

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

by

PETER NEWSON ASSOCIATES LIMITED

In support of the planning applications

for

WARRENWOOD MANOR  
HORNBEAM LANE, ESSENDON

on behalf of

ROSE LIMITED  
REPRESENTED BY FARRER & CO

## A CONTEXT

This statement is intended to act as an “executive summary” to be read in conjunction with the following detailed documents attached to this application:

- 1 Planning Statement by Tim Northey, Savills
- 2 Landscape Assessment by The Landscape Partnership
- 3 Biodiversity Report by MKA Ecology Ltd

### I Assessment

This application concerns an extensive 23.97Ha landholding in a very attractive rural Green Belt Hertfordshire setting, comprising four fields on undulating land formerly used for agricultural purposes.

Situated to the south of the B158 road between Potters Bar and Hertford, it lies close to the small village of Wildhill and the immediate area is characterised by several quite grand houses mostly long established in their own grounds, the closest including Camfield Place, Warren Wood, Woodhill House and, more recently, Wildewood, together with other detached individual dwellings, lodge houses or groups of cottages.

Accessed from the B158 at Cum Cum Hill via the bridleway Hornbeam Lane, the site south east of the lane was known locally as “Spike Island” and comprised Meadow Cottage, its garage and a stable block.

The adjacent open field and land to the north west of Hornbeam Lane edged and crossed by Essendon Brook, was subsequently purchased by the previous owner and added to his landholding with the intention of providing stabling and barn facilities in connection with his interest in the sport of polo.

None of the Meadow Cottage buildings had architectural merit and the house, now demolished, was built uncomfortably close to the south east boundary hedgerow, whilst the garage and stables remain extant and intact.

The planning permissions granted for a replacement dwelling have extended the residential curtilage to a limited extent, away from the site boundary and corner of the field.

The majority of the current structure on this site was constructed within this curtilage over a large concrete basement and is an unroofed and unfinished masonry, concrete and steel shell with the surrounding land left damaged and displaying large spoil heaps, hardcore and abandoned building materials.

Planning permission in the north eastern field was granted for equestrian stabling close to a new access from Hornbeam Lane and a storage barn further along the southern field boundary.

The masonry and concrete structural shell of the stables building is substantially complete, but with only the principal entrance wing roofed over. As above, the land around displays piles of hardcore and spoil. Only the foundations and brick plinth for the storage barn have been completed.

In each case, the unfinished structures have been abandoned and the site closed and vacated leaving an unsightly scar on the landscape.

## **2 Involvement**

In 1998 Peter Newson Associates Limited, Chartered Architects (PNAL), were commissioned by the previous landowner for the design of a replacement dwelling, new stables building for 20 polo ponies and a new storage barn which gained planning permission. Following abandonment of the project, PNAL have been engaged by Coutts Bank to seek fresh planning permissions to regularise development on the site.

Savills, acting for Coutts Bank, have liaised with the Local Planning Authority and prepared the accompanying Planning Statement.

The Landscape Partnership have updated their original 1998 landscape assessment and proposals which accompanies this application.

MKA Ecology Ltd have prepared the Biodiversity Report.

P J Dunphy (Construction Services) Ltd have carried out the topographical survey which has been updated to accompany the application by B A Surveys Ltd.

For Welwyn Hatfield Council, Principal Team Leader, Lisa Hughes and James Robson, Senior Planning Enforcement Officer have advised on the planning history, breaches of planning regulations, relevant adopted policies and their assessment of the current planning position.

## **3 Planning Policies**

Relevant planning policies are addressed in the accompanying planning statement prepared by Savills.

## **4 Evaluation**

It is clearly necessary to address and overcome the present abandoned and derelict condition of this site. The previous permissions granted for a substantial new country house and equestrian stabling established an appropriate level of development on the site and the proposal is to renew those consents by way of fresh applications.

### **4a The House**

On-site evaluation of the existing buildings has concluded that the unfinished structure of the house does not comply with planning regulations, would be difficult to adapt and demolition is therefore proposed subject to approval of the enclosed applications.

### **4b The Stables**

Examination and survey of the partly completed structural shell of the stables building confirm it has been constructed over a larger footprint than consented,

however, the roofed over section does not, in general, depart significantly from the consented appearance or roof ridge height.

Partial demolition of uncompleted sections of the building and removal of non-conforming partition work, together with minor modification of the floor plan will result in a similar building to that previously consented and thereby use of the existing structure and materials in a sustainable manner

#### **4c Storage Barn**

The hay barn structure completed is limited to the foundations and brick plinth and has not been constructed in accordance with the planning permission. It is proposed to demolish the plinth and return the site to soft landscape.

### **5 Conclusions**

#### **5a The House**

The enclosed proposals are for demolition of the incomplete structure of the replacement dwelling and basement followed by replacement dwelling of similar design to that previously consented, plus construction of a replacement associated garage and garden store building.

The attached drawings for a replacement dwelling follow quite closely the originally consented scheme in siting, scale, height, levels and accommodation for a 2½ storey traditional style house with a basement level of non-habitable rooms.

In addition, permission is sought for a detached three bay garage plus garden store to serve the new dwelling. This will replace both the existing garage and stables building which have yet to be demolished. Although a larger garage building is proposed, this is commensurate with the comparable scale and residential accommodation to be provided and is designed to match the style of the house. Similar scale buildings have been previously consented by the Council for example at Wildewood, and clearly there will be a need to provide secure dry storage for garden tractors, trailer and associated machinery and tools.

#### **5b Stables Building**

This is a substantially constructed building and, following demolition of additional concrete floor slabs and plinth walls to the rear wings, can readily be adapted to provide the proposed layout of 16 horse boxes, feed and hay store, tack rooms and staff rest room within a gross floor area of 3.2m<sup>2</sup> less than previously consented.

Pre-application agreement has been reached confirming demolition of the associated storage barn brick plinth walls. This building was intended to house hay and straw purchased economically in bulk for equine use.

The completed section of the stables building incorporates a solid concrete plank floor at eaves level which could not be removed without destroying the roof, and provides an opportunity for hay and straw storage within the roof

space, in the traditional manner, with the concrete floor slab providing a fire protection barrier. Whilst the building was intended for polo ponies, all loose boxes are of standard size or larger and are readily suitable for alternative equestrian uses.

## **B DESIGN**

### **I Amount of Development**

#### **I a Replacement Dwelling**

The application is for a single replacement dwelling of 703.57m<sup>2</sup> gross residential floorspace comprising ground and first floors and attic bedrooms within the roof space, plus a basement floor level of 356.17m<sup>2</sup> gross external ancillary non-habitable floorspace, to total 1059.74m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area.

In addition, the proposed detached garage and garden store will replace both the garage and stables buildings extant on site as follows:

|                             |                      |                              |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Existing Garage Floor Area  | 35.15m <sup>2</sup>  | Volume: 102.98m <sup>3</sup> |
| Existing Stables Floor Area | 102.16m <sup>2</sup> | Volume: 293.60m <sup>3</sup> |
| <hr/>                       |                      |                              |
| TOTALS                      | 137.31m <sup>2</sup> | 396.58m <sup>3</sup>         |

The proposed garage floor area is 80.60m<sup>2</sup> and volume 390.89m<sup>3</sup>. Therefore a footprint reduction of 56.71m<sup>2</sup> and 5.69m<sup>3</sup> volume will result on site.

#### **I b Stables Building**

Specifically to house a team of polo ponies, the consented stables design provided 20 loose boxes plus tack rooms, feed stores, staff rest room and lavatories within a single storey building of 514.2m<sup>2</sup> gross external floor area.

The application is to reduce and modify the existing structure to provide similar equine, feed and staff accommodation within 511m<sup>2</sup> gross external floorspace to accommodate 16 horses and associated facilities.

#### **I c No separate hay storage barn is proposed.**

## **2 Layout**

For these applications, the arrangement of buildings on the site is dictated by the previous planning permission. The replacement dwelling is confined within the previously defined and consented residential curtilage and is approached via the existing gated entrance and driveway from Hornbeam Lane.

The site is divided by Hornbeam Lane, public right of way.

The stables and associated land is already accessed from Hornbeam Lane with a gated entrance opposite that for the house.

### **3 Scale**

Please refer to the drawings submitted with these applications.

### **4 Landscaping**

The site is the subject of comprehensive Landscape and Ecological studies. Please refer to the enclosed specialist reports.

### **5 Appearance**

#### **5a Replacement Dwelling**

The design and appearance for the dwelling results from a specific brief from the former landowner.

It is sited on rising land with the central front door entrance façade facing north west commanding long rural views, whilst the south east facing rear elevation will provide a private garden area and sunny aspect.

The house is based upon traditional designs to be found in some Queen Anne or Georgian period houses. Externally, its rectangular plan form is relieved by two forward facing shallow hipped gables with matching hipped gables on the rear and side elevation roofs, effectively softening the scale of the roof. The roof incorporates traditional working chimneys and dormer windows to attic rooms.

The secondary, day-to-day family entrance is incorporated in a single storey "utility" extension to the main structure designed in the style of an orangery with tall sash windows and roof lantern. Just beyond to the east, the replacement garage is planned with elevations and external materials matching the house and for three cars plus a tractor and garden store for grounds maintenance.

All external materials are high quality and traditional, principally hand-made facing brickwork and plain clay tiles with stone/recast stone string courses and details, sliding sash fenestration and joinery to be in painted softwood and a carefully detailed timber and metal balcony added to the rear elevation of the house.

#### **5b Stables Building**

The stables building will retain its existing traditional design of plain clay tiled roof over painted/stained weatherboard elevations and facing brickwork plinth. The yard to the rear is out of site from public viewpoints and hard and soft landscaping will be to a high standard and restored to meet consented levels.

### **C ACCESS**

The site is remote from main facilities and transport centres which are at Potters Bar, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.

The University Bus service provides links between neighbouring villages, Essendon, Little Berkhamsted, Wildhill and Brookmans Park estate.

From the B158 Hornbeam Lane is an unmade bridleway, which can become overgrown, but forms part of a network of footpaths and bridleways linking local roads and settlements and well used by riders and walkers.

## **I The House**

Within the site for the replacement dwelling are private driveways to the front door and to the garage area and side entrance way providing close access from motor transport to the house and clearly visible points of entry. External surfaces will be chosen to be wheelchair friendly.

Internally, this is a large house with wide circulation and doorways and two disabled standard WC/cloakrooms are provided. There is no ground floor bedroom indicated but the single storey "playroom" will readily convert to a bed-sitting room, and adjoining utility room to a bathroom.

The main staircase to serve the first floor is wide and of ambulant standard and all three first floor bedrooms are provided with en-suite bathrooms.

## **2 The Stables**

The stables are accessed directly from Hornbeam Lane where there is parking and turning space for vehicles directly adjacent to the building entrance, which is visibly apparent and on level ground. External surfaces will be chosen to be wheelchair friendly.

Within the single storey building, circulation is via wide corridors and access to loose boxes, etc via wide gateways. A washroom and disabled standard WC are provided adjacent to the entrance, plus a staff restroom.

Direct and level access from the building to the rear external hard surfaced yard would provide an easy transition for, say, riding for the disabled or similar activities.

## **3 Emergency Access**

The large parking and turning areas provide ready access to both buildings for emergency vehicles.

## **D WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Three principal areas on the site will give rise to waste materials that will be appropriate for recycling, on or off the site:

- 1 House structure and site.
- 2 Stables building.
- 3 Barn brickwork plinth.
- 4 Grounds

## 1 House

The masonry, concrete and steel construction will require demolition by specialist contractors who will seek to profit from the sale of recycled materials off site in the normal way.

Steelwork framing, particularly at upper floor levels, has bolted connectors and is readily dismantlable for re-use.

Brickwork is good quality but set in cement mortar and therefore appropriate for crushing on site together with the concrete plank flooring and in-situ concrete basement structure. The combined amount of material will warrant a concrete crusher on site.

Hardcore already piled on site can also be used directly for hardcore. Reclaimed hardcore can be retained on site for use in construction of the driveways and hardstandings to serve the proposed replacement dwelling, the remainder to be taken off site for recycling elsewhere.

## 2 Stables

To the rear of the building, the brickwork plinths and concrete floor slabs are to be broken up and taken down to ground level. These materials can be crushed (as above) and re-used to form bases for the stable yard proposed between the two wings and hard standings to the front entrance and car parking areas. As for the house, hardcore already piled on site can also be re-used on site or recycled elsewhere.

It is proposed to retain the front, roofed over, section of the building for equine use. Softwood stud partitioning has been erected throughout the roofspace and can all be dismantled for re-use elsewhere.

## 3 Barn

The brickwork plinth, as for the house, is appropriate for demolition to ground level and crushing on site for re-use elsewhere.

## 4 Grounds

The grounds, in particular surrounding the house, retain spoil heaps from excavation, subsoils and some topsoil and will need to be reinstated to approved levels. The ground is to be restored in accordance with the Landscape Partnership's proposals and may require reintroduction of top soils or soil forming materials. Specialist advice will be taken in respect of the pond, where some subsoils on site may be appropriate for restoration.

**PETER NEWSON ASSOCIATES LIMITED**