape.*” The proposal takes key design cues from the surrounding area in its pitched roof, low scale (1.5 storey), sympathetic materials and traditional elements like dormer windows.

Policy ARD 8: Biodiversity

“*The Neighbourhood Plan will support proposals that protect and enhance the rich natural features...*” The proposal seeks to protect the rich biodiversity on site by ensuring only Category U trees are removed to facilitate the development, replacing these with new, native species, as well as the preservation of the existing garden by limiting the development to the west portion of the site, most of which is already occupied by the existing footprint.

Policy ARD 9: Heritage Assets

The site is just within the border of the Conservation Area and as such the proposal seeks to protect and enhance the key characteristics of the area. Key aspects of the Ardingly Conservation Area relevant to the site are:

- The spacious secluded gardens which include an abundance of mature trees and hedgerows in Church Lane;
- Groups of trees at the north end of the High Street;

As such the proposal has carefully sought to protect the strong existing tree lines on the north, west and east boundaries of the site. The proposal sits within much of the existing buildings footprint to protect existing RPAs and a full arboricultural report and protection statement accompanies the application.

All other elements of the CA are not considered to be relevant to this particular site.

National Design Guide

1. Context

Given the comments on the previous application, context was a driving feature in the design of the proposal. Through comprehensive studies of the local area, we developed a thorough understanding of the forms scale and materiality that define the Ardingly area. (para.41)

The prevailing scale of the area is 2-2.5 storey houses with pitched roofs and brick / stone and cladding as the main material. The composition creates a typical village feeling surrounded by greenery. This design uses very traditional materials, features and forms but with a subtle contemporary approach. The proposal responds to the context with gabled roofs, a 1.5 storey scale, red tiling and local stone walls, all of which are seen in the local context. (Para. 42)

The NDG highlights that the surrounding architecture does not need to be copied but respected. This contemporary approach provides an exciting modern approach toward the architecture but its style is rooted in the local vernacular. The architecture is sympathetic and respectful of Ardingly but provides a contemporary new dwelling. (Para. 48)

2. Identity

The contemporary approach provides a design that has a *“character that suits the context, its history, and how we live today”* (para. 51). The materiality has references directly to Ardingly, elements like the blacked timber reflect the history of the site and the sustainable features provide a comfortable modern dwelling.

The design adopts *“typical building forms, composition, articulation, proportions, features, materials, details, patterns and colours”* (para. 56). Gabled roofs, red tile hanging, dormers, 1.5 storeys and a local material palette all show the design commitment to reflecting Ardingly's character.

However, the modern design also introduces a subtly different form and appearance that introduces a *“built form and appearance that adds new character”* (para. 56). This approach enhances the area adding to the rich and varied architectural language of Ardingly.

3. Built Form

The proposed built form is low rise with rooms provided within the roof spaces, there is an active frontage with a large main entrance facing the vehicle access, whilst the more contemporary elements of the proposed are well hidden behind a garden / courtyard wall. (Para 69.)

The design makes efficient use of the land by locating the building largely within the existing footprint and ensuring the building doesn't extend into the garden (Para. 65). The historical nature of the houses being at the front of the site along this street is preserved through the proposal.

4. Movement

The existing access arrangement will be preserved, however the available space for vehicle movement and parking will be increased. A larger, well surface drive will be created in addition to a double garage. This all contributes to creating a well designed movement located at the front of the site. (Para. 85)

5. Nature

The successful feature of this scheme is the high retention of existing trees and vegetation. The design has sought to keep as much as possible and retain the verdant feel of the site. (Para. 91)

The extensive garden will be retained in its entirety with the built form being limited to the front portion of the site, largely inline with the existing footprint. This will ensure the existing biodiversity is retained and supported. (Para. 98).

6. Public Spaces

As a public dwelling no public spaces will be provided as part of the proposals.

7. Uses

The existing use is to be retained and this is not considered to be a matter for consideration in the design.

8. Homes and Buildings

The new dwelling will provide a contemporary home suitable for a family with an array of exciting features that will ensure the building can be used for generations. (Para. 121)

The dwelling will provide high quality internal environments with a considered layout that mixes uses for various different needs. A central courtyard has been formed through the building locations which provides an interaction between the internal and external spaces. The natural stone 'garden' wall at the front of the site provides a clear boundary between the more private areas of the dwelling and the public facing elements. (Para. 123)

The dense tree lined boundary provides initial privacy on approach to the site, the 'garden' wall then provides another layer that shields the more private parts of the dwelling. This creates deepening levels of privacy that ensure comfort and safety for its occupants. (Para. 124)

The communal living areas on the ground floor have increased ceiling heights from the standard 2.4m and provide large open plan living elements with bright large apertures providing high levels of daylight. Various large doors are used to enable the residents to close off space providing more intimate environments when required. (Para. 126)

The private amenity spaces are interwoven into the building forms with courtyards, a pool and separate seating areas all in addition to a sprawling verdant garden. Every internal space has some form of outlook to these amenity spaces to provide a strong sense of connection to the outdoors. (Para. 132)

Services have all been discretely integrated into the fabric of the building and roofs, with very few visible. Waste storage is also discretely locked away but easy to access in relation to the main vehicle entrance. (Para. 134)

9. Resources

The contemporary design provides a robust, durable and long lasting design. The layout has scope to evolve and adapt to any families need without increasing the development (para. 145).

The dwelling has a variety of spaces for all needs. It will also utilise technology such as green roofs, PV panels, a thermal efficient envelope and water saving technology to reduce its environmental impact. (Para. 137)

10. Lifespan

The design focus has been on creating a simplistic arrangement but with high quality materials and detailing to ensure the building is robust and provides longevity. (Para. 152)

National and Local Planning Policy: Summary

This section highlights how the proposal accords or exceeds the National and Local Design Policy and guidance. Below are some key summary points from this section:

- The proposal exceeds the criteria as set out within the National Design Guide, Mid-Sussex Design Guide SPD, Ardingly Parish Neighbourhood Plan, and The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan. Therefore, the scheme is afforded significant weight as per the requirements of NPPF (December, 2023) paragraph 134.
- Furthermore, consideration has been given to the requirements of NPPF (December, 2023) paragraph 131, which sets out criteria for achieving well-designed buildings and places.
- The proposed developments seeks to replace a ruined existing dwelling, currently detracting from the Ardingly area.
- The proposed dwelling represents a well design visually attractive building that shows great sensitivity to the local area. It has materials sympathetic to the local vernacular; a low rise scale, appropriate form with pitched roofs, and sensitive detailing. All of these features comply with the aims of the above policies and ensure the building will sit comfortably in the local setting.
- The site layout has been designed to integrate well with the existing site. The proposed footprint will stick close to the existing dwelling thus preserving the historical layout of the site, ensuring biodiversity remains in the large garden and preserving the extensive trees and boundary planting.

- It is considered the scheme accords with multiple policies and guidance documents, demonstrating the benefits of the the proposal in enhancing the character of Ardingly, as such application should be approved.

Relevant Planning History

There are a number of previous applications which relate to the site:

- AR/016/75: Erection of car port to rear of garage. **Approved**
- AR/006/78: Provision of new dental surgery by extending existing garage. **Approved**
- AR/012/88: Provision of new dental surgery by extending existing garage. **Approved**
- AR/037/91: Porch extension to garage/surgery. **Approved**
- 00/00345/COU: Conversion of dental surgery to form granny annexe with the addition of a bathroom within existing walls. No external change. All services already on site. **Approved**
- DM/22/0547: Demolition of existing dwelling and replace with new 4 bedroom dwelling. (Amended plans received 18.08.2022). **Withdrawn**

The most relevant is the previous application for the erection of a single dwelling on the site **DM/22/0547** which was withdrawn. The application proposed a large dwelling on the site with associated parking and landscaping. This application was a key starting point for this proposal to ensure the design responded to the comments highlighted. Below is a summary of the main concerns raised during the course of the previous application, including comments from the pre-application, consultation period and neighbouring residents. These have summarised points have been used these as key drivers for the design to ensure the new proposal addresses the issues. The design responses for the new proposals are listed below:

Access Arrangements

Residents raised concerns over how the site would be accessed during in construction and after. The application would seek to use the same access arrangements as existing. Should the application be approved a full construction management plan will be produced in conjunction with residents to ensure all considerations are factored in, working hours are agreed and key contact information provided to resolve any issues that might arise.

Maintain Verdant Nature of the Site:

Concerns were raised by the residents that the proposal may remove landscaping which adds value to the area. Similarly the Conservation Officer highlighted the contribution the garden arrangement makes to the area. The bulk of the proposal sits largely within the footprint of the existing building, negated any mass removal of trees and vegetation and respecting existing root protection areas. Where the footprint does extend we have minimised the removal of trees, most of which are poor quality and unlikely to contribute to the site / area long term. The main garden area will remain untouched, preserving the historical layout of the house and garden arrangement.

Materiality:

The previous proposal showed a more contemporary approach to materials with little reference to the local vernacular. The Conservation Officer and residents felt this would detract from the area. The new proposal prioritises the local vernacular with material inspiration drawn from an extensive study of Ardingly. The proposed material palette, will feature red tile hanging, local natural stone walls and charred timber. Further details of the material choices are outlined in the Materiality Appraisal.

Scale:

Concerns were raised by both residents and the Conservation Officer over the increase scale of the building. There were particular concerns from the Conservation Officer over the street facing elevation appearing too dominant. The previous application was significantly larger than the existing building, despite being sunken into the ground. In response to the concerns, the proposal positions the smaller scale garage and annex accommodation closer to the road edge, with the 1.5 storey element positioned further down the site. The main building also utilises the roof space for the first floor accommodation ensuring a smaller overall form. The building is no longer sunken into the ground, and it is envisaged to work with the existing topography to ensure a more sympathetic scheme is proposed; and the accommodation closer to the neighbouring residents is limited to single storey.

Appearance

The elevation of the street facing facade was deemed to prominent by the Conservation Officer and general comments were also raised by residents that the design was out of keeping with the area. The street facing elevations have been stripped back to a simple single storey gable form rising to 1.5 storeys for the main house, the garden wall is also a simple discreet detail. The proposal has also carefully taken reference from the area through materials, form and scale to ensure the proposal matches and enhances the character of Ardingly.

Site Layout

The layout of the scheme follows the existing characteristics of the site carefully. The access remains in the same position with the drive and garage also remaining in the same location. The existing dwelling spans east to west on the site and the proposed dwelling would be orientated in the same fashion. The extent of the footprint only extends to the limit of the existing decking at the rear of the existing house.

The annex accommodation sits to the south edge of the site and with the main house forms a central courtyard with a pool. Hard surfacing would surround the pool and courtyard area providing external amenity space accessible from the main house and annex. A key feature of the layout is the local natural stone 'garden' / courtyard wall which bisects the site and runs into the internal entrance. This wall hides much of the accommodation behind ensuring the entrance area remains simple and modest. To the east of the site the garden will be retained with a new landscaping plan proposed to preserve and enhance the existing character. The overall layout ensures the site is faithful to the existing characteristics of the site, whilst in enhancing it through better landscaping, surfacing and simpler building footprints.

Proposed Dwelling

The layout follows a simple linear arrangement with a long gabled roof form being sub-divided internally on a central axis on both the ground and first floor. This simple arrangement allows the spaces to flow into one another but with the privacy of each space increasing as you move through the dwelling.

The entrance provides a tall double height space, serviced by a large double height south facing window which will flood the entrance with natural light. Moving through the flank natural stone wall you enter the kitchen which can open out onto the courtyard and pool area, with a glazed link leading to the lower level private entertainment and office annex. Visual connections through large glazing through large open ensure connections between spaces are maintained but the amenity space grants privacy between different areas.

Moving through the kitchen a concealed door hides the main lounge space. Upon opening the door you descend into a tall living space with large windows facing onto the long main garden beyond, this private space sits furthestest away from the rest of the house providing a place to relax.

Upstairs works on a similar pattern with the natural stone wall dividing the bedroom spaces from the main entrance. The large main bedroom spaces are also behind a concealed door lending more privacy to the occupants.

To the left of the entrance space are more functional WC and plant elements alongside the garage. Upstairs guest accommodation is provided above the garage in the form of a bedroom and ensuite accessed across a bridge from the main stair.

Simplicity and discovery have been the key driving factors behind the dwellings appearance and rationale.

Materiality

The material palette has been drawn from the local area and has been kept simple with just three key materials.

Natural Stone

Natural Stone is a material prevalent across Sussex with a strong association to the area. It's patterned grey surface provides variety and texture to the simple forms. The use of stone is limited to the ground floor, providing interesting detail close up. The material is also often used at a lower scale for boundary walls or small houses, so this association strengthens the smaller scale of the proposal. As mentioned above, this material will also be used internally.

Tile Hanging

The upper floor of the main house is clad in tiles, this is very typical of Ardingly with a number of dwellings nearby using the same material, including neighbouring houses. Tile hanging strengthens the dwellings relationship to the area. The same red tiling is used for the main roof, blending the material positioning implies a smaller scale building helping to diminish the second storey.

Charred Timber

The choice of blackened timber for the ancillary buildings such as the garage is a reflection of the direct site context. The site is heavily wooded, surrounded by trees on all boundaries with a long wooded garden, therefore timber feels a sensitive material for the site. The choice of blackened timber reflects the more recent history of the site which suffered a large fire devastating the original house. The blackened timber provides a subtle reference to this history in the new dwelling.

The material palette will be complemented by black aluminium framed glazing through the property.

The three materials form a harmonious blend of silver, black and red that offer a variety of textures and interest but crucially are sympathetic to the village of Ardingly. The design intent was to provide a contemporary dwelling but root it to the context through its materials ensuring it does not feel out of place but enhance the strong existing character of Ardingly.

Summary

Overall, the proposal is considered to be an effective, yet sensitive manner in which to develop the site. The development is of a high quality design that incorporates contemporary features, whilst respecting and integrating with the character of the surrounding area. The proposal therefore accords with both local planning policies and design guides - which have been useful documents in developing the proposals. We believe the proposed design is a sympathetic response to the applicants needs and responds well to the context, neighbouring properties and site constraints. We have tried to include as much information as possible within this application to ensure a smooth determination process. However, if you require any further information, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.