



DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed extensions, conservatories & associated internal/external works

for

Eastdene Investments Ltd
c/o The Warwickshire Nursing Home
Main Street
Thurlaston
CV23 9JS



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Context

Thurlaston is a thriving Warwickshire village with a strong sense of community. Located near the A45/M45 approximately 3.5 miles to the south-west of Rugby its peaceful and quiet setting is due mainly to it being a 'destination' village with no through road and only 1 road leading into the village from the B4429. This, coupled with its location overlooking Draycote Water to the south, its unspoilt charm and lively social scene has led to the village being populated predominantly by the mature, affluent resident, many of whom are retired or commute to work in nearby towns like Rugby and Daventry or further afield in Coventry, Leicester and Northampton.

The origins of the village can be traced back as far as Anglo-Saxon times and it was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. There are many distinctive properties within the village spanning several centuries, the oldest remaining (Pipewell Cottage) probably originating from the late C15/early C16. Up until the early C20 this was a thriving agricultural village supporting several shops, a miller (the windmill is an enduring landmark and is currently a residential property), a smithy (the thatched forge used as a residence to this day) and a flourishing pub trade. During the course of the last century, however, in line with most communities in central England, the role of farming communities has changed and diminished and there are now only a couple of cottage industries that exist, the remainder of the village now being residential.

The village itself has retained a largely unspoilt, rural character with a real sense of place and this is largely due to the local community having resisted any developments or insertions considered out of keeping and are rightly proud of their heritage. A mixture of small cottages and larger properties, older buildings and more modern houses, stepped building lines, many and varied rooflines, open and walled enclosures, all contribute to presenting an interesting and varied street scene.

Surrounding the village to the north, east and west is farmland, predominantly grassland for sheep and cattle although in latter years alpacas have made an appearance grazing alongside the shores of the reservoir. The countryside permeates very much into the heart of the village and has been left as natural as possible. For example there are few footpaths and no kerbs or unnecessary road markings. Modern insertions such as street lighting have been kept to traditional designs to blend into the background.

The Site

The grounds are bounded to the east by Main Street and to the north by Biggin Hall Lane, both of which are dead-ends with residential properties spread out at varying distances along their length.

Main Street, as the name suggests, is the main arterial road into the village and carries the majority of traffic. Adjacent to the nursing home are both smaller and larger properties, from older properties like the thatched cottage that was once the village forge, to Stanley's Farm (Grade II listed) to more modern, modestly sized houses.

The nursing home itself is situated on land that once formed the grounds of the manor house, although the current house (Appendix A: P5) is not the original but probably dates back to at least the C18. The property is not listed but is located within a Conservation Area and also sits just inside the village boundary.

The building is an amalgamation of various extensions to the manor house that have taken place over the centuries. Despite not being original, these extensions have, in the main, been sympathetic to the original style and, despite many different heights, rooflines and orientation, seem to form a cohesive whole mainly due to the use of similar materials and detailing. The exception to this would have to be the relatively new workshop to the northern façade and the 2 storey extension to the north-western end of the premises, both of which are C20 additions. Although they use the same materials and blend in generally they are relatively characterless and do not have the same charm as the older parts of the building.

There are extensive grounds around the building, some of which have been landscaped into formal gardens whilst other areas have been left 'wild' and unkempt.

The area does not appear to be in a flood risk zone located as it is on the top of a hill overlooking Draycote Water.

Aims PLEASE REFER ALSO TO THE ACCOMPANYING 'JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT'

To realise the full potential of the nursing home for current and future residents by providing up-to-date modern standards both inside and outside of the home whilst maintaining the unique atmosphere and character of its surroundings.

The increase in numbers of residents will need to be matched with an appropriate increase in staff. At present the home employs around 60 members of staff and it is anticipated that a further 10 will be required.

To enhance the surroundings and make them more accessible for the residents and visitors.

The Design Process

The view of the local community is important to the Applicant and to this end, in depth discussions with both the local planning department and the Parish Council have been taking place over the course of the last 12 months in an attempt to address any concerns regarding the enlargement of the premises and to provide a workable scheme that all are happy with, prior to a planning application being submitted.

Originally, the Applicant was looking to extend the main building to provide accommodation for an additional 17 bedrooms & ancillary rooms for residential use and also to provide 4no. step down housing units and a detached property for his own personal occupation. A detached property was ruled out of the question during the first meeting with the planning department when it transpired that a previous application and subsequent appeal in 2001 had been refused. Although the lead officer for Warwickshire County Council's Care and Choice programme was in favour of the step down housing units, it was ultimately decided, following several meetings and re-designs that, due to the only 2 potential locations on the site suitable for their positioning were either not acceptable to the planning department or not acceptable to the Parish Council, this also was a non starter. This leaves the current proposal for an extension housing an additional 14no. bedrooms, 3no. bathrooms and 3no. communal lounges plus ancillary accommodation, and other more minor extensions to improve current facilities elsewhere in the property to the standards required for the increase in occupancy.

Reference to Appendix B (Design Development document) will give a brief overview of discussions and the ensuing design changes to date.

Proposal

Please refer to the accompanying document 'Justification Statement' which outlines the Applicant's reasons for wishing to pursue this project.

The proposal is for various extensions and alterations to the existing buildings comprising:

- two storey & single storey extensions and conservatory to western wing
- various external works to incorporate parking and landscaping
- various internal alterations
- a conservatory to the southern facade of the existing property
- a single storey extension to the existing kitchen to northern façade
- a single storey extension with roof terrace above to the communal lounge to southern façade
- alterations to first floor rooms to southern wing

The solution has been arrived at after conducting several site visits and consultation with both the local Parish Council and Planning department, and giving consideration to the following:

Use

Currently the home has 45 rooms in use and operates at 90-92% occupancy levels with an on-going demand for both care and respite care facilities. With an increasing elderly population, many of whom will inevitably, despite the current trend of remaining in their homes for longer, at some point choose or require care home facilities. The Applicant wishes to extend the existing facilities by providing modern, up to date accommodation to current standards to meet this demand.

Amount

To fully justify the projected cost of the work with workable revenues, an optimum number of 60 rooms (+ ancillary accommodation) in total would be required. However, the maximum number possible on this scheme is for 15no. rooms (due to various site constrictions such as ridge heights, boundaries, overlooking etc). As there are also various alterations being made to other areas inside the home resulting in the loss of some of the existing rooms, the total net gain is only 14no. additional rooms giving a total of 59 rooms.

Accommodation extensions

The proposals are for a 2-storey extension and single storey annex which provide for the additional accommodation needed and also offer pleasant views over the grounds from attractive living spaces. This is of particular importance for residents as they spend the majority of their time either in their own rooms or in one of the communal spaces.

Kitchen extension

The single storey extension to the kitchen is required and has been sized to cater for the additional residents and staff that will arrive with the increased number of rooms.

Sun lounge extension

The single storey extension to form the sun lounge and terrace are proposed to provide the adequate proportion of communal space required by current minimum standards⁽³⁾.

Conservatory (South wing)

The existing structure on the end of the southern façade is a rather ugly single storey extension built, the Applicant believes, to be used as an air raid shelter. It is only accessible from the outside and is unusable. The new conservatory proposed, however, will provide a newly created facility for a quiet, contemplative room where family members of the deceased can be informed of their loss and can have time alone separated from the busy environment of the rest of the home. Doors lead to the outside where they will have access to the remembrance garden and can be greeted and leave the premises discreetly without needing to access the rest of the home.

Layout

After investigating several options as to where building work would be most acceptable to the local community and to the planning department, it has been concluded that the current design is the most appropriate (refer Appendix C – Design Development document).

Accommodation extensions

The courtyard arrangement replicates the existing courtyard to the west and is governed by the minimum turning circle required by a large ambulance together with constraints on room sizes and ridge heights (refer below) balanced with external constraints on the adjacent landscape and visual amenity.

Concerns raised by local residents and the planning department regarding ridge heights has partially informed the size of the footprint of the buildings. There are minimum room sizes required to comply with current space standards regarding care homes (reference has been made to the Department of Health publication 'Care Homes for Older People National Minimum Standards Care Homes Regulations 3rd Edition⁽³⁾'), one of the most important is the minimum requirement of 12m² of available floor space (ie excluding door swings) which allows the minimum amount of furniture but with a choice of layout. Although preferable to have larger rooms than the standard minimum, the proposed scheme has kept to the 12m² minimum space requirement in order to minimise the footprint of the new building works which in turn keeps the ridge height to a minimum.

Kitchen & sun lounge extensions

The locations of the kitchen and sun lounge extensions are pre-determined by the existing layout.

Conservatory (South wing)

The new conservatory to the southern façade is located adjacent to the administration wing of the premises to provide discreet access/egress for the deceased's family members in a relatively quiet area of the premises.

Scale

The proportions and scale of the proposed extensions not only relate to the accommodation required within but are also of appropriate scale to hold their own with the existing adjacent buildings.

Accommodation extensions

The layout, as described above, mirrors the existing courtyard arrangement and others in the vicinity and is generally felt to be sympathetic in terms of scale and massing.

Virtually all of the buildings both on this site and in the general vicinity have relatively steep pitches of around 45 degrees or more. This has determined the roof pitches of the proposed extensions and consequently the height of the ridge. The ridge height has further been kept as low as possible by keeping the heads of the windows as tight as possible to the eaves.

The new entrance canopy, provided to give the maximum amount of shelter possible from the elements for loading and unloading passengers from ambulances, is determined by the width of the existing gable. The height of this canopy is dictated by a minimum requirement of 3.5m clearance to enable a large ambulance with aerial to pass unhindered.

From Biggin Hall Lane the new buildings will be hardly visible since the Lane itself is set down into a cutting with high hedges to either side and dips considerably and where it rises again there are trees and hedges obscuring the view. Properties on the southern side of Biggin Hall Lane will undoubtedly have a view of the new buildings, specifically the 2 storey extension but due to the distance between it is felt by the design team that there should be no issues of overlooking, and the mass of the buildings should, by and large, blend into the existing.

From Main Street, the only view of the new building works will be through the enlarged entrance nearest to Biggin Hall Lane. Artist's impressions of how this will look can be seen at Appendix B V1 and V2 and can be compared to the photograph at Appendix A P1.

Kitchen extension

The flat roof single storey kitchen extension infills a rather untidy existing space, is well within the confines of the building line and is bounded to 2 sides by 2 storey buildings. It cannot be seen from Main Street or Biggin Hall Lane and will be further masked by a close boarded fence which forms a delivery yard. Similarly, a brick wall featuring trellis panels will screen the smoking area from view.

Sun lounge extension

The proposed extension incorporating the existing single storey, single pitch glass roofed extension will provide first floor residents with access to a roof terrace, and being effectively single storey in front of a 2 storey building is not considered out of scale.

Conservatory (South wing)

A single storey conservatory attached to the end of an existing 3 storey building, the roofline has been kept low by the introduction of a twin roof which was considered to be more in keeping with the surrounding scale. A single pitched roof would have been significantly more prominent, particularly when viewed from Main Street or the adjacent property. As can be seen from the photographs at Appendix A: P7 & P8 the current proposal should hardly be visible from Main Street at all.

Landscaping

The link between inside and outside is particularly important in a care home setting as attractive views can have a beneficial impact on those who often spend the majority of their time indoors particularly for the bed-ridden. Views of the outdoors helps to connect residents with the changing seasons and provides interest in terms of both flora and fauna that are attracted to the area.

Trees

The majority of the existing trees and shrubs on the site will remain unaffected by the development. The exceptions to this are the removal of 2 fruit trees adjacent the new 2 storey extension and the removal of 2 rows of ornamental purple plum trees adjacent to the existing entrance. An accompanying Arboricultural Survey & Report to BS5832 (Appendix D) has been carried out as part of this planning application which indicates that these trees are past their best and recommends their removal. The intention would be to replace them with saplings as part of the proposed development, the exact species and number to be discussed and agreed with the local Conservation Officer.

The Applicant undertakes to ensure the Main Contractor will provide the appropriate protective measures and actions as identified in the Arboricultural Report.

Wildflower meadows

The current scheme proposes to create designated wildflower meadows (maintained and non-maintained) and retains a large proportion of the existing natural habitat. A large proportion of the site is currently left wild and supports a variety of wildlife. The intention of the Applicant is to enhance what is existing and to implement as many of the recommendations in the accompanying Ecology Report (Appendix E) for the promotion of the wildlife habitat as can practicably be achieved and will work with the local authority Ecology Officer to this end.

Walkway around the site and into the village

Paving surfaces will be smooth, even and well-laid & maintained to avoid trip hazards. The detailed design has not been developed at this stage though it is intended that the routes will incorporate seating which will be provided at intervals along the walk where on the Applicant's land to allow for rest stops. Any seating will have arm and back rests and be located so as not to obstruct routes.

Traditional farm style gate and fence forms a boundary to the side of the footpath at the north entrance which helps define the access road, enhances security whilst still allowing a typically rural view.

Garden of Remembrance

The intention is to create a 'garden of remembrance' evocative of traditional English walled cottage gardens. This can be accessed by residents, staff and visitors and is intended as a quiet external space for contemplation.

Parking

At present there is provision for parking either in the existing courtyard (limited due to the necessity to keep a large area clear for ambulances turning) or informally on the grass inside the north entrance. The exact figure of existing spaces is difficult to obtain as there are very few officially designated spaces but a guideline figure of about 30no. spaces would seem appropriate.

At the moment, the main entrance to the home is via the existing courtyard (southern entrance) which is also where the ambulances come to. In the new scheme ambulances and the majority of visitors will approach via the north entrance which will mean the existing courtyard can be better utilised for parking.

New parking spaces will also be created within the new courtyard and adjacent to the existing workshop which will be partially screened by low level planting.

Due to the potential increase in staff and visitor numbers additional parking is required. The staff parking area to the south east of the site is to be created by removing part of wall furthest away from the road to minimise the visual impact from Main Street, retaining approximately 2/3 of the original wall and planting. This not only leaves a pleasing aspect when viewed from Main Street but also helps screen the cars from general view from the courtyard.

Current standards require at least 1/2 a parking space per room. With a proposed total of 59 rooms a total of 30 parking spaces (residents/visitors) are required. The proposed scheme can accommodate a total of 40 spaces (residents, visitors and staff) with potential for at least another 7 spaces in the suggested overspill area adjacent to the north entrance wall. This area could be fitted with a system such as 'grasscrete' which will still give a natural look to the area whilst being suitable to take vehicles. As the intention may be to replace the group of trees in this location this would be an opportune time to carry out the work.

Appearance

Materials

All proposed new building works are to match as closely as possible with the existing which is predominantly red brick with grey tiled roofs. Rainwater goods will be black; balustrading will match the existing terrace railings; fascias, doors and windows will be white painted timber, all matching the existing. The main exception is to be the 'lych gate' feature canopy support in timber (green oak).

Accommodation extension

The proposed new accommodation wings have been designed in keeping with the local vernacular and have taken many design references from the adjacent buildings. For example, the existing courtyard arrangement of single and 2 storey elements to the south-east of the site have been replicated to the north-west to form the new entrance courtyard. This is also reflected in the property directly across the road as Stanleys Farm, once one of many such farms in the village's agricultural past, has a similar arrangement of buildings and barns set around a farmyard/courtyard.

The 2 storey extension has introduced feature gable ends and dormer roofs to break up the façade and add interest without being too fussy. A stepping down of the roofs and stepping back of the walls at the corner junction with the single storey element help turn the corner and may help to give the impression that this has been added to organically over time.

The long single storey annex is suggestive of a stable block and has been kept relatively simple in its detailing. For example, no bay windows, patio doors or feature dormers. The conservatory seen at approach and from Main Street helps soften the gable end wall of this part of the extension and provides a visual stepping down in terms of massing. This will be fitted with anti-glare glazing following comments from the Parish Council regarding possible glare in the sunlight.

The courtyard layout not only provides the required no. of additional rooms, but also helps to create a sense of arrival and containment on what is predominantly the circulation hub whilst creating pleasant rural vistas for the residents of the new rooms. Corridors have been located next to the courtyard and rooms have been sited away from the courtyard with views over the wildflower meadows.

The new canopy, timber support structure and feature pool at what will be the new visitor entrance to the home creates a sense of drama at the entrance. It has been designed with reference to traditional church 'lych gates' and defines the entrance area as the focal point.

Windows and doors

Window and door head treatments have been informed by the existing which are predominantly arched with the occasional square head. On the South and South-West elevations, roman arched heads to the patio doors on the communal lounges mirror existing patio doors to TV1 Lounge.

Low window cills enable views out for all, particularly those who are mainly confined to sitting and/or lying down for a large proportion of the day.

Access

Vehicular & Transport

Although there is a shelter located at the north entrance to the home, this is no longer in use as the local bus service does not come into the village but stops at the end of Main Street where it joins the B4429. It is in theory an accessible option for residents if required and is used by members of staff who live locally. Some members of staff, however, come from further afield and commute by car.

The proposal at the north entrance to the home is to enlarge the existing opening to allow greater visibility for both drivers and pedestrians and to provide a suitably grand entrance to the premises. This will, however, necessitate removing part of the existing grass verge (to the right when viewed from Main Street). Although adjacent to a bus shelter, as mentioned previously, this is no longer in use so there should be no issue with stationary traffic.

Inclusive

Due to the nature of the business, ease of access for all is already a pre-requisite around the building, however there is always scope for improvement, particularly in very old properties. Any internal alterations to the existing will be to current standards. For example, the plans include the installation of at least one new DDA compliant passenger lift for vertical circulation. There is a lift already in operation but it is not centrally located and does not meet minimum dimensional standards so is only of limited use.

Level access is to be provided into all new buildings at main entrances & fire exits.

Level access is to be provided around the buildings & gardens.

Level access is to be provided into the village (and beyond). The existing footpaths along Main Street are kerb-less and so are ideal for those of limited mobility. However, it should be noted that the footpaths outside of the site boundary are maintained by others (local Highways authority) so the Applicant can have no accountability for their condition and suitability.

Footpaths on the Applicant's land will have dropped kerbs installed at suitable locations.

Disabled parking bays will be designated

Sustainability

The Applicant is to investigate the possibility of installing roof mounted solar panels to generate electricity.

Where possible spoils from the excavations are to be relocated elsewhere on the site. Further consultation with the local ecology officer will, however, be required to avoid disturbance to the existing ecostructure.

Some materials from the demolitions can be re-used on site. For example, tile creasings and bricks from the boundary wall may be used to patch those areas which have deteriorated over the years.

Security

CCTV is to be installed to monitor external areas.

There is a 24/7 staffing policy in operation.

Patio doors are to be locked at night by members of staff with the facility to open as air vents if required.

All new ground floor windows and doors are to be fitted with restrictors to allow for night ventilation.

References

1. The 'Thurlaston Village Design Statement'
2. The Applicant's 'Justification Statement'
3. Department of Health publication: 'Care Homes for Older People, National Minimum Standards, Care Homes Regulations 3rd Edition'
4. Design Development Document (Appendix C, C1, C2 & C3)
5. 'Arboricultural Survey, Report & Method Statement' by R J Tree Services (Appendix D)
6. 'Protected Species Report' by Ecolocation (Appendix E)

Appendix A – Photographs



P1 – Proposed visitors entrance



P2 – View towards new proposed entrance courtyard



P3 – View looking back towards rear



P4 – View from formal gardens



P5 – View towards the manor house (on the left)



P6 - View towards existing courtyard



P7 – View from Main Street



P8 – View of secondary entrance

APPENDIX B – Artist’s impressions



V1 – View from Main Street towards new buildings



V2 View from Main Street towards wildflower meadow