

THE COACH HOUSE, GLASFRYN, GRESFORD, LL12 8RG.
PLANNING APPLICATION NO. P / 2014 / 0057

RESPONSE TO EMAIL REQUEST FOR AMENDMENTS FROM SHARON HOLMAN,
12.5.14

Each point discussed here has been prefaced with quotation of comments from S. Holman's email referred to above.

1. 'Whilst not within the conservation area the building still has some historical significance being the former outbuilding associated with the nearby Glasfryn and this former relationship is still distinguishable. It is considered important that any replacement building be respectful of this former relationship and therefore the scale and proportions should be clearly subservient to Glasfryn, and a building of a similar form would be appropriate.'

We would contest that the existing proposal IS clearly subservient to Glasfryn; Glasfryn has two good height storeys, and a third storey in the roof at the rear. Glasfryn has a footprint of 230 sq.m. The proposal has 170 sq.m footprint, and has most accommodation to the ground floor, with two modest study bedrooms built into the roof pitch.



Glasfryn front elevation



Glasfryn side view

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2. 'The proposed dwelling has a chalet type form and appearance and a much squarer plan form than the existing building. I do not consider this appropriate when viewed in the context of Glasfryn and the building should be made longer and narrower to give a more linear plan form which would better reflect the traditional form of the coach house. This would also reduce the overbearing impact upon the properties on Yew Tree Court which back onto the development, by the reduction in depth of the building.'



Coach house view from NE



Coach house south elevation

The proposal is designed to achieve the internationally recognised Passivhaus standard of energy efficiency. The house is calculated to achieve a reduction in CO2 emissions of approx. 85 – 90 % compared with current conventional construction.

The design process involves calculation of projected heat loss, factoring in construction details / insulation levels; design & orientation of windows and doors; and equally importantly with all these issues, the ratios between plan form and height, are significant factors in reducing heat loss.

For example, if the building were to be 'longer and narrower to give a more linear plan form', the heat loss would increase, unless greater thicknesses / cost of insulation used.

Therefore, this is a compact form that makes Passivhaus standard achievable.

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RE: EXISTING FORM

The existing coach house measures 8.3m x 6.3m on plan; giving a ratio of 1: 1.3 between depth and length.

The proposed house has plan measuring 14.3m x 12.2m; giving a ratio of 1: 1.2 between depth and length.

We would therefore contest that there is not a significant difference in plan form ratios.

The existing coach house has a single storey outbuilding adjacent on its westerly side, with these buildings and adjacent storage building forming two side of a courtyard on the northerly entrance side.

The proposal will demolish the existing outbuilding connected to west end of the coach house; the outbuilding (shed and garage) that is perpendicular to the house will remain, thus continuing the feel of this 'courtyard' area, with its part cobble-stone finish.

To the east of the existing coach house is the northerly section of the garden wall that gives a beautiful, and historic setting to the house. This section of wall will be maintained, continuing the tradition of the walled garden.

We would contest that the continuation of this courtyard feel to the north maintains much of the architectural quality of this space; the westerly outbuilding / garage will remain, as will the garden wall.

This form also reflects the brief for our clients' current and future needs. It is a house designed for accessible living; therefore it is possible for our clients to live solely on the ground floor if necessary, with the first floor rooms provided for their current work needs. It achieves all the CSH Lifetime homes credits, due to the various aspects of the design contributing to this accessibility. It is important for our clients to continue living on this family site in their future years, in a comfortable house that is easy to use and heat.

As a home, it has been designed with a central 'hall space' open to the roof pitch, which will be a focus for the family for music, and social gatherings. Utility, cloakroom, storage all to the north of this have small windows (less heat loss), whilst also contributing to the continuation of the courtyard feeling on this side. Living spaces open to the garden to west east and south of this room. This important central design feature will re-use the bricks reclaimed from the coach house, and will therefore be reminiscent of the old building.

For all of these reasons, we therefore do not feel that making the design 'longer and narrower' would be beneficial. We also feel that the design has adopted many of the materials and form characteristics of the existing vernacular. It will have a slate roof to match Glasfryn; rendered walls will be painted the same colour as Glasfryn; some existing

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brickwork will be recycled to be used in either the new cold store, or in the internal walls of the central hall, or for plinth brickwork if possible. New windows and doors will be white externally, to match in with Glasfryn. It is true that the plan form is deeper than existing, and because of reasons explained here, it has one double roof pitch extending over the whole.

The term 'chalet type form and appearance' tends to suggest either a pre-fabricated lightweight building in this country, or elsewhere, such as Switzerland, a timber framed building with large overhanging roof. The eaves of the proposal are approx. 760mm lower than the existing eaves, thus maintaining a good stature to the north elevation. Moreover, the materials chosen are masonry materials, and slate roof, in keeping with the design of Glasfryn, and the aesthetic of the traditional building in the village.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

We think that this kind of architectural approach, a contextual eco-vernacular, is respectful of the existing architecture and history of the site. Without aping the existing building, it is a modern, highly energy efficient building suited to the 21st. century, with its rising energy costs, and threats of climate change.

We would hope that the council would rise to support this demonstration of good sustainable design.

Wrexham Council has many references in policy documents on its website that talk about sustainable design, and ways of combatting climate change. This house will be an exemplar project in the district, with various types of publicity such as via the Passivhaus Trust, the AECB (Sustainable Building Association), and no doubt various local publications.

3. 'I also have concerns in relation to the size of the openings in the side elevations at first floor level and the impact this would have on the adjacent properties. These openings should be reduced in size relative to the reduction in depth of the building, and the detrimental impact upon the privacy of the occupiers of these property should be no greater than is as existing.

I would also be grateful if you could confirm the height of the existing building; a perspective of the east elevation as existing would be useful to help the neighbours visualise the new development in the context of what is already there.'

Current window east gable : $0.6\text{m} \times 1.3\text{m} = 0.78\text{sq.m}$,
plus window to south $1.2\text{m} \times 1.02\text{m} = 1.22\text{sq.m}$, TOTAL 2 sq.m

Proposed window east gable : $2.5\text{m} \times 1.3\text{m} = 3.3\text{sq.m}$

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Existing window west gable : 1.2m x 1.02m = 1.22sq.m,
plus window to south 1.2m x 1.02m = 1.22sq.m, TOTAL 2.44sq.m

Proposed window west 2.5m x 1.3m = 3.3 sq.m

To the east, no. 4 Yew Tree Court is the house that has most direct view of the coach house gable. The photographs below show how trees mask this view.



View from coach house east gable
To no.4 yew tree court.



View from no.4 yew tree court towards coach
House, Glasfryn



View from coach house gable window
Into garden of no.3 Yew Tree Court,
Showing conifers on boundary.

We have also produced a simple set of elevation drawings that show comparison, not only between the existing coach house and proposed, but also showing diagrammatic view from the neighbours at no. 3 & 4 Yew Tree Court, showing how effectively trees mask the view between these properties.

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The coach house needs reasonable daylight and ventilation to the first floor study rooms, hence the size of windows proposed. We would assert that it is the privacy of the proposed new coach house that is more affected by larger windows; the smaller window currently affords the same view from the coach house to Yew Tree Court due to its position, not its size.

The proposed east gable is approx. 1.4m further east towards the garden wall than existing. See drg. No. 13 showing that the proposal is still 21.4m away from the nearest point of no.3 Yew Tree Court, which is obviously still a considerable distance as a space between dwellings; much more than there is between the houses in Yew Tree Court, and also maintained in privacy by the particularly high wall of the Coach House's garden.

RELATIVE HEIGHT OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED

See the separate document with comparison drawings.

The existing coach house is 5.7m high to the ridge. The proposed new house is 6.7m high, so this is a 17% increase in height.

To the west, the neighbouring house has no windows facing east. The view from Glasfryn coach house currently looks into their garden; this is masked when trees are in leaf.

Our clients have spoken to the owner of no. 4 Yew Tree Court this weekend; Mr. David Norman was reassured that his privacy will not be unduly affected by the proposal, and he was reassured that the proposal is not 50% higher than existing, as he had suggested in his objection letter.

Our clients have spoken to the owner of the tenanted no.3 Yew Tree Court, and have written to her with a letter and documents showing the proposal. She was reassured that the view of the church from no. 3 would not be impaired by the proposal. As can be seen from photos of view from coach house towards this garden, the boundary is screened by conifers.

We therefore take the view that since the first floor windows are needed for daylight, we propose to maintain the design as it currently stands.

SIZE OF THE PLOT

Another factor worth taking note of in considering the proposal, is that the curtilage of the Coach House is approx. 1110 sq.m and so the proposed plan for 170 sq.m covers 15% of this, or a sixth of the plot. We therefore feel that this is not over-development of the plot, and that in fact, a garden of this size which needs a good amount of work to maintain it, merits a house of a reasonable size.

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CONCLUSION

We presented the full set of drawings, together with the 3-model sketches last year with our pre-application submission. No detail comments suggesting that the design needed modification were made.

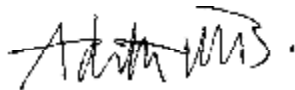
These comments sent, just before the scheme was due for determination, have of course, resulted in us re-assessing the scheme, despite the fact that it would have been helpful for any issues to be raised in the pre-application process.

However, as we suggest here in our various responses to points raised, our clients (working of course with our advice as to the passivhaus design aspects, and overall architectural input) do not want to change the design. It has been very carefully worked out, in the knowledge of their own brief, developed with years of experience of the site. They have consulted with the neighbours, and listened to concerns, but do not feel that alteration of the first floor windows is necessary.

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this further.

We submit this document, together with the attached additional comparison drawings, to be included with the planning application.

Yours,



Adele Mills
For Simmonds.Mills

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