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**Design, Access &
Supporting Statement**

Proposed Extension to Brookside Cottage
Trevor Road, Garth

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DESIGN, ACCESS & SUPPORTING STATEMENT

5089 – Proposed Extension to Brookside Cottage, Trevor Hall Road, Garth

This report has been prepared in support of an application for the proposed demolition of an existing outbuilding and subsequent construction of a new two storey extension and associated alterations at Brookside Cottage, Garth.

The application should be read in conjunction with the following documents;

- 5089 – L01 – Location and Proposed Site Plan
- 5089 – S01 Existing Plans and Elevations
- 5089 – P01F Proposed Plans
- 5089 – P02F Proposed Elevations
- 5089 – Existing Photographs

GENERAL

Situated adjacent to Trevor Hall Road in the village of Garth; Brookside Cottage is a 1½ – 2 storey detached stone cottage with slated roof, brick chimneys and dormer windows. To the south-east of the property stands an existing single storey stone outbuilding with metal roof.

The existing site slopes up sharply to the rear (to the North), and a substantial retaining wall separates Brookside Cottage from the neighbouring large rendered two storey property, as shown in the photograph below and on drawing 5089 – L01 [Location Plan and Site Plan].



Boundaries to the plot are generally of stone walling, with the rear wall of the existing outbuilding forming part of the south-eastern wall which runs adjacent to the Trevor Hall Road. It is noted that this existing arrangement is somewhat dangerous, due to the width of the existing road and the poor visibility on the corner. The existing outbuilding is sound in structure but due to its scale, orientation and proximity to the main house and Trevor Hall Road, it is no longer appropriate for use and, for further reasons outlined in this statement, it is proposed that this is carefully demolished.

This application also proposes the construction of a modest two-storey extension to the side of Brookside Cottage, comprising kitchen and utility to the ground floor and bathroom and bedroom above. In an effort to make the most efficient use of the site, the proposed extension follows the shape and orientation of the plot, capitalising on the views to the East and the picturesque location of the existing dwelling. The proposal also uses the existing levels of the site, envisioned to ensure that the extension has a minimal impact on the existing cottage and its surroundings, while avoiding the need for any extensive on-site excavation works.

The character of the extension has been carefully designed to be subservient to the existing cottage, both in terms of scale and appearance. Surrounding domestic structures are of various styles and ages and the local vernacular of the area is mixed in style and generally consists of agricultural buildings, constructed of steel and timber, and detached properties with slated or tiled roofs with either brick or rendered walls.

ACCESS

As noted above, the site is immediately accessible off Trevor Hall Road and an existing gate provides vehicular access onto the site.

Space surrounding the front of the property is limited and, at present, there is only sufficient space for one to two vehicles to park, however, it should be noted that this is without space for manoeuvre. This causes some concern with regard to safety due to the position of the site and the limited availability for means of parking outside of the boundary.

As previously noted, the siting of the existing outbuilding is considered problematic and, in addition to its vulnerable position directly adjacent to the roadway, the buildings location on the site also limits the availability of space to the front of the property. With this in mind, it is proposed that the outbuilding is carefully demolished, the boundary wall repaired, as necessary, and that any stonework deriving from demolition is utilised for landscaping on the site. This will significantly improve access and vehicular parking arrangements, thus improving the safety of access and egress onto the site overall.

CHARACTER / DESIGN

The existing dwelling is constructed of stone and has a slated pitched roof and two dormer windows to the front elevation. The applicant will be undertaking a careful, considerate and appropriate scheme of restoration and maintenance works on the property, which include some re-pointing works to the external walls in a breathable lime mortar, re-roofing works in Welsh slate and the insertion of new windows of a matching style. Some of this sensitive conservation work has already been carried out to the building, as shown in the below photograph, which includes the installation of cottage flush sash windows and the removal of non-breathable render finish.



The simple form of the cottage lends itself for sympathetic extension and alteration, and this work is deemed essential due to the limited floorspace currently available within the relatively small property. At present, the overall area of Brookside Cottage is just under 100m², based over two floors, with these areas significantly impacted by existing features such as thick walls, chimney breasts and low ceiling heights to North and South Sides. It should be noted that the dormer style of the existing property severely impacts the usable space on the first floor. In addition to this, it will be necessary for the applicant to fix insulation to the internal face of the external walls in order to improve the efficiency of the dwelling in line with modern standards. This will also, understandably, negatively impact the availability of floor space internally.

The area of the existing outbuilding measures approximately 20m², with this building currently providing much needed additional space for storage.

The character of the extension has been carefully designed to be subservient to the existing cottage, with multiple suggestions having been considered during the design development process. A brief summary of these suggestions is included below;

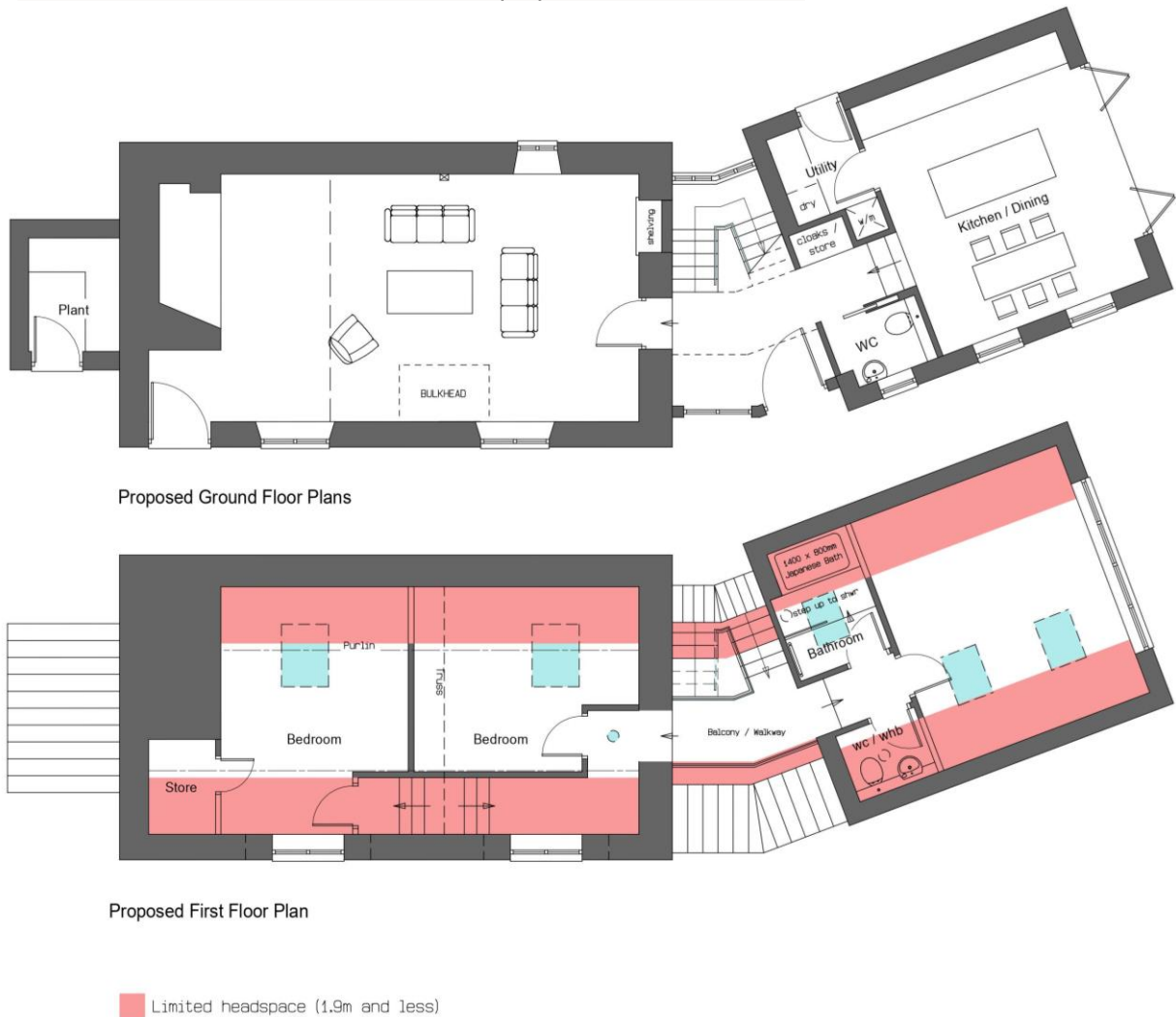
- *Proposed two-storey side extension to be linear, in line with existing cottage. Considered inappropriate due to the impact that this would have on the main elevation of the existing building - main concern relating to the appearance and the impact that a solid and monolithic extension of this nature and scale would have on the existing cottage and surrounding area. Note that the extension would need to be substantial to provide adequate internal additional space whilst allowing for the front wall to be stepped back, and for the ridge line to be lowered etc., in line with good design principles and Planning LPGN's. This solution also does little to alleviate the existing problems that exist on site with regard to access and parking.*
- *Proposed linking of the cottage and existing outbuilding. Considered inappropriate in terms of the safety of the existing outbuilding structure and the impact that this would have on the existing dwelling.*

The character and style of the proposed extension has been designed sympathetically towards its local surroundings but takes note of the variation of style and lack of defined vernacular in existing properties within the surrounding context. With this in mind, this project was seen as an opportunity to propose an extension which would distinguish the old cottage from any new extension, whilst maximising the potential of this unique site. This would be achieved by utilising the existing characteristics of the site, such as the levels and the form, with the aim of proposing a high-quality design, bespoke to the cottage, the site and its surroundings.

The plot almost resembles a 'boomerang' in shape, and the proposal capitalises on this. The new extension re-directs and frames views away from the adjacent road and towards the Pontycysyllte Aqueduct and beyond. This is achieved by the introduction of a new central lightweight glazed 'link', envisioned to act like a hinge connection between the old and the new.

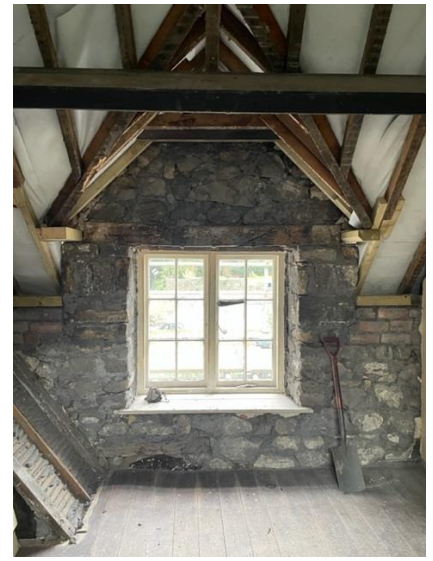
The link is essential to the design, not only as a physical point where the cottage and the extension meet, but also as a suitable position for a new single staircase and entrance door, in lieu of the existing access to the eastern gable of the property which will be lost. Again, multiple design suggestions were considered in an effort to find the best possible position for this within the property, with initial proposals retaining the existing stair within the cottage. However, this was dismissed due to the impact that this would have on the availability of the already limited space within the dwelling. For example, the retention of the existing stair and the positioning a new one for exclusive use within the extension would result in

the need for two bathrooms to be accommodated within property. The negative impact that this would have is demonstrated in one of the earlier proposals, included below.



As noted, the area of the existing cottage is roughly 100m², with an additional 20m² available for storage in the outbuilding. The proposed extension measures approximately 52m², with 9m² of this being allocated to the much-needed link structure. While it is noted that Wrexham LPGN 13 states that extensions should not exceed the area of the existing dwelling by more than a third, we believe that, in this instance, this increase is justified in order to provide space suitable for modern living standards and is not extensive, especially when considered against the context of the site and its surrounding properties. It should, again, be noted that the roof and head heights in the first-floor spaces to both the cottage and new extension are somewhat limited, directly impacting the proportions as proposed.

The photographs overleaf show the internal spaces on the first floor, prior to the installation of any insulation, plaster or decoration. Eaves are very low and, as a result, head height is extremely limited to both north and south sides.



In line with good design principles, the proposals utilise minor variations of height and volume to ensure that they do not impose on the cottage and the landscape. Furthermore, the cranked nature of the extension ensures that this has a minimal impact on the view of the property from the road. The new structures are also further obscured by the existing boundary wall and extensive vegetation already located along the southern boundary of the site, as demonstrated by the 3D impressions below.



Influenced by nearby agricultural buildings and styles, finishes to the extension will be natural locally sourced timber, left untreated to achieve a silver / light grey appearance over time, and a grey metal roof. This approach will create a clear distinction between the cottage and the extension and will help to add interest and break up the elevations to avoid an overbearing, homogenous look. Natural timber cladding has been used to contrast traditional masonry materials on a number of building projects near to Brookside Cottage recently, with the approval of the following Planning Applications;

- *4, Tir Griffin Close, Garth - LLR P/2021/0310 – Approved June 2021*
- *Sygyn Y Pwll, Tower Hill, Garth - LLR P/2021/0791 Approved September 2021*
- *Cedar Cladding – Ben Tara, Maes Mawr Road, Garth - LLR P/2021/1139 – Approved Jan 2022*

The roof to the lightweight glazed link will be tiled in natural slate, to match the existing cottage.

As stated earlier, the site is located in a rural area and the surrounding structures are sparsely located, mostly made up of dwellings of various styles and ages and other agricultural buildings. The proposal will therefore have no detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the landscape and area and, through utilising the existing topography and form of the site, has been designed in order to rationalise and enhance the site as a whole.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

The site will be accessed by a single existing access point from Trevor Hall Road and, as noted, safety concerns will be alleviated by the proposals.

The nearby public footpath will remain unaffected by the development and will be protected from interference from any construction works.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In terms of Building Regulations, the target is to achieve a tangible improvement over the current Part L (2014) Conservation of Fuel and Power.

Furthermore, and in line with Welsh Government Guidelines, the proposed scheme allows for the use of timber-based construction to reduce upfront and embodied carbon, along with a sensitive scheme

for installing insulation where possible to the original cottage. To further improve energy efficiency, it is also proposed that the building will benefit from the installation of an efficient air or ground source heat pump system. These considerations will not only improve the efficiency and environmental impact of the dwelling, but will also future proof the building; thus securing its use as a habitable and comfortable home for years to come.

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