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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT: THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement has been written to support the application for the proposed works at the site of The Old School House, Suckley Road, Bransford, Worcestershire.

The proposal includes the demolition of an existing two storey dwelling and its replacement with a new two storey dwelling. The proposed works also include alterations to provide associated parking and landscaping.

A previous planning application was submitted in 2021 for a replacement dwelling on the same site. (Ref: 21/01573/FUL) Following feedback from the local authority during the planning process, concerns were raised regarding the design and positioning of the building on the site. As a result that application was withdrawn by the applicant.

The scheme detailed within this document considers the comments made during the previous planning application process and aims to address the concerns raised.

2.0 SITE

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2.0 SITE

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is located on Suckley Road in Bransford, Worcestershire.

Bransford is a village and civil parish within the Malvern Hills District and is situated close to The River Teme and the village of Leigh. The village is located on the primary route between the Worcester and Hereford.

The Old School House sits West of the centre of Bransford and is on the edge of, and, is part of an area containing a number of residential buildings. Beyond this area are patches of small woodlands, agricultural fields and farmland. The site and the farmlands are of irregular shapes and are generally bordered with hedgerow and scattered hedgerow trees.

The site has an area of approximately 1,695m^2. The North, East and West Boundaries are bordered with hedges and trees and the entrance to the site for vehicles is from the South. There are neighbouring properties to the South and the East of the site. To the North and West of the site are mostly open fields. The small field to the West of the site is also under the ownership of the applicants.

Currently on site there are a number of existing buildings, these are situated on the Southern half of the site.

The site and existing house is discreet and is not visible from the main road. It is concealed by buildings to the south, and by boundary hedges and trees along Suckley Road.

View from Suckley Road

2.0 SITE

2.2 EXISTING BUILDINGS

The existing dwelling is a detached two storey house. The existing house dates to around 1900-1930 and consists of a conventional masonry construction with red facing brick to the front elevations and with several areas with rendered finishes to the rear elevations. The house has plain red tiled pitched roofing. The house appears to have been extended a number of times in the past. There is a connected garage on the side of the house.

To the South of the house there is a detached garage which was constructed in 2008. This garage is a steel framed building with three bays. It is finished externally with timber cladding and a slate roof. There are photovoltaic panels located on the south facing side of the garage roof.

There are also a number of small sheds and greenhouses at the rear of the house.

The existing house and garage currently sit within the Bransford Development boundary which cuts through the site, with the northern areas of the site outside the boundary. The sheds and greenhouses noted above sit beyond the development boundary. The Northern areas of the site are landscaped garden areas for the existing property with some areas being utilised for small scale subsistence farming by the applicants.

Existing house

Existing detached garage

2.0 SITE

2.3 LOCAL ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPE

In order to allow the proposed building to be more sympathetic to the local surroundings, local architecture and existing buildings have served as inspiration for the design and choice of materials for the proposed building.

Historic England's Farmstead and Landscape statement, in relation to Malvern Hills, references farmsteads in the local area. The statement notes the following, 'There is a medium density of farmsteads in the landscape: high to the Suckley Hills to the north and low in the estate lands to the south.'

Regarding the layout of these farmsteads it also notes the following: 'Farmsteads are small-scale regular L-shaped, mostly comprising a barn with additionally shelter shed' and in relation to barns it mentions that 'threshing barns are commonly found with shelter sheds making an L-plan' The opposite shows satellite images showing local examples of this.

In reference to the local landscape the statement notes the following, 'Across much of the area, fields are generally irregular and small in scale, the result of medieval and post-medieval woodland clearance.'

The document mentions areas of historic orchard planting and says the following, 'Formerly extensive orchards still survive in part, particularly in the Leigh and Alfrick area, where fruit production for urban markets peaked in the early 20th century.'

Although areas of orchards still exist in the vicinity of the site, it is evident by looking a historical OS map data that they may have been more numerous and larger in the past.

See section 4.5 of this design and access statement for futher discussion regarding the local landscape character In relation to the proposals.

2.0 SITE

LOCAL ARCHITECTURE CONTINUED

The Farmstead and Landscape statement further goes on to describe barns with the following, 'There are some 17th- century and earlier timber-framed buildings, including medieval cruck houses, particularly around the Suckley Hills. Timber-framed farm buildings are typically with weatherboarding or have brick infill panels'.

Local barn and agricultural buildings, such as the below barn found in Leigh brook nearby, show an example of the use of external timber cladding with masonry at low levels. These barn buildings also have very low pitched roofs.

The use of timber cladding, locally, extends to residential properties and commercial buildings in the area. Where there are nearby example of it's use on building in both vertical and horizontal orientations. The opposite photographs show a farmhouse which is extensively clad in horizontal timber cladding.

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The below building is part of the local Fox Inn in Bransford and functions as its events building. This building is finished with vertical timber cladding and with it's low pitched roof and general size resembles agricultural buildings.

2.0 SITE

LOCAL ARCHITECTURE CONTINUED

Examples of timber clad barn buildings are not just found locally and there are many examples of this in the wider area as evident in the following examples. These building range from historic buildings to more contemporary agricultural building. By the nature of these buildings and their agricultural use, these types of buildings typically have relatively large massing.

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2.0 SITE

LOCAL ARCHITECTURE CONTINUED

Examples of domestic buildings in the near vicinity of the site are eclectic in style and use of materials. There are examples of more modern brick houses such as those found along Leigh Hurst adjacent and houses on the opposite side of Suckley road. However also along Suckley road are examples of buildings which contain varying amounts of timber cladding, or rendered finishes. This mix of styles and materials means that there is not a prevailing vernacular to the buildings found along Suckley Road and immediate areas surrounding.








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3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

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3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

The existing house is in poor condition. The house is currently unoccupied due to this and has been deemed uninhabitable from a council tax perspective. The necessary remedial works to the existing building in order to make the building habitable would be considerable and not economically viable, especiallu when compared to the costs of constructing a new dwelling.

There are a number of structural issues with the property which are detailed within the structural report submitted as part of this application.

There is a desire to create a highly sustainable house which, would go well beyond that of a typical new house when trying to meet the challenge of climate change. The proposed house will provide a better standard of accommodation with a better design.

3.1 PROPOSED SITING

Early discussions with the Local Authority have influenced the footprint and the location of the building on site and the plans have responded to the feedback recieved.

The scope of the proposal has been reduced following the advice provided. This has been reduced to only provide a single new dwelling as opposed to several. The proposed footprint was also altered to reduce its size and its position had been moved closer to the footprint of the existing house.

The existing house is located in the Southern half of the site and sits directly adjacent to the Eastern boundary. There are several issues with the current siting which could be greatly improved by a slight relocation of the building footprint.

The house is currently positioned in an area which makes poor use of the site itself. Being so close to the Eastern border it does not take advantage of the views offered by the local landscape. The windows at the rear of the property are all directed towards several large trees at the North-East corner of the site.

The existing house is also currently overlooked by the properties to the East. These houses were built around 1994, originally these houses were not intended to have windows on their western elevations except for rooflights. At some point since their initial approval and the present, windows were installed that now overlook The Old School House. This has led to reduced privacy for the property.

The proposed building is planned to be positioned so that it can most effectively benefit from the views out of the site, towards nearby open fields and also to make use of existing parking areas and vehicular access into the site.

The proposed building will still be sited in the Southern half of the site. Although it will be moved slightly from the existing house position, this will still within the existing domestic curtilage of the existing house. This allows the existing driveway positions to be retained as well as retaining the use of the existing detached garage building at the South East of the site. The existing entrance to the site will also be retained.

The layout of the building itself has also been arranged to take advantage of the surrounding views. Larger areas of glazing will be located on the Northwest facing areas of the building which will be where the main living areas and reception areas of the proposed house will be located. There will be smaller windows positioned on the other elevations. To provide natural daylight. The arrangement of glazing in this way will take advantage of North Lighting in order to reduce overheating from solar gain during the summer. This would also help to reduce overlooking to and from neighbouring properties from the East and South of the site. By rotating parts of the proposed house away from the Eastern boundary, privacy is further increased as the main living and sleeping areas are located such that they face away from neighbours to the East.

The siting of the building away from the Eastern boundary and the existing hedgerow has the added benefit of opening up views to the East of the proposed building for neighbouring properties on this side and therefore would contribute to improving the visual amenity for these properties.

3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

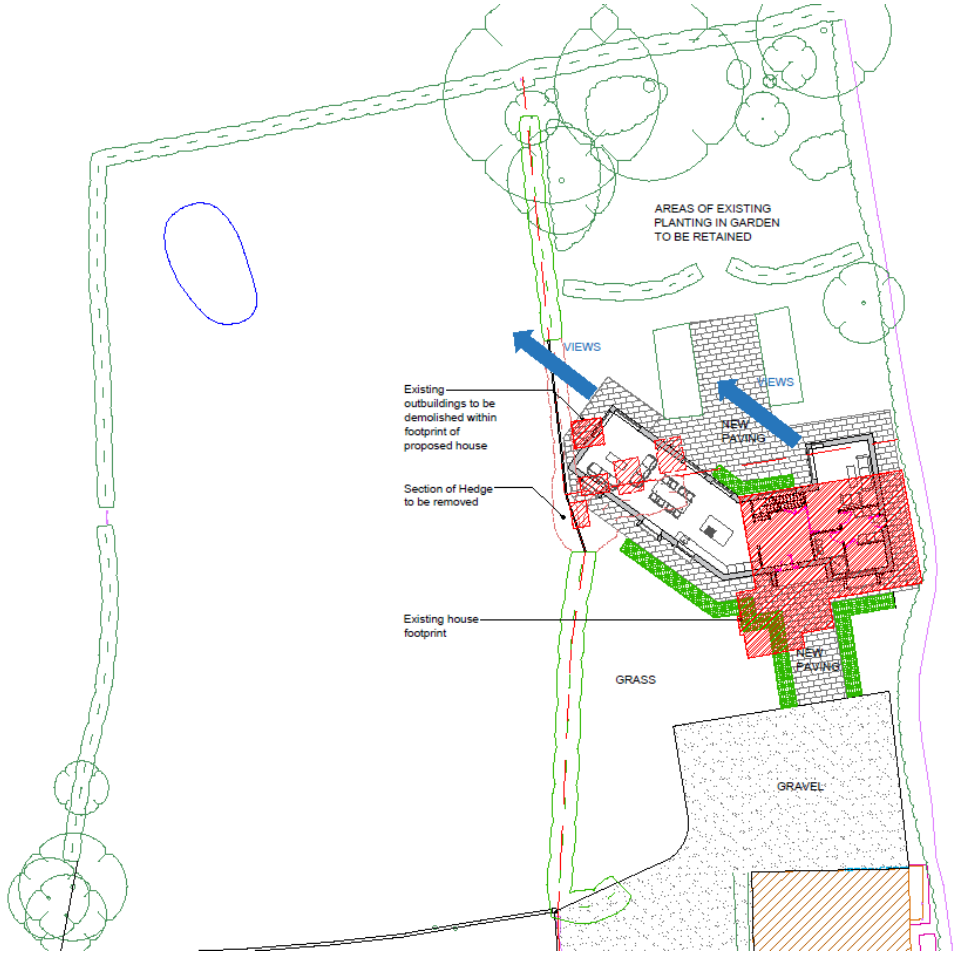
3.1 PROPOSED SITING CONTINUED

The site plan opposite shows the proposed location of the house. In addition, the red line dashed line on the plan indicates the development boundary as part of the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood plan which was adopted in November 2022.

In order to make the best use of the site and provide appropriate amounts of space to the driveway and parking areas, the footprint of the new house will sit partly outside the development boundary, for Bransford and within the domestic garden areas. However the majority of the building will sit within the boundary and over the existing footprint of the existing house.

The areas of the building sitting beyond the boundary will be in an area where existing outbuildings currently exist. these will be demolished to allow the construction of the new house.

The projection into the garden would be no worse than the projection achievable with a permitted development, single storey extension (prior approval)



3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

3.2 PROPOSED INTERNAL LAYOUT

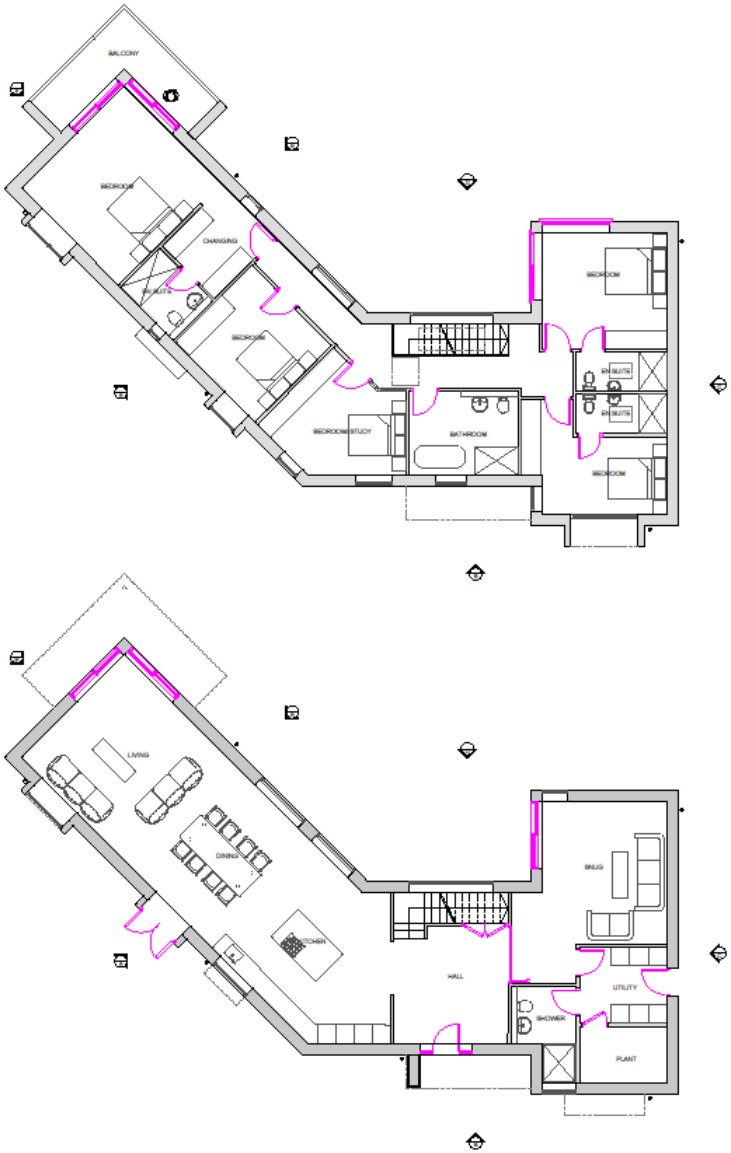
The proposed house will have five bedrooms situated at first floor level.

The layout of the proposed building creates an slightly L shaped building. This has been deliberately shaped to create an enclosed courtyard area. This arrangement references the layouts of local farmsteads and buildings where similar enclosed courtyards are found.

The central courtyard area will be shielded by the rest of the house on the East side and South side and will be open to the North, this provides additional privacy to and from neighbouring properties whilst remaining open to views and allowing the area to receive sun in the afternoon and evening.

Due to recent events related to Covid-19, it has become clear that there is a need to provide areas in the house for home working. The previous house provided little room to suitably accommodate this. Although lockdowns and restrictions have eased, there is a need for the proposed houses to provide areas where the occupants can continue to work from home, to allow flexible working. The new flexible rooms provided at first floor and ground level is aimed to provide comfortable working spaces whilst being able to become bedrooms if required. The provision of adequate space for home working would help to provide additional sustainability benefits as per SWDP:1, this would allow the house to provide a increased social, and economic role, (see section 4.1 of statement) relating to planning policy.

The ground floor areas have been arranged to allow for easy future reconfiguration to cater for occupants with mobility issues. This would allow the house to provide suitable accommodation for the occupants as they age with relatively minor alterations. This would allow a high level of future proofing.



3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

In order to allow the proposed house to remain suitable for the use as the inhabitants grow older the house follows many of the standards that are set out in the Lifetime Homes Standards. This will ensure that the design of the house meets a recognised standard in relation to meeting the needs for older people and those will mobility issues.

The following notes the allowances made to achieve the standard:

- Adequate widths to corridors and landing areas
- The provision of level access into the building
- Suitably placed, level parking area near the main entrance to the house.
- stair widths will be wide enough to allow future installation of stair lifts
- Suitably wide doorways in relation to attached corridors and landings to allow convenience for wider range of users
- Living rooms have been located at entrance level
- Entrance level bed space within the proposed Annex area
- 1500mm Diameter turning circles have been allowed for within the ground floor areas and in living spaces to allow wheelchair turning.
- Entrance level WC and showers.
- Handles to doors and windows and height of service controls will be sited at heights and locations suitable for use when seated.

3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

3.3 PROPOSED MATERIALS

Externally the building will be finished with dark grey render at low levels and with timber cladding at high levels. The use of timber cladding references the Architecture of many agricultural buildings where similar materials are used on barns and farm houses. The vertical orientation of the cladding and minimal detailing provides a contemporary appearance whilst still making use of this traditional material. The dark render will provide a visual contrast with the lighter cladding, to create visual interest. These areas are mostly at lower levels of the building, which means that they will be less visible from outside the site due to existing hedges and trees at the site boundaries. The dark render will allow these areas to blend in behind shaded areas of trees and hedges.

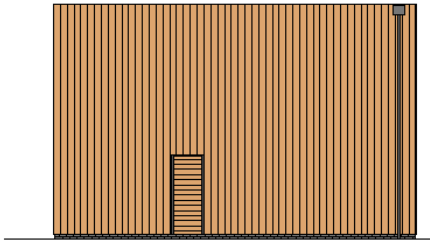
The use of the cladding at higher levels with lower areas of render, allows the proposed appearance of the house to reference the construction of local barns where there may be lower level plinth walls with timber above. This is also referenced in the proportions of rendered areas to timber clad areas of the proposed house.

The choice of timber cladding finish was also due to it being a natural material. The local area is very rural especially to the North of the site. The appearance of the timber cladding would allow a more sympathetic appearance with the surroundings. The cladding would be allowed to weather and silver over time. This would further allow the building to blend into its surroundings and would mean that as time passes the upper areas of the building will gain an even more natural appearance. This would enhance the character of the building whilst making building appear less conspicuous when observed from a distance as it blends into its surroundings.

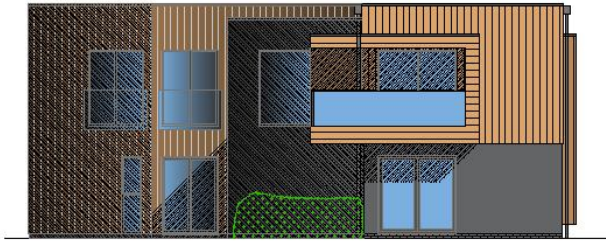
The careful use of timber finishes, choice of window arrangements and frame finishes will prevent the house from being a direct copy of a barn buildings or other buildings nearby. Instead the inspiration taken from agricultural buildings would be evident but the design would be contemporary and original, where the building would be clearly be read as a domestic house. The inclusion of box dormers throughout and variation to roof heights add visual variety, which would prevent a monolithic appearance and would help to reduce the visual mass of the building.

The proposed building will make use of flat roofs throughout, this will have the benefit of allowing the maximisation of the use of internal space whilst also allowing a lower roof height overall. The proposed buildings overall height will be lower than the ridge height of the existing house.

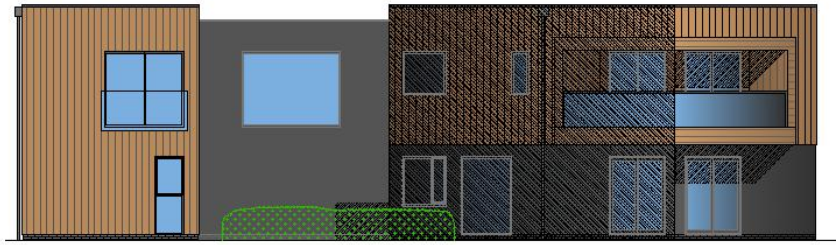
Proposed South Elevation NTS



Proposed East Elevation NTS



Proposed West Elevation NTS



Proposed North Elevation NTS

3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

3.4 VISIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED HOUSE

The location of the house will be unobtrusive when observed from views looking back onto the site. The photographs on this page show the views from outside of the site. Due to the hedgerows and trees surrounding, the existing house is relatively hidden. From the nearest road at the North of the site, the hedgerows block the view onto the site except at occasionally openings and gate positions.

At these positions the view of the house is obscured by the hedgerow and trees on the North boundary. The photograph taken along a public right of way, shows that although the house is more visible from certain angles most of the lower areas of the house is obscured.

Following construction of the new house, due to the height of the existing hedges at the rear of the site, only the timber clad areas will be visible outside the site from the North, the rendered lower areas will be obscured. This would allow the house to further blend in to its surroundings as only this more natural material will be visible.

This is similar to the front of the property where existing houses and hedgerows obscure the house.

View from Suckley Road south of site

View from road North of the site

View from public right of way (existing house highlighted)

Existing view from North of the site, late winter

3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

3.4 VISIBILITY OF THE PROPOSED HOUSE CONTINUED

The montages opposite show the proposed house when viewed from the North and from a gate opening. The proposed house will be obscured by existing hedgerow and trees throughout the year. Although when deciduous trees lose their leaf cover during winter more of the house will be visible this will only be the upper areas. During summer the house is mostly obscured. The timber cladding proposed will naturally silver over time and will further allow the building to be less conspicuous.

Gate in hedge along road North of the site

View from North of the site, late winter

View from North of the site, summer

3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

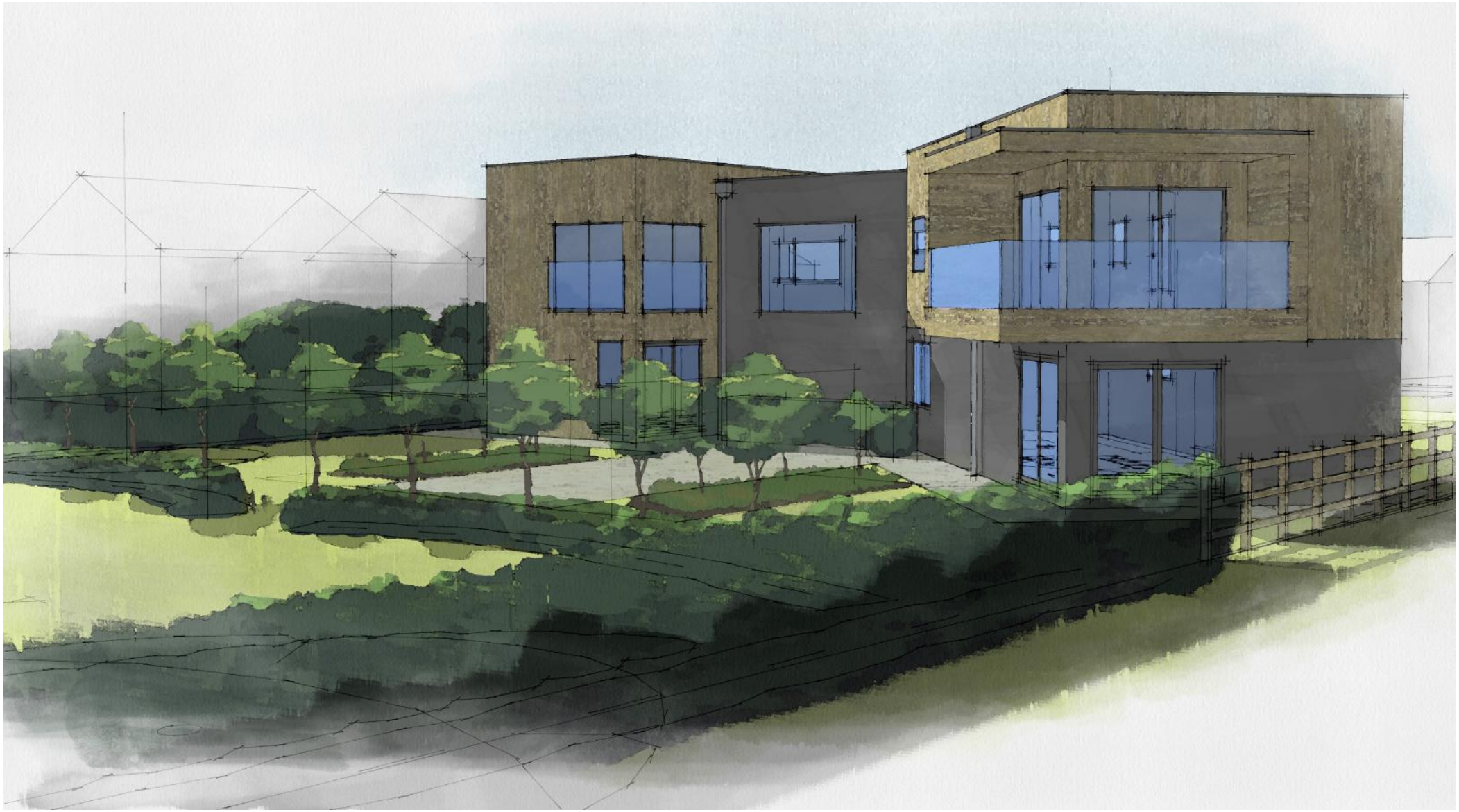
3.5 PROPOSED LANDSCAPING

The existing areas for parking on site will be altered to suit the new layout and location of the proposed house and will maintain vehicular access to the existing garage. Surfacing for these areas will be gravel and will be detailed to allow rainwater to drain freely through. This will help with the management of rainwater on site. A Soakaway is proposed to manage any additional rainwater on newly created impermeable surfaces. Including new roof and paved areas.

The hedgerows to the boundaries will mostly be retained along with the hedgerow trees. A small area of hedgerow will be removed to allow for the footprint of the proposed house. This is necessary to facilitate the positioning of the new house and to help allow more natural daylight to reach the north west corner of the house especially at ground floor level. A small section of post and rail fencing will be erected in place of part of this hedge.

Existing garden areas in the north currently consist of hedges and trees. These will be retained as part of the works and form the landscaping for the proposed house.

The landscape character assessment of the local area notes that the hedgerows and hedgerow trees bordering irregular shaped fields and farms are a typical feature in this area. The retention of these will therefore help to maintain the local landscape character.



4.0 PLANNING POLICY

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21-106 THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

The site is divided by the South Worcester development boundary. The existing house to be demolished is situated on the Southern half of the site that is within the development boundary. The proposals seek to replace the existing dwelling with a new larger dwelling and as part of the proposals an area of the new footprint will sit beyond the development boundary and therefore, could be considered to be within open countryside.

It is worth noting that the areas surrounding the existing house and within the site form gardens for the property and contains outbuildings for the existing house. Other areas of the gardens are currently used as areas of subsidence farming for the applicants. This has been the case prior to the undertaking of the South Worcestershire development plan review and prior to the defining of the development boundary. There is piece of land to the North-east of the site which also is outside the development boundary, however this area contains an existing playground area and may also be seen as having been previously developed.

The South Worcester Development plan has the following policies which are relevant to the proposals.

SWDP 1—OVERARCHING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

SWDP 21 – DESIGN

SWDP 25 – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

SWDP 27 – RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out Government policy in relation to planning, the following sections of the NPPF are relevant to the proposals.

SECTION 5—DELIVERING A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF HOMES

SECTION 12—ACHIEVING WELL DESIGNED PLACES

SECTION 13—PROTECTING GREENBELT LAND

SECTION 14—MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODING AND COASTAL CHANGE

SECTION 15—CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 SWDP 1—OVERARCHING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The SWDP reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable developments. For a development to be seen as a sustainable development it must achieve a number of roles:

An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive south Worcestershire economy.

A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities in south Worcestershire.

An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing south Worcestershire's unique natural, built and historic environment.

The proposed building achieves these roles in the following ways:

Economic role

As a development for a single domestic dwelling, the economic role of this project is less obvious. It is important to note however, that the proposals to demolish an existing building which is in poor condition and its replacement with a larger and more desirable house, this would help to improve the overall quality and local housing stock. Due to the large site it is arguable that the existing house underutilises the site, which could accommodate a larger property with more bedrooms, whilst still providing abundant outdoor space and suitable parking.

Social Role

The proposed house replaces an existing house therefore, it is not detrimental to current of future housing needs.

Great consideration has been put into the creation of a high quality and attractive building. The new house creates a contemporary and more sustainable building.

Environmental Role

On a similar level of importance to the design of the appearance of the building, the environmental aspects of the design have played a huge role in the development of the scheme. This has influenced materials used, building orientation, arrangement of spaces as well as proposed lifestyle enhancements for the inhabitants. Already the site utilises solar energy generation, the further proposals will aim to utilise air source or ground source for energy generation. The end goal of these is to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and creating a contemporary building with excellent sustainability credentials. (see section 4.6 of this design and access statement for more information)

The new development aims to preserve and take advantage of the amenities the local natural landscape has to offer. Through the siting and orientation of the building and minimal disturbance to the landscape character the building will be further integrated into the landscape.

The SWDP notes that where applications do not accord with policies, that solutions mitigating impact can be sought. The SWDP further notes that the developments should avoid impacts of development significantly outweighing the benefits where no relevent policies are applicable. The proposed development provides little negative impact to the site and local area and through its sustainability considerations and design greatly improves upon the existing and overall we believe will provide a benefit and enhancement to the local area.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.2 NPPF 5: DELIVERING A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF HOMES

NPPF 5 discusses the provision of new homes to meet housing needs. NPPF 5 provides information on the creation of new homes in rural areas which may have some relevance to the proposed house as the proposed house does not fully sit within the footprint of the existing property. Paragraph 79 in these sections of the NPPF notes that isolated homes in the countryside should generally be avoided with some exceptions. We believe that the restrictions noted within NPPF and Paragraph 79 would not apply to this application as the proposed building would not be seen as being an isolated home within the open countryside.

When looking to determine whether the definition 'isolated homes in the countryside' applies to this project, the relatively recent, *Braintree District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Ors (2018)* case is relevant and helps to define what can be classed as an isolated home. In this precedent, due to the amount of other neighbouring dwellings surrounding it, the development would not result in being an isolated homes in the countryside. This is similarly the case with the proposed new dwelling. There are several existing neighbouring dwellings in the near vicinity of the site which means that the proposed development would not be isolated and would be seen as being part of the village settlement. The image opposite highlights some of the neighbouring dwellings around the site location in red.

The above means that paragraph 79 of the NPPF does not apply to this application and therefore the proposals would not be contrary to this policy. Additionally the building replaces a house that is within the development boundary and itself will mostly be sited within the boundary.

The purpose of paragraph 79 is to encourage the creation of high-quality homes, which, we believe the proposal achieves. This is through the design of the new house and, its considerations for sustainability. An emphasis on exceptional design quality and innovation has been applied to the project.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.3 SWDP 21– DESIGN

NPPF 12—ACHIEVING WELL-DESIGNED PLACES

The SWDP section 21 & NPPF 12 both puts emphasis on the need for high quality design and innovation as well as emphasising the need to improve existing areas.

The existing house provides no Architectural merit and is currently in poor condition. The proposed design creates a new contemporary building which takes full advantage of the site and makes use of innovative construction techniques to provide improved sustainability and thermal efficiency.

The house makes use of timber cladding and a contrasting dark grey render externally. The use of timber cladding at higher levels of walls with the dark grey render at lower levels. The two contrasting materials along with the articulation to the front elevation helps to break up the external appearance of the walls. The choice of a darker colour render at low levels resembles the appearance of shaded elements. Particularly so when the building is seen from the North. The darker render will further allow the lower areas to blend in with tree trunks and hedgerows that will be in front.

The use of timber cladding allows the building to reference local agricultural buildings, where timber cladding is used extensively, as discussed earlier within this document. The layout of the proposed building creates a central courtyard areas also takes references from traditional farmhouse layouts, whilst offering increased levels of privacy. The splayed L shaped arrangement is a contemporary take on traditional L shaped farmstead found locally. This allows the building to reference the local architecture.

The use of a more natural material for the majority of the external finishes of the building will help to soften its external appearance so that it appears less imposing and help the building fit in with its setting. This is especially the case when looking into the site from outside, where retained hedges surrounding will mean that in most cases only the timber cladding will be visible, this will have the additional benefit of weathering and silvering over time which would further allow the building to blend in to its surroundings.

The siting of the new building will also improve the amenity of the neighbouring buildings to the East of the site. The proposed building is sited further away from the boundary, with no glazing to the elevation next to the boundary. This would help prevent overlooking and therefore will improve privacy for neighbouring buildings.

The height of the roof of the proposed building will be lower than the ridge of the existing house. Locating the house in a similar position to the existing will allow the proposed to continue to be read as being part of the settlement group with the adjacent buildings.

The building was also carefully placed to minimise the effect on houses to the south and East of the site by reducing the profile that is visible from these directions.

Existing windows on the neighbouring Oakapple Cottage are to its western areas. Currently the views from these are mainly towards the West and are from its two upper storey, West facing windows and to the North/ Northwest from its single North facing window. The views from the windows facing North are currently blocked by hedgerows and trees at the border of the site and by planting at the position of the proposed house. This means views from this window are predominantly towards the North-west. The placement of the new house would not impact these views.

Within NPPF 12, paragraph 134 it states that significant weight should be given to designs which achieve the following,

'outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.'

We believe that the proposed building achieves this by its emphasis on sustainability and by the high quality of its design.

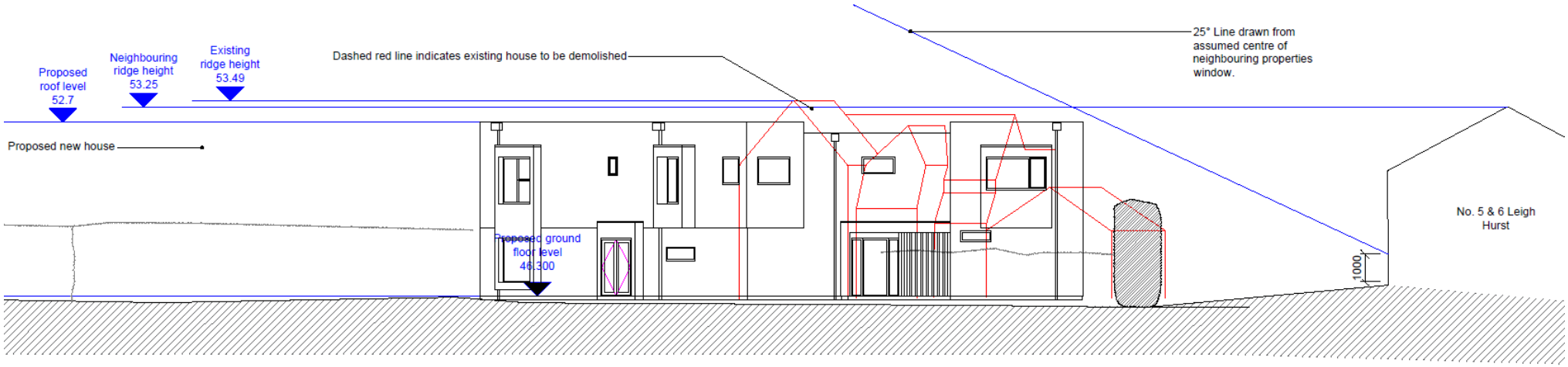
4.0 PLANNING POLICY

The size and massing of the development ensures that the new house accommodates the applicants' current needs and anticipated future needs, therefore it would help to futureproof the house for the applicants.

The SWDP notes that the scale, height, and massing should be appropriate for the setting of the site. The size of the development references the external appearance of typical barn buildings found locally, this will help the proposed building to better sit within the local landscape. The proposed size of the building is not too dissimilar to typical farmstead building arrangements which would include farmhouses, barns etc. which are found locally. The size of the proposed is a response to the size of the site and allows more effective utilisation of the space available. The proposed footprint, although larger than the existing house's, constitutes a less than 30% increase.

When this is considered with the restricted views onto the site due to existing planting, the scale and height of the proposed house would not be inappropriate for the site.

The height of the new house will be lower than the ridge of the existing, this is also lower than the ridges of the nearest neighbouring houses to the East. As indicated in the below elevation, there are no forseeable issues with blocking of daylight as the building does not exceed the area indicated when a 25° line is drawn from the approximate centre of glazing on neighbouring houses.



4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.4 SWDP 25: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

NPPF 15: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The NPPF notes the need for developments to contribute and enhance the local environment. This includes consideration for the local natural landscapes and also consideration for local wildlife habitats and biodiversity. Similarly, the SWDP 25 sets out the need for consideration for local Landscape characteristics.

The Landscape Character Assessment for the site notes that the local landscape consists of principal timbered farmlands. This landscape type has the following description taken from the landscape type information sheet:

'A small- to medium-scale wooded, agricultural landscape characterised by filtered views through densely scattered hedgerow trees. This is a complex, in places intimate, landscape of irregularly shaped woodlands, winding lanes and frequent wayside dwellings and farmsteads. It is a landscape of great interest and exception, yet also one of balance.'

The proposals for the site involve the retaining existing hedgerow and trees forming the boundaries to the site. This means that the main characteristic of having hedgerow boundaries to fields will be retained.

A secondary characteristic noted as part of this landscape type is the brick and timber style to old buildings in the area. Therefore, the proposed use of timber cladding on the proposed building will help contribute to the continuance of local Architectural characteristics.

Both the Landscape type description and the Land profile for the area describes farmsteads being typical to the area. This means that the references the proposed design takes from agricultural buildings will also help the new house to be more in keeping with the local landscape.

The retention of much of the hedgerow to the site boundaries would mean that habitats and local biodiversity is mostly unaffected by the works.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.5 SWDP 27: RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY

NPPF 14: MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODING AND COASTAL CHANGE

The SWDP notes the need for new developments to be sustainable and emphasises the importance of renewable energy sources. The NPPF similarly refers to the need to adapt to and mitigate climate change in relation to the planning system..

The possibility of retaining and altering the existing house had been considered, however, following structural surveys, it was determined that the repairs required would be substantial and in its current state the house is deemed as uninhabitable. After careful consideration it was determined that the demolition of the existing house would provide an opportunity for the applicants to construct a new house that fulfilled their needs whilst also provide improved thermal efficiency and offer opportunities to make use of renewable energy sources for heating and electricity.

The current house is of early 20th century construction and therefore is unlikely to meet the more demanding air tightness and insulation requirements of today. In order to improve thermal performance considerable work would need to be undertaken which would require loss of already limited internal space.

Even during early design discussions for the new house, sustainability has been one of the main driving factors of the design for the building. To help towards the goal of achieving a zero-carbon building or one that greatly reduces the need to rely on imported energy the building envelope had to be designed so that the amount of energy the house itself requires is reduced. This is before further considerations can be made to implement additional strategies for renewable energy generation and heating. The proposed new house is intended to utilise an insulated concrete formwork system (ICF) or Structural insulated Panel system (SIPS) for the construction of external walls. These provide a number of benefits over traditional construction methods and in particular offers benefits in sustainability.

Both systems provide benefits in thermal insulation when compared to traditional masonry methods, with smaller wall thicknesses, improved u-values, and improved air-tightness. Both systems also provides benefits in reduced labour on site and improved speed of erection as well as less wastage on site.

Example house with ICF system with timber cladding and render

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

Once the choice for building envelope construction method had been considered, it was possible to further look at other suitable strategies and technologies in order to further improve the sustainability of the new house. This was carried out by looking at the site itself and the opportunities this presented. Next, further considerations were looked into to see how the design of the building could influence the lifestyle of inhabitants that could allow for a more long-term sustainability and low carbon changes.

The proposed house will also seek to take advantage of sustainable technologies and strategies which would further provide improvements over the existing these include the following:

- Use of mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems to improve heating efficiency. This will be used with good natural cross ventilation provided by openable windows. When used in conjunction with the improved airtightness offered by an ICF or SIPS system this would help to allow the MVHR system to be utilised more efficiently. In order to allow this as well as the new walls, the construction of the rest of the house will be carefully carried out to reduce air leakage.
- Use of existing photovoltaic panels located on the existing detached garage roof.
- Electric vehicle charging points will be installed to facilitate the adoption of electric vehicles in the future.
- The use of an Air source or ground source heat pumps. This will provide heating for the house using a more sustainable method when compared to more traditional heating systems. There will be a small amount of electricity used in order to run these systems however the impact of this will be outweighed by the benefits of using a heat pump system.
- A higher than typical U-value for building elements will be specified, walls, roofs and floors will be detailed. This will reduce the heating required.
- Highly insulating glazing units will be used, these will be orientated to maximise North light whilst smaller glazing facing south will provide some heating from solar gain whilst preventing overheating during summer. The areas of North and Northwest facing glazing will allow the house to receive large amounts of natural daylight thereby reducing the use of artificial lighting for longer periods of the day. All artificial lighting will be using energy efficient LED bulbs and light fittings, which would further reduce energy required for lighting needs.

The above-mentioned strategies demonstrates the considerations taken by the design of the new house regarding the points described in both the SWDP and NPPF addressing climate change. The proposals would result in a building that goes beyond typical new dwellings in sustainability and reducing carbon.

NPPF 14 also discusses the need for developments to manage rainwater. The site itself is not within an area of high risk of flooding according the flood map for planning the site is within a flood zone 1 area, and the site has a ‘very low’ risk of flooding from surface water. However as impermeable surfaces have been introduced as part of the proposed works, these will be dealt with using a soakaway system. This means that most of the rainwater falling onto the site will be dealt with within the site itself.

Water butts will also be installed, and these will allow collected water to be reused on site for areas of planting.

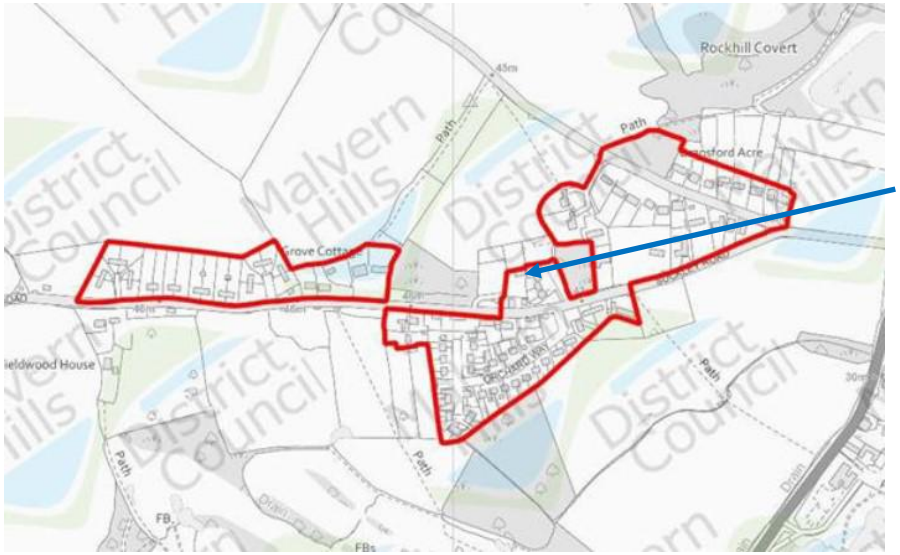
4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.6 – PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The existing building to be demolished is sited entirely within the development boundary as shown on the opposite plan taken from the Leigh and Bransford Neighbourhood plan. This boundary has recently been adopted in November 2022, and prior to this the local area did not have a defined development boundary. The site is not part of a conservation area and is not under Article 4 direction.

The proposed new dwelling will have an increased footprint compared to the existing house The footprint of the proposed building is approximately 155m^2 where the existing house to be demolished is 119m^2. The foot print of the proposed house is therefore under a 30% increase on the existing house. The design of the proposed footprint was kept to this size as a response to previous comments provided by the planning officer in relation to the previously submitted application for the same site in 2021 (ref: 21/01573/FUL—withdrawn by the applicant). The scheme previously proposed was considerably larger and this application seeks to obtain approval for a alternative scheme with a much reduced footprint.

When the previous application was submitted the area was classed as open country side due to the defined boundary. However following it's adoption the demolition will be to a property fully within the development boundary. The proposed property will be sited mostly within the boundary with only a small area extending into the rear garden areas.



Bransford Development Boundary (taken from Leigh and Bransford development plan)

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

An application was made for the site in 2022 (ref: M/22/01115/CLE) this was approved and certified that the land on the North of the site has an existing use for residential purposes incidental to the Old School House dwelling. The means that areas of the new house that sit beyond the boundary sit within this curtilage. In addition to this these areas of the new house will sit over areas where existing outbuildings and sheds are currently located. These will be removed as part of the works.

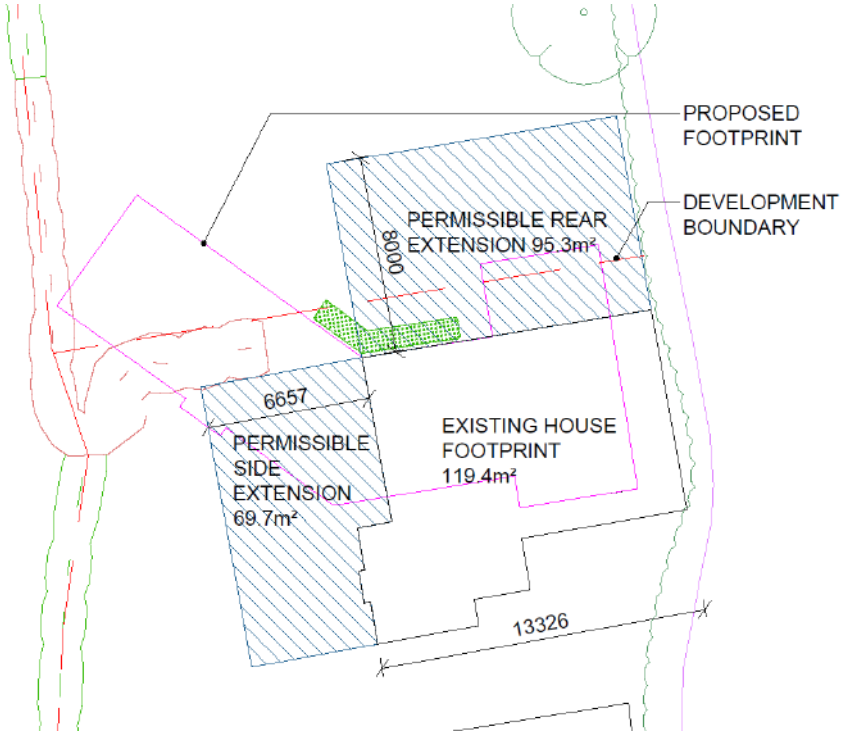
It would also be appropriate to compare the areas of the footprint that sit beyond the boundary with what would be achievable with the existing house and permitted development rights. This is illustrated in the opposite plan. It would be possible to extend the existing house to the rear by 8 m this would be equal to approximately 69m^2 of the floor areas beyond the development boundary, when compared to the section of the proposed buildings footprint over the boundary, the proposals would not be worse than what would be achievable through permitted development.

The size of the existing property is too small to meet the needs of the owners and does not make effective use of the surrounding site.

Following structural surveys of the existing house on site, it was determined that a considerable number of repairs would be required to the property. These necessary repairs, when considered with the need for the owners for additional space, means that retaining the existing property and extending would not provide an economical solution.

Additionally, the existing building provides no Architectural merit. Therefore, it is felt that the demolition of the existing building would not be detrimental to the local character of the surroundings.

The new building is replacing a single residential property with another, and therefore it is believed that this would not be an excessive development.



5.0 ACCESS

THIS IMAGE IS INDICATIVE ONLY

21-106 THE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE

5.0 ACCESS

Currently access to the site is via a private drive off Suckley Road. This is access is shared with the neighbouring, Oakapple cottage however the driveway itself is under the ownership of The Old School House. Access to the site will be kept clear during and following the works, access to both the proposed house and the existing neighbouring properties will be as existing.

The local area is served by local public transport with the nearest bus stop less than 100m South East of the site. This connects the property with the wider local and national transport networks.

There is currently off road parking provided on site. The amount of parking will be retained following the works and the existing detached garage building onsite will also be retained. There will be adequate turning on site for vehicles following works. The retained garage building will also be able to continue to accommodate the storage of bicycles.

Access to the proposed house will via level thresholds wherever possible in order to allow ease of access for all residents and guests. The proposed new downstairs bedroom will provide suitable accommodation for people with mobility issues, and level access will be provided into this part of the building.

Access to site from Suckley Road