

# Paul Smith Associates

Chartered Town and Country Planners

Mr Simon Withers,  
Principal Planning Officer,  
Planning Services,  
Herefordshire Council,  
Blueschool Street,  
Hereford. HR1 2ZB

My Ref: PMS/H/Har/16/01

25 April 2016

FAO Mr Simon Withers

Dear Mr Withers,

**Re: Proposed Replacement of Dwelling,  
'Witchwater Cottage', Bridge Sollars, Hereford. HR4 7JH**

I attach a planning application for the addition of a first floor with pitched roof upon an existing dwelling. This application includes a Heritage Statement and Ecological Assessment.

During our previous discussions, you expressed the view that this proposal was tantamount to the erection of a replacement dwelling. Therefore, this application is submitted on that basis although it is important to note that the resultant property would comprise the existing building at ground floor level.

## Site

The application site comprises a modern dwelling, 'Witchwater Cottage' standing within a well screened site. It lies approximately 70 metres downslope of St Andrew's Church, a Grade II listed building (see cross-sectional drawing on submitted plan number: JS/288/15/3 Rev. B).

The existing building is 1½ storey in scale with two bedrooms and bathroom in the roof space. It is constructed of facing brick under a red/brown concrete tiled roof with two dormer windows and a rooflight on its south-west elevation and a wide dormer window on its north-east elevation facing the church.

The existing dwelling has a modest presence in the setting and outlook of the church by virtue of their relative grounds levels and the high degree of screening on the application site.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING SERVICES DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
3 - MAY 2016	
To .....	
Ack'd .....	File .....

## Proposal

The proposal entails the following principal changes to the cottage:

- The addition of a first floor clad in vertical boarding appropriately stained under a roof of the same pitch and materials as the existing roof;
- The insertion of three roof lights in the south-west elevation and one small rooflight in the elevation facing the church and;
- The addition of first floor, two-light windows on three of the four elevations.

As a result of these changes, the height of the cottage would increase by 2.5 metres providing three, first floor bedrooms with a fourth bedroom and study in the new roof space.

## Planning Policy

In planning policy terms, the application site lies in open countryside even though it lies close to an extensive group of large agricultural barns and in the vicinity of St. Andrew's Church.

### *Replacement dwellings*

Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) permits the erection of replacement dwellings. Similarly, Policy RA3 of the adopted Herefordshire Core Strategy permits new housing in open countryside where it involves, amongst other things, the *"...replacement of an existing dwelling (with a lawful residential use) that is comparable in size and scale with, and is located in the lawful domestic curtilage, of the existing dwelling..."*.

Witchwater Cottage is currently occupied by the applicants as a dwelling and the existing building footprint would be unaltered by this proposal. The addition of a first floor would add to the scale of the cottage however not excessively. The proposal would result in a building of more traditional proportions and the presence of the enlarged dwelling upon its surroundings would be screened to a large extent by existing vegetation.

### *Effect on St Andrew's Church*

The property lies within the setting of St Andrew's Church, a Grade II listed building which stands prominently in this section of the Wye Valley. Paragraph 129 of the Framework requires planning authorities to take into account an assessment of the particular significance of any heritage asset and its setting when considering the impact of a proposal. Paragraph 132 requires great weight to be given to the asset's conservation.

Core Strategy Policy LD4, amongst other things, requires proposals to protect, conserve and wherever possible enhance heritage assets and their settings.

As has been demonstrated in the submitted Heritage Assessment, the effect of the proposed dwelling upon the setting would be very modest. By virtue of its distance, subservient ground level and intervening mature vegetation, the proposed development would not impinge upon the valley aspect from the church. Conversely, it would not impinge upon the visual dominance of the church within this section of the valley.

#### *Landscape Effect*

The site lies within the Wye Valley. Paragraph 109 of the Framework requires the protection and enhancement of 'valued' landscapes. Core Strategy Policy LD1 reiterates this requirement.

By virtue of the extent of substantial vegetation within and adjoining the application site, the effect of the proposed development upon the local landscape would be muted. Consequently, it would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Wye Valley.

Further, the submitted Ecological Assessment demonstrates that no harm to species or their habitats would arise from the proposed development.

#### **Conclusions**

The proposed development entails an increase in height of this residential property. It has been demonstrated that its resultant size and scale would be within acceptable parameters having regard to Core Strategy Policy RA3. Its greater height would not impact harmfully upon the setting of St Andrew's Church, a Grade II listed building, or the local landscape.

For these reasons, I consider there are sound planning reasons to grant planning permission for the proposed development as it accords fully with relevant national planning policy and development plan policy.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Smith MRTPI

---

Principal: Paul M. Smith B.A.(Hons.), B.Sc.(Hons.), Dip. Des.Blt.Env't., MRTPI  
First Floor, 41 Bridge Street, Hereford. HR4 9DG.  
Tel.No. (01432) 353 700  
E-mail: paulsmithplanning@outlook.com