

AGENDA ITEM 8: FOR CIRCULATION TO COMMITTEE**Supporting Statement for NYM/2018/0730/FL Sycamore Cottage, Ampleforth.**

Dear Jill Bastow,

I am writing in response to the comments from the Building and Conservation Team, and to the questions posed by some members of the committee as to our needs for the requested development.

We have been told Sycamore Cottage is now to be considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. This would seem to be a disadvantage to us, in requiring a higher standard of scrutiny, but I like to think this reflects not just the nature of the building, but also the care and sensitivity with which we have conducted repairs over many years. We have undertaken a long programme of repairs and improvements to the house, outbuildings, and garden since buying the house.

When I bought the property 25 years ago, the house had been empty for 3 years; it was in a very sorry state, and the garden was very overgrown. To make it habitable I had to renew the roof, install an injected damp-proof course, take up and replace all the downstairs floors, adding damp courses and insulation, and replace all the plumbing and electrics. In subsequent years we installed oil-fired central heating, and added a staircase to the loft (all wood), so that it could be used for storage, using conservation roof lights at the front to preserve the heritage appearance. (The loft is not suitable for use as a bedroom because there is no provision for a fire escape, and it can be extremely cold in winter, and unbearably hot in the summer.) We also replaced the fully-glazed front door with a more appropriate semi-glazed wooden door. We chose to retain and renovate the existing wooden windows, rather than replacing with modern double-glazed plastic units that are cunningly designed to look like wood, which we have witnessed being installed in some neighbouring properties in the last three years.

We chose to repair the outbuilding before applying to enlarge the kitchen, because it was in danger of falling down. There was a large crack in the gable, and the roof timbers, stairs and wooden floor were all rotten. In renovating this, we again chose to use all-wooden windows and doors, in an appropriate style. The outbuilding now has lighting, but no heating or water supply, and the electric supply is from aging overhead cables which will only support a couple of electric items being used at once. This building is now used for storage upstairs, and downstairs is a workshop (my hobby is woodworking with hand tools).

We also chose to create a large parking area at foot of the lawn, because parking has been an increasing problem on the main street.

I have lived here 25 years, my partner Laraine 20 years, and we both love this house, our large garden, and the village. We have made this our home, and we never want to move again. The considerable works we have undertaken so far have not required planning consent. Obviously, we have had a long time to carefully consider our needs before making this planning application as we wanted to get it right, and we feel that we have; the development we are asking for permission to build reflects our current and future identified needs.

As to our needs:

Firstly, our work. We are both self-employed in the creative industries, myself as a musician and Laraine as an artist, and we both teach our craft. As a performer I have a number of instruments, amplification equipment and accessories, in addition to recorded and written music. As an artist and art tutor Laraine has plan chests, drawing boards, easels, paper, canvases, and a multitude of drawing and painting materials for use by herself and her students. In addition, we both have a wealth of books, research and teaching materials for our respective subjects. All these require storage space. We also need office space to conduct our separate businesses, and potentially teaching space if we are to teach individuals (1:1) from our home.

Laraine teaches art for a charitable trust near Ripon, in adult education, and regularly runs workshops in local village halls, and for Art Societies throughout the County. She has regular enquiries about teaching 1:1, but has been unable to do this from home because of lack of studio space. The new studio will replace the ramshackle wooden shed, with its asbestos roof, which is long past its useful life, and will provide Laraine with a specialised art space, with plenty of natural light, and space to teach 1:1.

I teach guitar in various schools in the county, and at York St John University, as well as to some private students. I am intending to scale down my teaching in schools, to reduce the amount of travelling I do for work, and hopefully to do more teaching from home. I feel it is inappropriate to teach individual youngsters in an upstairs bedroom, so when I teach private students, I do so in the living room, which is inconvenient. I would like to convert the downstairs of the outbuilding into a teaching room/studio space, and move my woodworking from there to the new timber summerhouse/workshop building.

Incidentally, most parents drop their children off, and return for them at the end of the lesson. We like to direct them to our local café (Kirks, opposite) or either of the 2 village pubs depending on the time of day, thereby supporting local businesses.

One further point: the nature of our businesses means we can work well into and beyond standard retirement age, which we intend to do as we both enjoy our occupations.

Secondly, more personal factors. Our bedroom faces onto the main street, and the window is level with chimneys on the other side of the road. Laraine is a light sleeper, and is also very sensitive to the wood-smoke that drifts into our front bedroom from the various wood-burners on the main street, and to the fumes from traffic and particularly the many heavy goods vehicles. (She regularly wakes with sore eyes and sore throat from this pollution). It is impossible to create a double bedroom at the rear by re-configuring the existing layout of rooms, (which are small compared to the footprint of the building due to the thickness of the external walls). Consequently, we are wanting a double bedroom at the rear of the house.

Thirdly, as I indicated earlier, we never want to move house, so we have to consider the possibility of one or both of us becoming less mobile in the future. Having just one upstairs toilet has caused problems in the past when my elderly mother stayed with us, and more recently when Laraine had a leg injury. Therefore, looking to the future, we want an ensuite bathroom in the bedroom, and most importantly, a downstairs toilet, with the potential to install a shower.

Having a very small kitchen has always caused issues, and we now would like to upgrade this to a modern kitchen-dining room suitable for today's living standards. The amended 2 storey extension design in our application would answer these various needs.

As to the planned extension:

In designing the house extension, we took account of the guidelines from the National Park, that the size, shape and detailing of the new build should be subservient to the main building, that it be set in from the corner, and with the ridge lower than the main house.

- The gable of the main house measures 8.5 metres, the 2-storey extension at 4 metres is less than half of this. The total length with the single storey addition at 6 metres is less than three-quarters. In addition, the visual impact is reduced because it will be partially set in to the rising slope of the garden.
- When viewed on the plan, the rear ridge appears to exaggerate the length of the extension. However, this view will not be seen from the road despite the wide angle of view afforded by Prospect House being set back.
- The windows of the extension have all been designed to be smaller than those of the main house.
- The view to the tree line beyond our property is unaffected by all our planned development.

9th April 2019

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15 April 2019

Application Ref NYM/2018/0730/FL

Response to Mr & Mrs Allistones' letter of 12 April 2019

I do not intend to make a further rebuttal to all the Allistones' objections, as most have been raised before in their previous letters, to which we have responded. Instead, I wish to focus on 3 main points.

Size:

The new rear extension will add 40% to the footprint of the house, not "double the size".

Dampness and impact of building on the Allistones' kitchen:

The Gables kitchen/bathroom extension wall is currently exposed to the elements, and rainwater is channelled to a drain running underneath the Allistones' property. The planned 2 storey extension will build alongside this wall, and will have flashings along the top to prevent water falling between, thus having beneficial effects regarding insulation and protection from moisture. All drainage will be re-routed to the drive side of our property.

We will of course consult specialists regarding the damp proofing, to ensure there is no possibility of bridging the damp course, and all aspects of this part of the building work will be covered by a party wall agreement, which we will take out in preparation for work to commence. All these points were made by the Allistones' own surveyor in his 'Clarification of Boundary' report, of which we have a copy supplied by the Allistones.

Privacy:

The Allistones bought the Gables in the full knowledge that the house and garden have 5 different neighbours with the potential for overlooking, due to the staggered layout of houses and gardens in Mowbray Terrace. Since moving in, they have constantly referred to their privacy, and respecting this we maintain an 8ft hedge between our gardens, despite its limiting effect on our afternoon and evening sunshine. We currently have direct views into their patio area from our rear upstairs windows, and from our rear terrace area, which is above the level of their patio, and has a chest-high boundary wall.

The proposed new extension will have no western windows, the oblique angle of view from the new long bedroom windows will give a much-reduced field of view of their patio, (if any, as we will not be able to stand outside the windows), and our new sunken terrace will offer no line of sight to their patio. In relation to the studio, at present there is virtually no view into their windows from this point, due to their recent rear extension; the new studio floor level will be at least 18 inches lower than the current ramshackle shed, further reducing any risk of overlooking.

Further up the garden, there is one point where the hedge is lower (approx. 5 ft), never having recovered from snow-damage some years ago; the new timber summerhouse will have its western wall (no windows) alongside the hedge at his point, thus again improving their privacy.

Paul Judge
15 April 2019