



design and heritage statement

application: Proposed Re-location of Access, Stopping up of Existing Access, Diversion of Public Right of Way, Re-Positioning of Previously Permitted Underground Garage, Alterations to Boiler Room and Related External Works at Wolfstones Heights Farm, Upperthong, Holmfirth .

applicants: Mr and Mrs R Butterfield

document nr: 13072DA-001-P01-Design and Access Statement

date: 26 November 2014

Design Statement

Planning History

Planning Permission has previously been granted at this property as follows:

- 2014: Planning Permission was granted for Erection of single storey rear extension under application nr 2014/90816. Date of Approval 13 May 2014. This permission was for an amended design of garden room to replace that previously approved by way of application nr 2010/90436. The permission has not yet been implemented
- 2012: Planning Permission was granted by way of application nr 2012/92672 for a non-material amendment in respect of the previous permission under planning application nr 2012/90095 for construction of an underground garage. Date of Approval 07 November 2012. The non-material amendment was to allow the garage to be made larger. The permission to which the non-material amendment relates is currently extant and has not yet been implemented.
- 2012: Planning Permission was granted for construction of an underground extension to an existing garage to by way of application nr 2102/90095. Date of Approval 09 March 2012. The permission is extant and has not yet been implemented.
- 2010: Planning Permission was granted for an extension to form a garden room and a balcony at first floor level by way of application nr 2010/90436. Date of Approval 14 April 2010. The application was for renewal of the previous permission granted under application nr 2003/92919 which had lapsed. The balcony was constructed thus implementing the Planning Application but the garden room most likely will not now be constructed as a new permission for an amended design has been permitted under planning application nr 2104/90816.
- 2003: Planning Permission was granted an erection of a garden room extension by way of application nr 2003/92919 Date of Approval 04 September 2003. The planning permission was not implemented and therefore lapsed.
- 2000: Planning Permission was granted for an extension to existing stables to form a bale and tractor store by way of application nr 2000/92541 Date of Approval 21 November 2000. Planning Permission was implemented.
- 2000: Planning Permission was granted for retention of a tarmac road by way of application nr 2000/90482 Date of Approval 14 April 2000. The Planning Permission was implemented.
- 1999: Planning Permission was sought to erect a field shelter by way of application nr 1999/90073 but the application was refused on 26 February 1999.
- 1998: Planning Permission was granted for the formation of an all-weather riding arena by way of application nr 1998/91739. Date of Approval 10 September 1998. The planning permission was implemented.

- 1995: Planning Permission was granted for the erection of an extension to form garaging, tack room, playroom and hall with store over by way of application nr 1995/92857. Date of Approval 24 November 1995. The planning permission was implemented.
- 1995: Planning Permission was granted for the erection of a stable block and hay store by way of application nr 1998/92580. Date of Approval 24 October 1995. The planning permission was implemented.
- 1984: Planning Permission was granted for conversion of barn to form a store, kitchen and bedroom extension to existing dwelling and erection of extension to ground floor by way of application nr 1984/02236. Date of Approval 22 June 1984. This permission was granted before the current owners of Wolfstones Heights purchased the property and it is not clear if any of the development covered by the permission was carried out.

Re-location of the access to Wolfstones Heights Farm

The applicants became the owners of Wolfstones Heights Farm in 1995 and since that date have carried out various alterations and extensions as listed in the planning history set out above. Soon after moving to the property it became clear to the Applicants that the layout and the gradient of the existing driveway creates problems for access, particularly in winter. Vehicles are difficult to turn around the narrow right angle corner from the driveway into the parking area in front of the house with even greater difficulty returning to the drive as the adjacent building restricts visibility. The driveway also serves as a public footpath causing conflict between walkers, particularly if accompanied by children and dogs using the narrow drive and the applicant's vehicles and those of their visitors. The right angle turn, combined with the gradient is particularly difficult or impossible in ice or snow as the drive that passes through a small gap between buildings facing the prevailing wind quickly fills with snow. The difficulty of using the drive was highlighted earlier this year when there was a serious fire, at the property, which destroyed a sizable part of the house and the fire appliance sent to tackle the blaze became wedged in the driveway. The existing point of access from the existing drive into Wolfstones Road is on a bend in the road at the crest of a hill, where visibility is poor with consequent highway safety hazards.

The applicants have several horses and a small collection of classic cars, this involves use from time to time of a vehicle towing a trailer to transport horses or cars, the layout of the drive places severe restrictions on the size of trailer, which can be used. The applicants have investigated alternative routes over the years to create a more suitable access but none have appeared to be feasible until recent events took place which lead to this application. The owners of the adjacent property Wolfstones Heights, which is served by two access driveways from Wolfstones Road, put their property on the market in 2012. The property has not sold and the Applicants saw in this an opportunity to overcome their access problems, if part of the residential curtilage of Wolfstones Heights containing one of the driveways could be purchased to be used as a new access to Wolfstones Heights Farm, with Wolfstones Heights continuing to be served by the other access. This application therefore seeks permission for the stopping up of the existing access drive to Wolfstones Heights Farm and its replacement with one of the driveways currently serving Wolfstones Heights.

Construction of Underground Garage

Permission was granted in 2102 by way of application 2102/90095 for construction of an underground extension to the existing garage which at the time occupied the lower part of the former barn attached to the house at Wolfstones Heights Farm. The extended garage was to accommodate the small collection of classic cars, which the applicants own, currently stored at various locations around the district, which for security, ease of use and maintenance the applicants would prefer to store at their home. A serious fire destroyed the former barn and also caused extensive smoke damage to the remainder of the house during last winter. As a result of the fire the Applicants decided in the course of the repairs to re-plan the interior of the house which has resulted in part of the lower floor of the barn being absorbed into the house, this precludes the construction of the underground extension of the garage in the manner anticipated in the planning permission as previously granted. As part of these proposals the Applicants therefore wish to construct the underground garage in a different location alongside the proposed entrance drive. The proposed layout of the garage to accommodate the same number of cars as previously proposed but laid out in a different manner will enable cars to be taken in and out of the garage without having to remove other cars. The garage will be hidden below ground on three sides with only one elevation visible, constructed to replicate the appearance of a drystone retaining wall with doors set deeply back in openings. Existing trees and the proposed planting alongside the diverted public footpath will screen long distance views of the garage. The proposed garage will as a result have little if any visual impact on the appearance of the green belt.

Diversion of Public Footpath

As mentioned above the access drive to Wolfstones Heights Farm also serves as a public footpath, creating a safety risk to those using the footpath from the owners vehicles and horses, a particular hazard is that horses using the drive can be easily "spooked" by dogs and children with the consequent risk of injury not only to those using the path but to riders. This application proposes the re-routing of the public right of way to remove the conflict, which currently exists between the Applicants and members of the public using the footpath. The footpath currently passes very close to the Applicants house, carrying with it security problems. An incident occurred recently when the Applicants were out for dinner when an intruder entered their house from the footpath and kept their children hostage in their locked bedroom for some time, obviously the Applicants wish to remove any likelihood of this happening again.

The public footpath from Netherthong to Wolfstones Heights, which this application seeks permission to divert, is used as a leisure route where the quality of the walk is of more importance than a short journey time. As the path nears Wolfstones Heights Farm it passes along a green lane used by the applicants for access to their fields with horses, it then passes up the narrow macadam surfaced driveway to Wolfstones Heights Farm where the route is also shared by horses and motor vehicles. The path at this point is hemmed in by adjacent buildings restricting views until it joins Wolfstones Road. Where the route passes through the Applicants property many users will feel they are trespassing. The diversion proposed in this application offers a route where potential for conflict between members of the public using the path with vehicles and horses is removed; it also would be segregated from the curtilage of the applicant's house. Furthermore a more visually attractive route is offered where the steep climb between the enclosure of the buildings near the junction with Wolfstones Road will be exchanged for a virtually level path traversing the contours with spectacular views towards the northeast with Castle Hill as a striking feature in the centre of the panorama. To further enhance this experience the applicant will provide a seating/picnic area at the point where the view is at its best. On reaching Wolfstones Road the route onwards towards Wilshaw will follow the gradual descent down Wolfstones Road. If walking towards Upperthong a short gradual climb along what is currently the grass verge of Wolfstones Road towards the south will quickly take the walker to the point where the existing route is re-joined at point emerges from the grounds of Wolfstones Heights Farm at a brow before continuing down in the direction of Upperthong. The diversion will provide a shorter journey time with less gradient to climb if walking towards Wilshaw, if travelling to Upperthong the walking time will be extended by approx. 5 minutes but the quality of the walk will be significantly improved which it is suggested will more than compensate for the short extension of journey.

Two meetings have taken place in the preparation of this application with Giles Cheetham the Council's Public Rights of Way Officer who was broadly supportive of the these proposals.

Heritage Statement

Statement of Significance of the Heritage Asset

This application seeks approval for use of an existing access drive within the curtilage of a listed Building to create access to the adjacent building. It also seeks approval for construction of an underground garage within the same curtilage.

The Listed Building question is in the form of "Laithe House", a farmhouse, with an attached agricultural building. The farmhouse and attached building are listed, most likely because of their age and the quality of the ranges of windows on the south east elevation and the distinctive "catslide" roof. There are two other buildings within the curtilage of the Heritage Asset, a stable and a garage both of recent construction neither is identified in the listing notice these buildings are therefore not listed in their own right.

The Enclosures Acts of the late 18c lead to commons and wastes in the locality of Upperthong being enclosed, dividing land into a great number of small holdings and giving rise to the need for buildings to accommodate both new landowning and tenant farmers and their animals. The "Laithe House" was a characteristic type of building which evolved to satisfy this need combining, usually under a single roof and in a simple linear range, a dwelling and a laithe (a dialect word for a combined barn, cowhouse and stable). This type of building is found over a wide area of northern England being particularly prevalent in the Pennine uplands. The popularity of the Laithe House was due to its economical form and compact plan. The farmer with his small acreage and small number of beasts had no need for, nor could he afford, the detached barns and mistals built by the wealthier yeoman farmers. The Laithe House was capable of providing a wide range of accommodation, both in the dwelling part and in the agricultural area. Although originally designed to serve a predominately pastoral economy the form could readily be adapted to suit other specialised agricultural needs. The publication "Rural Houses of West Yorkshire" by RCHME and

WYCC identifies the typology of these buildings in some detail and provides illustrations of a number of examples.

By comparison with the information in the reference mentioned above and from what I have gathered from inspection and studying the original building at Wolfstones Heights has an appearance consistent with what would be regarded as a typical Laithe House, with few later external extensions and alterations which have modified this architectural character. Internally the buildings appear to have been subject to “modernisation” and as such heritage value has been lost.

I suggest the significance of the heritage asset at Wolfstones Heights is that externally it presents a well preserved example of the “Laithe House” typology, which has been subject to limited change and has therefore architectural and historic value which should be conserved. It is however relevant to state that this type of building is relatively common in the area and is therefore not an asset of outstanding importance.

Setting of the Heritage Asset

The buildings at Wolfstones Heights are set into a slope for shelter from the prevailing wind just below the ridge line to the west. The adjacent buildings at Wolfstones Heights Farm, which have been significantly altered are not Listed and sited in a similar manner forming a group with the buildings at Wolfstones Heights. The group of buildings at Wolfstones, as can be seen from the Visual Impact Assessment provided with the application are hidden from view by the contours and tree planting when viewed from the west and only really visible from a narrow arc round from north to south the principle vantage points being due east along the footpath from Netherthong where the properties are seen as a squat mass of buildings against the background of trees and rising ground to the west. The group forms a distinctive but low-key component of a highpoint within the wider landscape.

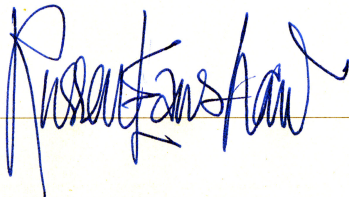
Impact of the proposed development on the Heritage Asset and its setting

As described above the group of buildings at Wolfstones Heights stand in a rather isolated setting but blend in with the wider landscape. They are visible from a distance in an arc from the North through to South and also from close range from the definitive public footpath, which this application seeks to divert. The application proposes a change to the route of the access to Wolfstones Heights Farm but this is an existing drive serving Wolfstone Heights which will be subject only to minor physical change and as a result there will be little if any material impact on the heritage asset or its setting. The proposed underground garage, which will be at some distance from the heritage asset, further away than the previously permitted garage and stable buildings will be unseen from Wolfstones Heights and therefore have no visual impact from that vantage point. The garage will however be visible from the public footpath from the east. The appearance of the garage will be of a section of drystone retaining wall with a number of openings blending with the surrounding ground levels. The area of hard standing in front of the proposed garage will be quite extensive however the hard standing currently forming the drive to Wolfstones Heights will be removed on balance there will therefore be no greater area of hard standing by way of the proposed development. Based on its distance from the heritage asset and low key appearance blending with the landscape in the same manner as the many drystone walls in the area, which it will resemble.

Conclusion

In preparing this application I have consulted early ordnance maps, the publication “Rural Houses of West Yorkshire 1400 to 1830” and used my own detailed knowledge of the design, construction and history of building in and around the Holme Valley gained from 45 years of study and practice as an Architect in the area, specialising in the care and conservation of historic buildings.

I contend and have demonstrated in the preceding evaluation that the development, which this application proposes will have minimal impact on the established character and setting of the heritage asset to the extent this will cause less than actual harm.



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