

Design and Access Statement. Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB

Revision A: Policies updated, planning statement added.

Introduction

This statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling and associated buildings at Woodlands, Lodge Lane, and the proposed development of a replacement detached dwelling with attached garage and landscaping.



Design and Access Statement. Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB

Site

The site is within the parish of Cronton, just off the M62 and is located approximately 725m off Cronton Road, down Lodge Lane. Lodge Lane is a mostly unsurfaced track which feeds a small group of agricultural buildings and detached dwellings. The existing dwelling, known as Woodlands, is the last property on Lodge Lane. The site sits within the Knowsley Green Belt and has a garden which, although currently overgrown, is bounded by many mature trees which give a lush environment and provide a good amount of screening in and out of the site.

The existing property is not of any exceptional architectural merit although it has a certain charm. The existing house is constructed mainly of brick; however, it has been rendered over the years, with a natural slate roof and a mix of timber and uPVC windows in a fairly traditional style. Unfortunately, the proportions of the internal rooms and overall scale of the house are not ideal to fit in with modern living; having very low floor to ceiling heights in some of the rooms. Woodlands sits directly on the roadside and therefore gives little opportunity to easily manoeuvre a vehicle in front of the house or garage. Within the curtilage of Woodlands there are several fairly large buildings including the main house, adjacent garage and building used as a kennel/aviary. In addition, there have been other structures built over the years which are used as greenhouses/cold frames and garden storage, although these have recently fallen into disrepair and are no longer useable. Within the local Green Belt designation, there is an adjacent farmstead which utilises a large area for the storage of Caravans and Mobile Homes. The site is flanked on all sides by fields and is detached from any housing cluster but there are developments of housing within close proximity to the site.



Design and Access Statement. Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB

Design

It is felt that the existing house is not of a layout, position on the site or size which would be suitable for the owners and therefore it is proposed to demolish the property and replace it with a similar, though slightly larger dwelling, more in keeping with modern uses and the owner's needs.

As there are very few houses within visual range of Woodlands, there is little to utilise directly from site as a design catalyst, however properties in the local area, and a materiality similar to the existing dwelling, have informed the proposals.

The proposed design of the new house is fairly traditional with contemporary elements to suit the needs of the client and sits harmoniously within the existing context, without possessing a pastiche aesthetic.

A material palette of Cheshire brick and natural slate, with PPC Aluminium windows in anthracite grey retain some of the traditional qualities of the original house, whilst bringing a modern character to the new building.

Larger areas of glazing, especially to the rear, exploit the lack of close neighbours to utilise views and lighting within the scheme.

The overall design is fairly simple with a double gabled frontage and rear which creates a semi-open courtyard, however brick detailing on the gables will elevate the scheme and provide a subtle interest into the proposed dwelling.



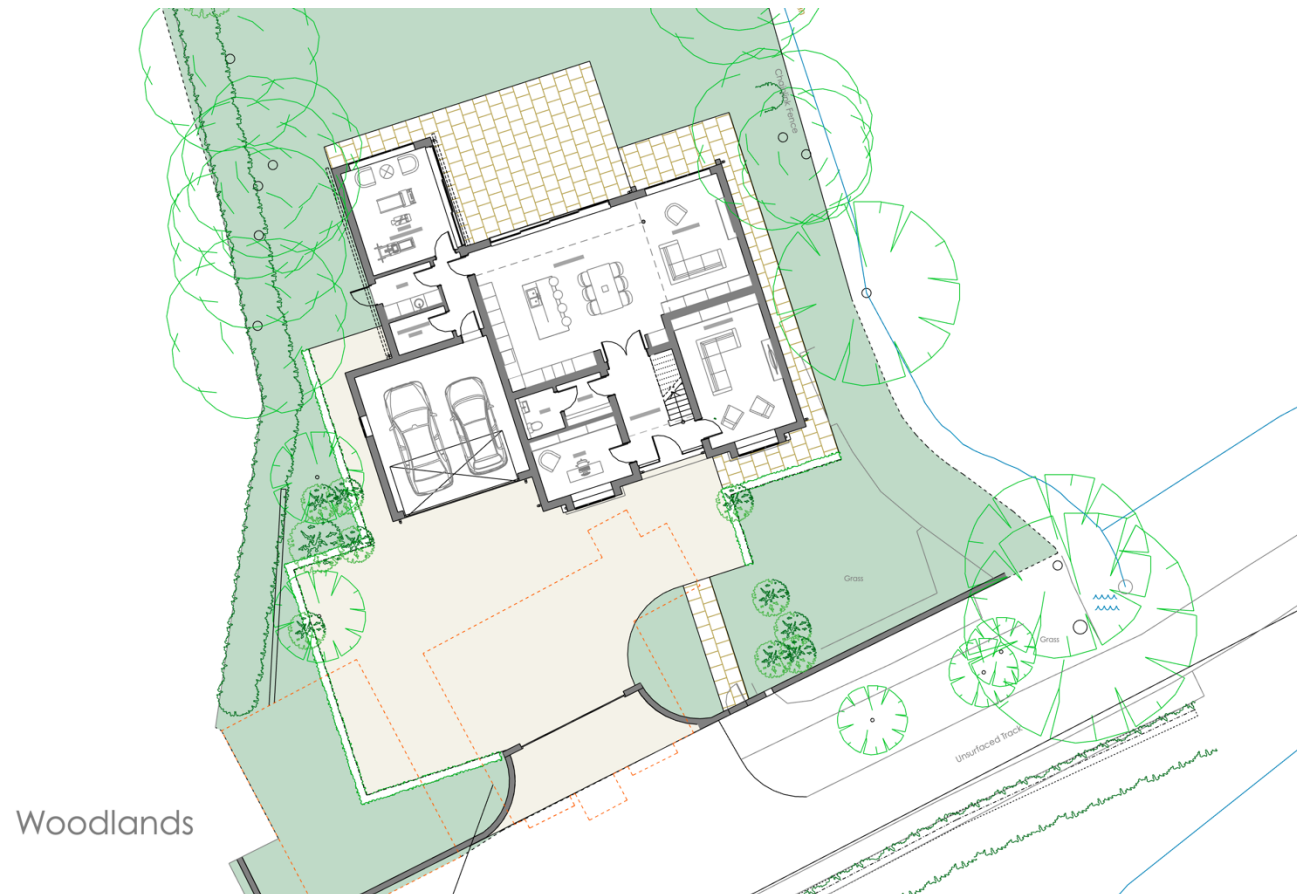
Design and Access Statement. Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB

Layout

The layout of the proposed dwelling is in a similar position to the existing built form; however, it has been pushed back into the site by approximately 12m to allow a more generous and safer way to turn vehicles using the site. As there are no direct neighbours, this shift in building line will have no adverse effect on any neighbouring properties and will not harm the openness of the green belt as the proposed volume will remain the same wherever it is positioned on the site.

As the building has been pushed back from the road edge, the orientation makes more sense to line up with the NE boundary rather than the roadside.

Internally, the most frequently used rooms have been designed to sit towards the rear of the property looking out onto the garden. Whilst the orientation of these rooms is NW, the larger areas of glazing will allow adequate lighting into these spaces, and westerly light will penetrate through in the evenings.



Design and Access Statement. Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB

Scale

Within design and planning guidance, it is recommended that extensions within the greenbelt should not exceed 50% of the original built form so that the original property is dominant (Paragraph 7.2 of Knowsley Householder Supplementary Planning Document Nov 2007). Additionally, replacement buildings should not be materially larger than ones they replace. The scheme proposed takes into account the existing built form and if it were to be extended by the allowed amount before demolition, the new dwelling would be of a similar scale. The generous size of the site as a whole allows for a larger house to be constructed without a detrimental effect or a sense of overdevelopment. As the site and existing building are away from other buildings, the increase in size and massing from the original building would not significantly impact any neighbouring properties and would not be visible outside of the immediate site context.

The footprint of the building will be 221.77m²

The footprint of the existing built form on the site is 219.93m²

Therefore, there is an increase in footprint of only 1.84m² or 0.084%

Taking into account just the main house and garage structures the footprint is an increase of 70.75m² or 47%

The volume of the building will be 1264m³

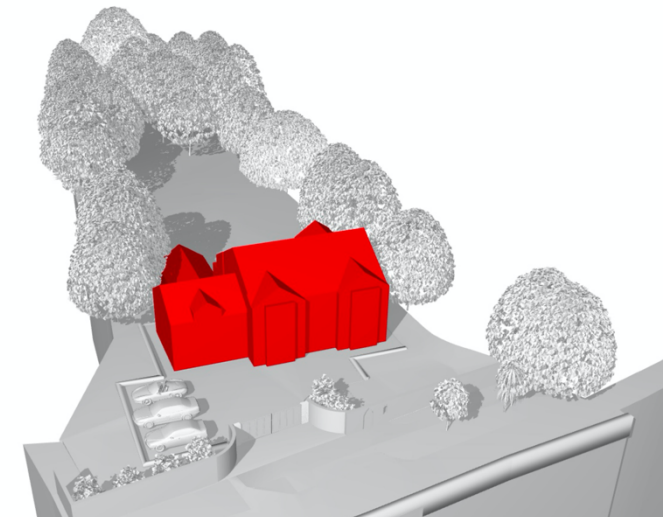
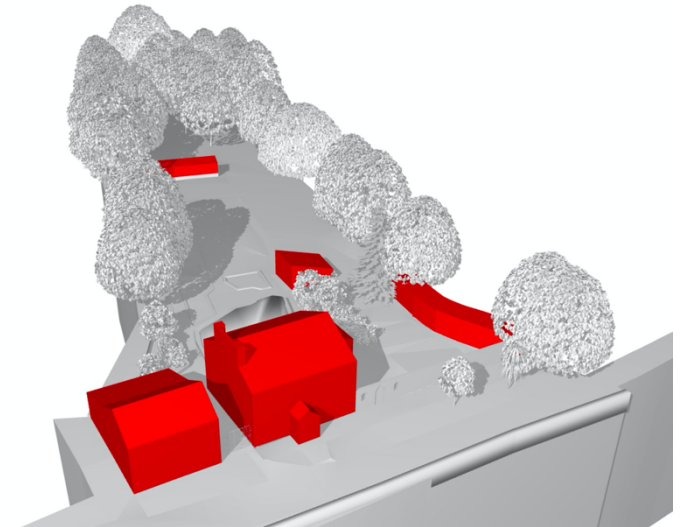
The volume of the existing built form on the site is 878.26m³

Therefore, there is an increase in volume of 385.74m³ or 43.9%

The ridge height of the proposed dwelling has increased to accommodate more useable floor to ceiling heights, increasing from that of the original dwelling by 1.64m

The eaves of the house have increased by 0.69m

Although an increase, these improvements are not overly ambitious and within the context of the large gardens, would sit harmoniously within the landscape and the Green Belt without creating any adverse effect on the environment or neighbourhood.



Design and Access Statement. Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB



Access

The proposals improve vehicular access into the site dramatically. The existing drive to the property has no turning capability and parking is limited. The current site allows approximately 2 car parking spaces (1 in garage, 1 adjacent), however the new scheme would allow 2 in the garage and a minimum of 3 on the drive for family/visitors. This greatly improves the access potential for the site. Additionally, within the design, any emergency vehicles or larger vehicles could turn within the drive and exit the site much easier than the current layout.

A small bin wagon currently collects the refuse weekly and these arrangements will remain for the waste and recycling collection.

The proposals show ground floor level access to all habitable rooms and Ground floor accessible toilet provision, in line with Building Regulations.

Planning Statement

This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr and Mrs Crosby, to accompany the planning application for demolition of Woodlands, Lodge Lane and the proposed subsequent building of a new detached property on the site.

Planning History

16/00588/FUL | ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED DRAINAGE CESSPIT. Withdrawn Jan 2017

Planning Policy Framework.

The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 indicates that any planning application determination should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. It reiterates, in paragraph 47, the provisions of the above Act. The NPPF is a material consideration in relation to the appraisal of the submitted application. It is complemented by the National Planning Guidance (2014), sections of which have been subsequently updated.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out "a presumption in favour of sustainable development", and advises decision makers that they should approve development that accords with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay unless:

Any adverse impacts of doing would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework, taken as a whole.

Paragraph 38 provides advice to Local Planning Authorities to approach decision taking in a positive and creative way, seeking where possible to approve applications for sustainable development.

Paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Whilst the construction of new buildings is regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, there are exceptions, which are listed in paragraph 149. These include:

- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

Design and Access Statement. Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB



As stated in point d, the replacement of a dwelling in the Green Belt is not inappropriate development, however as stated, it should not be materially larger than the original. As the existing building could apply for an extension of up to 50% of the original size, the proposals are within this amount if this had been applied prior to demolition and therefore are not materially larger than the volume the existing building is capable of. In addition, if the owners decided to exercise their permitted development rights on the plot, they could create a much larger amount of built form than that proposed, with the use of rear and side extensions and ancillary outbuilding taking up almost half of the plot.

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF reads:

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The proposed dwelling at Woodlands will provide a high-quality family home which will be more suitable for modern family living than the existing property and therefore should have a longevity. The design is considered and although it is not a replica of the former house, it calls on some design generators in the local area and therefore will be sympathetic to the local character. The new layout of the dwelling will also create a more inclusive and accessible scheme with better vehicular access, without compromising on the amenity of the property or the Green belt character.

Point 9.4 of the of the Replacement UDP 2006 and point 138 of the NPPF states the purposes of the Green Belt which are:

1.5 There are five purposes of including land in Green Belts:
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The proposals set out in our application would not harm these purposes for the Green Belt or be in conflict with them. As the land is already developed, the overall effect on the Green Belt would be negligible.

3.4 The construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:

Policy G1 of the Replacement UDP 2006 states:

Within the Green Belt the Council will not grant planning permission for development other than

(iii) Limited alterations, extensions or replacements of existing dwellings which would not (either by themselves or in conjunction with any previous alterations or extensions to the dwelling) result in a disproportionate increase in the size of the original dwelling;

Policy G7 of the Replacement UDP 2006 states:

1. Proposals for the extension or alteration of an existing dwelling within the Green Belt, or for the construction of a detached garage or outbuilding within its curtilage, will be permitted provided that they meet the following criteria:

a) The form and materials of the development would respect the appearance of the existing dwelling and its setting, and preserve the openness of the Green Belt;

b) The development and any associated vehicular access routes, boundary treatment, garden, storage or vehicular parking areas would be provided without harming or unreasonably impacting on the amenity of any neighbouring property and the appearance of the surrounding area; and

c) In the case of proposals to extend an existing dwelling or for the construction of detached buildings within 5 metres of the existing dwelling, the proposal would not (either by itself or in conjunction with earlier developments) result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling.

2. Proposals for the replacement of an existing dwelling in the Green Belt should (in addition to the above):

a) Demonstrate that the building is adequately served by public services or can be served without detriment to the openness of the Green Belt or the character of the area; and

b) In the case of buildings which may be used by bats, barn owls or other protected species, the possible presence of such species must be investigated and where appropriate, measures must be implemented to ensure that any damage to habitats is minimised.

3. The replacement of dwellings demolished prior to the submission of the planning application will not be allowed.

The proposed replacement dwelling would not detrimentally affect the openness of the Green Belt and the consolidation of the built form rather than many structures and outbuildings on the site could be argued to reduce impact. As demonstrated in the bat report, the demolition of the building would not affect or damage habitats, however it could be conditioned that bat and bird boxes be introduced to the site, either on the proposed building or on the existing trees. Additionally, there would not be any adverse effect to neighbouring properties or the surrounding area and the improved parking and vehicle manoeuvring would be beneficial to the immediate and nearby site.

As far as records show, there has never been any planning approval implemented for Woodlands, however neighbouring properties on Lodge Lane have been given approval for significant extensions, conversions and building structures within the Green Belt. These include the Part Q conversion of an agricultural building to dwelling, erection of agricultural sheds and extensions to existing properties. These have been implemented without significantly affecting the Green Belt character or having a detrimental effect on its openness. Therefore, we believe a similar judgement could be made of the proposals set forth in this application.

Design and Access Statement.
Woodlands, Lodge Lane, Widnes, WA8 4QB



Conclusion

Although the demolition of the existing building is unfortunate, the current property does not allow for adequate family living for the homeowner and is detrimental to the safe use of the highway in terms of its close proximity to Lodge Lane and restricted turning for vehicles. Therefore, the proposals are not out of context within the larger environment of Cronton and Widnes and would create a suitable family home allowing the surrounding landscape not to fall into an overgrown or dilapidated state.

The plot size will easily accommodate a building of this size and design and its approval would not be detrimental to the objectives which determine the Green Belt or its openness.

The proposals will prevent the site becoming further dilapidated and will encourage good, sensitive architecture.