

Design + Access Statement Including Consultation Statement

**Copse Farm
Brookshill Drive**

August 2006

KENNETH W REED  **ASSOCIATES**

chartered architects

369 Station Road, Harrow,
Middlesex HA1 2AW
Telephone 020 8427 1517
Facsimile 020 8861 4548
Email info@kwreedassociates.com
www.kwreedassociates.com

COPSE FARM

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT INCLUDING CONSULTATION STATEMENT

Suzanne's Riding School was established in 1939. It was with great reluctance that the owners Julian Marczak and his mother Suzanne had to close the school and sell the properties in 2003. They were latterly operating with great difficulty in a climate where ever increasing overheads such as insurance costs and business rates made it no longer viable for continued use.

The riding school industry nationwide is generally in a sorry state and various articles that have appeared in Horse and Hound demonstrate this. Further verification of the fact that an inordinate number of schools have closed and are continuing to close can be obtained from the Association of British Riding Schools (01736369440) and British Horse Society. It is to be noted that Duncan Brown, chairman of the ABRS, said that no major riding establishments have opened within the M25 in the past 20 years.

The Marczaks had been endeavouring to sell the properties off the open market for a number of years and can confirm that there had been no interest from any source to continue the riding school or for any use which would be appropriate to the site within its designation as Green Belt.

Evidence included in the attached copy of Geoff White's report on the viability of the agricultural, equestrian or alternative countryside uses, demonstrates that no viable alternative can be found for the use of the property.

Due to all the pressures as identified a scheme for residential units is felt to be the only option.

Copse Farm Limited

There was much interest in the site from major house builders. We are led to believe that a considerable number of discussions took place with the planners and all developers felt that the site presented too many issues for their standard process of development within the normal timescales.

The site was bought by Copse Farm Limited in 2003. They are not a major developer but felt that the site and location offered a unique opportunity to obtain value from a carefully and sensitively designed residential scheme that would provide a small community out of the repair and conservation of the key buildings, together with the limited introduction of small scale new buildings.

They later sought out and teamed up with Zed Homes Limited in order to deliver an environmentally sustainable development with the same initial philosophy.

The brief was far from an ostentatious executive house sterile development; indeed it was the opposite. It called for an examination of the fabric, structure and form of the existing buildings and to provide a sensitive minimal intervention scheme relying on location and detail to create an economically viable but interesting scheme.

Clearly the scheme has to work financially but it was felt that the character, shape form and size had to be generated using the building blocks available to such a site rather than the influence of the market forces that might generate more economically attractive solutions.

Kenneth W Reed & Associates were selected because of their expertise in designing high quality solutions in Conservation Areas and their ability to deliver sensitive and well detailed end products. Their knowledge of energy efficient design, detailing and materials through their previous association with Zed Homes and all ongoing interest in the subject was also felt to be vital to the project.

The Site and Surrounding Area

The site is situated to the south of Old Redding in the Brookshill Drive character area within the Brookshill Drive and Grimsdyke Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area was designated in 1978 with a view to preserving and enhancing the areas with semi rural character and historic qualities. There are a number of key elements that characterise the site within the character area.

- The proximity to the unmade road Brookshill Drive which winds its way from Old Redding in the north to the more built up section of Brookshill Drive to the east.
- The semi rural vernacular agricultural buildings, their context and layout and the spaces between these and the surround openness.
- The changing levels of topography cause the land to fall away providing views over Harrow. Glimpses through the open spaces on the site allow the public to appreciate these vistas from Brookshill Drive and the bridleway that runs through the site.
- Two modern houses in Brookshill Drive, Hill House and Dukes were build since its designation as a Conservation Area and these demonstrate a previous lack of sensitivity in the area where the semi rural character meets the more urban street scene of Brookshill Drive, which is dominated by single detached houses on large plots.
- The cottages at No. 3 and 4 Brookshill Drive have been joined to create a single dwelling house with inappropriate extensions.
- Nos. 1 and 2 Brookshill Drive remain as semi detached cottages, but No.1 is obscured by high hedgerows and gates, which significantly reduce the openness of the area, although they do hide ugly additions and outbuildings that are unworthy of the Conservation Area.
- Bridle Cottage is a listed building of interest.
- The buildings on the site can be grouped into 3 separate areas. The west courtyard, central courtyard and east courtyard.

The west courtyard has on its western edge Copse Farm House (Not part of the application site).

This is a locally listed building and represents the main farmhouse for Copse Farm. To

the south of Copse Farm House are a series of ramshackle, squalid buildings bordering on dereliction. They formed storage areas for the farm and riding stables and they can be seen from Harrow Weald ridge car park and viewing point as blots on the landscape. The eastern side of the west courtyard is a long brick build stable building with corrugated roof. There are a number of ramshackle extensions to the rear that formed the stabling for the riding school. To the north is a timber barn with later ugly extensions. Views into the courtyard are limited, but from Brookshill Drive the view between the barn and Copse Farm House reveals the historic layout of the farm

courtyard with views beyond. The courtyard is open with rough surfacing characteristic of a working farm, but it was in a state of disrepair long before it was sold.

The central courtyard is viewed from Brookshill Drive and from the bridleway. It is dominated by a large agricultural shed formerly used as an indoor ménage. Views through to the south are blocked by this building, although glimpses can be achieved over the fenced outdoor ménage and between the trees beyond. To the west of the courtyard are the derelict stable extensions of the west courtyard buildings. To the east is a dense hedgerow that abuts the bridleway. This bridleway forms a link from Brookshill Drive to the fields and footpaths to the south, allowing walkers to experience the rural character of the farmland to the south. Views back to the west and central courtyards from the bridleway are considerably obscured by trees and hedgerows. This bridleway flanks the western buildings of the east courtyard that provide an interesting counterpoint to the openness beyond.

The eastern courtyard is a much smaller enclosed courtyard bounded by Dairy and Farm Cottages on the west, (not part of the application site) low single storey stables in the south west, a hayloft to the south and a part two, part single storey brick block to the east. There are a number of additional poor quality timber stable and storage buildings tucked into corners. Most of the buildings are locally listed but of poor quality in their own right; the

enclosed courtyard being the characteristic feature. There are views from the entrance to Brookshill Drive through the courtyard over the single storey roofscape and through an opening in the hayloft to a fenced outdoor ménage beyond.

- The buildings have long been in a state of disrepair, certainly during the latter stages of the riding school era. There are certain prime buildings of significant architectural importance, but the majority are beyond retention from both architectural, historic and integrity points of view.

Public Consultation and Design Process

Before final design work took place a series of public consultations took place on site.

The first public consultation meeting took place on the 14 July 2004 at 7.00 pm. Other than the client group and architect it was attended by 16 people of whom 5 were representing organisations in and around Harrow and 11 were residents of Brookshill Drive.

The meeting was convened to explain the interest of the new owner, to analyse the importance of various parts of the site and to reassure the neighbours and interested parties that a sympathetic development of the site was being sought. Display boards showed the extent of land ownership, the relevant UDP planning policies, footpaths, bridleways, existing building stock, an analysis of the building form and views.

During the meetings the audience brought up their concerns and made comments about the site in the past and their thoughts for the future.

In terms of the design for a new development the issues related entirely to scale and massing, views and parking, fencing and materials.

Other concerns related to construction traffic, construction noise, flytipping, ownership of the surrounding land, alternative uses for the site, age mix of potential occupiers, roadway maintenance, bats and ecology.

Without positive suggestions for the development, other than it should be of a less footprint than the existing buildings, the architects instigated a collaborative discussion to share the thoughts they had for the development.

It was agreed that the site is split into three basic courtyards. The west courtyard is surrounded by Copse Farmhouse, the barn and the brick stables. There was general agreement that the courtyard form should be maintained with the existing access point retained. It was agreed that the buildings in the south west corner could be demolished and replaced. It was felt to be important that views to the south were retained.

The central courtyard space is formed by a rough and bleak car park bounded on the south by a railway sleeper cutting and a large agricultural shed. The tree screen to the east of the courtyard was seen to be a positive contribution, as was the open courtyard space. There was general agreement that the shed could be removed. Views through on the west side of the shed were considered fairly important. Everybody recognised that the bridleway through the site was an important public amenity and should not be disturbed.

The east courtyard is more compact than the west and is entered through a constricted entranceway that opens out and then closes again under the arch of the hayloft.

Dairy Cottage and Farm Cottage were obvious favourite buildings and the scale of the buildings in the courtyard was felt to be important, especially the mix of heights and variety of roofs.

Generally the audience accepted that a simple development to retain the courtyards would be looked upon favourably subject to detail.

There was considerable relief expressed when it became clear that further development outside the main concentration of existing buildings was not begin contemplated. Even so there was some scepticism that this would come later.

The second public consultation meeting took place on 6 October 2004 at 7.00 pm. It was attended by 16 people of whom 6 were representing organisations in and around Harrow and 10 were residents of Brookshill Drive.

This public meeting discussed a display of sketch designs for each of the courtyards.

The west courtyard had 2 additional detached houses to the south of Copse Farm House replacing the redundant and poor quality storage buildings. They were designed in brick with first floor rooms predominantly in the roof space so that the scale was subservient to Copse Farm House. Detailing was in the vernacular to compliment the existing more important buildings. The design for the east courtyard sought to demolish all the buildings excluding Dairy Cottage, Farm Cottage and the hayloft structure. These were replaced by far better architectural examples to compliment the retained buildings whilst retaining the built form, volume and enclosure of the existing courtyard.

The established footprint of each grouping is broadly maintained with a net reduction in the overall gross footprint area. The proposals for the central courtyard were not fully displayed, but the concept of sustainable green roof houses was explained. The design objective being to address in an innovative way the questions of sustainability as it affects the built environment and to develop an aesthetic arising out of the environmental concerns that closely ties habitation to the surrounding landscape. An aesthetic which effectively buries the building under a sloping grass roof making it unobtrusive from the north thus allowing full views out from the site.

Generally the concepts were welcomed but various amendments were required to increase views by lowering heights and by amending the detailed design to more fully accord with the scale and character of the adjacent buildings. All comments were taken on board.

Further discussions took place with the planners and conservation officers and several exchanges of ideas ensued resulting in further design changes that make up the current application.

The Current Scheme

- **Locally listed and sensitive existing buildings.**

The majority of the farm buildings on site are a mixture of ramshackle timber frame structures, or lean-to temporary structures often with corrugated asbestos roofs or worse.

In addition there are more modern large clear span farm buildings, all of which have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area by way of their unsightly appearance. Despite these buildings there are some good examples of farmyard buildings and at a meeting in March 2003 with the conservation officer, Amy Burbidge, we agreed which buildings were locally listed and which would form the valuable core of buildings to be retained and developed.

Within the site area we are therefore proposing to retain the timber barn and the brick riding stables that are locally listed. The open hayloft which forms an interesting feature framing views beyond is also retained. The demolition of the other buildings even though in a Conservation Area was not seen to be a great issue. These have all been assessed against the criteria for demolition in a Conservation Area in PPG15 and English Heritage Conservation Area practice notes. We concur that there are no characteristics for the building that could provide the basis for

considering that the buildings make a positive contribution to the special interest of a Conservation Area.

Subsequently and following the departure of the senior conservation officer, other information was tabled to suggest that all buildings surrounding the eastern courtyard were locally listed, even though the description fails to describe any of these structures.

- **The Barn**

The building has previously been investigated by English Heritage who feel it is in such a poor condition that it does not warrant statutory listing status. However, we believe the

building represents not only an important feature in the Conservation Area, but is also a part of the areas history and character. We are, therefore, treating the building with due reverence by respecting its structure, openings and internal volumes.

The southern lean-to later extension and the eastern extension have no relevance to the historic barn or the complex of farmyard buildings. We are, therefore, proposing to remove these to expose the full extent of the barn. Essentially the barn will be repaired and conserved in its entirety using good practice techniques. Our intention is to delicately insert a mezzanine platform to increase the amount of floor space and the ongoing usability.

Residential use would not be appropriate because the open volume of the barn would necessarily need to be broken down to form smaller rooms for bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens etc. We are, therefore, proposing office accommodation throughout. Behind the large wooden doors to the north we propose large glazed screens so that the openings and doors are preserved. Whilst preserving the integrity of the structure both physically and visually. Every attempt will be made to incorporate environmentally friendly materials and techniques for upgrading the fabric to Eco excellence ratings.

We believe that the barn can be preserved and used to the benefit of the building, the scheme and the wider contexts of the Conservation Area and Green Belt. We believe that the proposed changes are respectful to the historic function of the building and historic fabric. The conservation officers and the planners consider the proposal acceptable from a design/ locally listed point of view. They have stated in their letter of 7 August 2006 that they would be sympathetic to the re-use of Copse Farm Barn provided it is a use that does not require sub division of the building. Therefore, some sort of office space is a possibility, together with a workshop or studio.

- **Copse Farm Riding Stables (Houses 4 and 5)**

The existing stable buildings would appear to have little architectural merit because of their relatively poor construction and corrugated roofs. They are essentially unseen from the east because of the poor quality lean-to structures which hide that elevation.

On further inspection there is considerable merit in retaining the brick structures and roof trusses on the western side.

Our scheme minimises disruption to the external brickwork and openings and preserves the volume and height of the building under a new roof to the same profile.

To achieve additional accommodation the buildings are extended to the east using split level staircases and the changes in level that exist on site.

The height of the overall building is kept quite low to preserve views over from key public view positions on Brookshill Drive.

The new and refurbished construction will include 300mm of super insulation, biomass boilers and 'A' rated appliances. Because we are stripping out the existing stable block we can incorporate all environmental friendly techniques as would be appropriate for new build works. There are no objections from the planners or conservation officers to the design of these buildings as they are sympathetic to the character of the area and respect the courtyard layout of the farmyard. The removal of the existing additions to the rear of the main building is also welcomed. Subsequent to a previous design we have removed formal car parking and landscaping which was considered to have a detrimental effect on the courtyard space. This is now kept clear to retain the historic formation and space between buildings.

- **Open Arch Hayloft**

This forms an interesting feature at the end of the eastern courtyard and where it frames the view beyond. Whilst it has no merit for use as a dwelling it acts as a significant building block for the

end of the courtyard. Its presence will also be appreciated when viewed from the public view points in Brookshill Drive. The hayloft originally had doors as can be evidenced by large hinges and, therefore, the view through has no significance other than we would be pleased to see it retained. The building was completely gutted by fire some years ago and the roof and timbers have been completely replaced and the floor raised. It is our intention to return this to its original state.

- **The West Courtyard**

Houses 1 and 2 were previously designed as detached cottages in a manner that is subservient to the main Copse Farmhouse. They had integral garages hopefully to reduce the potential car parking in the open areas. Much of the accommodation was in the roof space to reduce bulk and height. Materials and detailing were to match other existing buildings so as to unify the development. Houses 1 and 2 were designed to be different and to reflect the sloping nature of the site. They were also designed with an articulated plan form so that they provide interesting pockets of spaces and gently enclose the courtyard. Their rear gardens generally go to the natural boundary of the existing enclosure of the settlement.

The conservation officer then felt that the houses were not sufficiently subservient to the principal building of the farmstead. The current proposals have concentrated the footprint of the two houses onto that which previously existed. The houses have been designed as barn conversions so that they are distinctly different to Copse Farm House, which will remain as the principal building. The new houses by way of their timber cladding and tucked away position will reflect some of the style of the Copse Farm barn. They are designed to minimise windows. Their relationship with each other was seen to be important, and, therefore, the ridge and eaves heights remain the same even though the

ground slopes away. This gives a greater feeling of continuity and interlinking as associated with barns rather than detached houses. The change has been welcomed by the conservation officer. Further amendments have been made following comments put forward in their letter of 7 August 2006 and further reductions have been made to the

scale of the buildings. We now consider that these houses are subservient to Copse Farm House, not necessarily by their scale but by their detailing and siting.

Houses 1 and 2 will be built with super insulation, biomass boilers and 'A' rated appliances. Standards will greatly exceed current Building Regulation requirements in terms of energy efficiency and environmental friendly design.

The proposed landscaping follows that of the development as a whole, which is one that takes as its model the surrounding pattern of enclosure hedgerows and trees. Rear garden boundaries will follow the established pattern of mixed species hedgerows and new boundaries will be formed in a similar way. Common access areas in front of houses 1 and 2 broadly run north, south between and through the courtyard that is associated with views out towards open Green Belt countryside. Surfaces will be permeable as part of a sustainable drainage system that is not a charge on the drainage network. An eclectic approach is taken towards hard landscaping, preserving existing features and surfaces where these are serviceable and replacing them where necessary with a matching material in order to maintain the varied character of an organically evolved environment.

The new west courtyard formed has very similar characteristics to the existing. Concealed parking provisions will ensure that only a small number of cars might intrude into the open space.

Views through the courtyard will remain unchanged. Views to the site from the Old Redding viewing point and from below will be very similar with no loss of openness.

House 3 was previously designed to be linked to the new extensions of houses 4 and 5. Its design followed the design style of the adjacent houses at the rear and then projects to form an end stop to the courtyard. The gable created on the west elevation and other elevations related closely to the design scale and materials of the previous houses 1 and 2 opposite.

The conservation officers had previously liked and endorsed the scheme for house 3 but were over thrown by the planner who suggested that it would extend into open space that impinges on views and would detract from the original courtyard layout. This house has now been removed from the scheme in this location.

- **The Central Courtyard**

Houses 3,11, 12, 13 and 14 sit on the footprint of the agricultural shed formerly used as the indoor arena. They are set at the low level of the shed and are hidden under a curving sedum grass roof.

The feature of the current raised car park is retained by the use of retaining walls so that the building sits in a hollow allowing views out and over the roofs. The grass and gravel of the car park will seemingly merge with the roofs and project a quality of a grass mound at the end of the courtyard.

The houses have been designed to be fully sustainable with almost zero carbon emissions. This is achieved by a green roof to provide temperature regulation, increased insulation and transpiration on hot sunny days. It regulates rainwater run off and promotes an interesting aesthetic. The buildings will be super insulated taking them well above current standards to a point where heating will be negligible. Triple glazing and airtight construction will control heat loss and solar gain. The houses have been designed with a sun space to act as a conservatory for passive solar gain in the winter and as an open ventilation chimney in

summer. In both seasons natural daylight levels will be high. Natural and recycled materials will be used in all cases. There will be a sustainable urban drainage system with rainwater storage and recycling to low flush W.Cs. All light fittings will be energy efficient. Wind cowls will be integrated for ventilation with heat recovery. Small domestic wind turbines will be an option for electricity generation, together with solar panels for hot water. Biomass boilers will be used where necessary.

The houses have been developed by Zed Homes with input from leading architects and engineers who are experts in this field.

We believe that not only will house 3, 11 – 14 be a seamless insertion into the landscape with interesting design and architectural features, but they will also be the first super efficient energy conscious, intelligent buildings in the Borough.

The planners have confirmed that the demolition of the indoor paddock is considered to be acceptable, as it does not make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. They consider that the new houses appear to be of innovative design and with a low setting that would help to retain the openness and views over the buildings.

- **The East Courtyard**

Dairy Cottage and Farm Cottage form the entrance to the east courtyard. Whilst they are not in the site boundary they are a pair of fine cottages with robust and interesting detailing more akin to a house of a larger scale. To the south of the cottages are some very low scale stables with timber frontages and doors. These are in very poor condition yet they have attractive characteristics that are the reason for replicating the scale of their east façade to form new garages. The roof slope, ridge and eaves line is therefore retained. The removal of redundant and unattractive lean-to sheds on the west façade enables their replacement to be created with sympathetic elevations.

House 8 tucks itself between the low garage wing and the hayloft arch. They have low eaves and simple roof. The ridge of the roof is subservient to the dominant hayloft structure. From the west the house is an extension of the rear of the garages. House 8 is low key, simple and discreet. It sits on the footprint of existing structures and replaces the poor quality lean-to timber sheds with brick walls and simple pitched roofs, which retain its subservience to Dairy and Farm Cottages.

House 9 has been the subject of much design change following comments from the conservation officer. Initially houses 9 and 10 were isolated as detached houses on either side of the access through the hayloft. After much debate it was agreed that houses 9 and 10 would be brought

back to close proximity to the hayloft whilst still remaining subservient to it, thus retaining the openness beyond the hayloft arch.

To achieve this house 9 has been carefully considered in relation to the change in levels. The upper floor tucks itself into the corner behind house 8 and adjacent to the hayloft. It retains the discreet character and scale of the other houses in the west courtyard. The bulk of the accommodation has been cleverly concealed below the level of the floor of the archway where its flat roof forms a garden terrace that retains views through the arch.

From the west and south the ground floor is created behind what is effectively a brick wall with windows, heavily planted in a series of layers to conceal it from any view from the bridleway. From the east there is no elevation as the building is underground at this point.

House 10 adjoins the hayloft to the east and again is subservient to it by way of its depth and height.

Its garage doors are discreetly located in the re-entrant angle formed by the L-shape of the house. The majority of the upper floor is contained in roof space with dormers so that its cottage like maintains a simple low key scale. It projects to the south a little further than the existing shed structure, but there is still sufficient space for a garden to be created which ends on a continuation of the boundary planting of the other houses in Brookshill Drive.

There is an added advantage that the flat and desolate external ménage area is completely removed in favour of landscaping.

Houses 8, 9 and 10 will be built and refurbished using super insulation, biomass boilers and 'A' rated appliances.

The current scheme differs from previous proposals by retaining the low height of the stable roofs and sheds. There is no longer any detrimental effect on the current views enjoyed over the

stable roofs, which would diminish the open rural character of the area. The locally listed buildings are also retained.

In previous designs the form of the east courtyard was retained and completed by the construction of new houses to replace the part single, part 2-storey block and glazed canopy. The Brookshill Drive elevation was substantially improved giving a more acceptable face to the Conservation Area. The two houses were designed to reflect the style of Dairy Cottage and Farm Cottage in a slightly simpler, more subservient style and scale. The houses were the subject of several design revisions following discussions with the planner and conservation officer.

All these points were discussed and displayed at a third public consultation meeting on 9 November 2005. It was attended by 9 people all of whom were residents in Brookshill Drive. All Harrow Councillors were invited to all 3 consultations, but only 2 Councillors accepted and both attended the second consultation. There were no adverse comments made by any of the attendees.

It subsequently transpired that the replacement conservation officer wished to see the buildings retained and the current scheme does this. The buildings are generally preserved in their entirety and are converted into houses 6 and 7. This is now accepted by the conservation officer as an acceptable solution.

Views

In the preparation of the design for the scheme we have always been mindful of the views to and through the site from public areas. We have been particularly conscious that there would be concern at the loss of views and the loss of openness created by any new development.

We believe that we can demonstrate by way of the sketches included in the drawings that there is no loss of view or openness in any part of the proposed development.

There is no change to the views from Brookshill Drive from the north (views 7 & 8).

There is no change to the view from Brookshill Drive through the gap between Copse Farm House (view 11).

There is no change to the end stop in the central courtyard because the indoor paddock is replaced by the sedum roofed houses 3, 11 to 14, but the roof line is the same and the buildings more attractive (view 6).

There is little change to the view looking from the north down the Bridleway other than the replacement of ramshackle extensions with good quality brick buildings on the same footprint (view 5).

There is no change to the view through the east courtyard and all roof levels remain consistent with the existing features (view 4).

There is no change in the view from the east looking along Brookshill Drive.

There is some change in the view from the bridleway looking north, but long range views are obscured by trees and short range views are improved by the removal of unsightly extensions, the indoor paddock and the outdoor ménage (views 1 & 12).

There is no loss of openness because the skyline and bulk is unchanged.

Landscape

Landscaping will be very simple and rural, generally recreating the current situation. Urban treatments have been discouraged and the open courtyards retain the farmyard feel. Rear gardens will be bounded by post and wire fences and dense landscaping thus retaining the essential character of the area yet providing privacy and safety for the occupiers.

Clearly we understand that there is a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

Those buildings which are proposed for demolition have been carefully assessed as follows.

- The quality, age, style and materials do not reflect those of at least a substantial number of buildings in the Conservation Area.

- Their age or materials do not relate to adjacent listed buildings nor do they contribute positively to their setting.
- They do not individually or as part of a group serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement, only as a reminder of the run down activities of the riding school which was forced to close through economic reasons.
- They do not have any historic association with any road layouts or landscape features.
- They certainly do not have landmark qualities.

- They do not reflect the traditional agricultural functional character of the area.
- They do not have any significant historical associations with local people or past events.

We, therefore, believe there is no merit in their retention and their replacements offer considerable enhancement whilst preserving the integrity and form of the built form.

Disabled Access

All houses, yards, parking areas and footpaths will be accessible for the disabled and all houses will be designed and detailed to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations. The choice of materials at the entrances to the courtyards and individual properties will have judicious use of materials that contrast in tone and colour to define important features. Lighting will be designed to balance an acceptable level for accessibility, but be of sufficiently near nature to suit the rural environment that must be maintained. There will be equal and convenient access to all buildings and suitable places for disabled parking. Access for emergency services equally well provided for.

Parking and Access

During its use as a riding stable there would be around 35 cars parked at the property. The 72 horses accommodated at the school were owned by the school and let out for lessons at regular intervals, which promoted considerable traffic movement from visitors and parents delivering and collecting children. In addition there were 27 ponies liveried at the school and these were visited by owners on a regular basis and transported to various meetings using horse boxes.

The current proposals for 14 houses and an office suite would generate far less parking and traffic movement.

There are 9 garages provided for the houses thus leaving a potential of 19 cars parked on open spaces within the development assuming 2 cars per house. This can have no significant impact on the area and is far less than the previous use.

Secure by Design

A safe and accessible environment will be created where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion. We are currently the process of discussing the proposals with the police and there will be a continued dialogue to ensure the development works towards the principles of secure by design. We are at the same time consulting “safe places – the planning system and crime prevention” and will incorporate the necessary safeguards relative to the perceived risks, balanced against the aesthetics that we are trying to create.

Conclusion

We believe we have retained the buildings and form of development which make the positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The scheme offers a sympathetic re-use and repair of the important buildings so as to secure the long term future of the site. We believe we have designed a scheme based on a thoughtful design process and a sustainable approach to access. We believe that the development proposals have been based on a good understanding of the local physical, economic and social context.

On completion the site will be considerably enhanced and security will be established and buildings protected against vandalism, fly tipping and further disrepair.

We believe the future use as proposed exhibits extreme sensitivity to the special character of the site. We believe we have demonstrated our commitment to achieving good design.

Demolished buildings have no relevance to others in the area, nor are they historically significant; indeed in all cases they are a distraction to the setting of the better and locally listed buildings being retained.

Our replacements preserve the group setting and development pattern on site and reinforce the courtyard development and concentration of the buildings within the overall farm setting. This serves as a reminder of the past and reflects the character of the development.

The buildings as a whole provides an important grouping on an important site. The new structures are generally subservient to the buildings of quality. The architecture and detailing reflect the traditional

functional character of the previous uses and new public access through the site will positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Green Belt.

All buildings will be detailed to achieve excellent 'green' credentials with houses 3,11 – 14 being 'cutting edge' in this field.

Traditional new build houses will be significantly more sustainable than other similar buildings in the Borough. The refurbished buildings will demonstrate that we can take old buildings and upgrade them to make them more energy efficient by integrating new technologies.

The development is designed to ensure adequate privacy for new and existing housing and the planners acknowledge that the proposal has been designed in such a way as to prevent overlooking of habitable room windows and to provide private amenity space for all proposed dwellings. The proposal is, therefore, considered to be satisfactory in this regard.

The proposals do not impede views nor diminish the gaps between buildings. The buildings do not intrude into areas of open space.

We believe that the development is low key and represents a very modest proposal, entirely appropriate for the site and surroundings, thus preserving and enhancing the area.

It is certainly not over development and the new building would not adversely affect the character of the buildings to be retained. Views are preserved, as is the openness of the area.

We have been particularly careful to allow local community, access groups and other interested

parties to involve themselves in the planning and design process. Whilst this may not have resulted in overwhelming support we do believe all legitimate concerns have been resolved.

Andrew Reed R.I.B.A.
Kenneth W Reed & Associates
Chartered Architects