PLANNING COMMITTEE 9TH NOVEMBER 2023

PROPOSAL: Replacement front porch to front; single storey extension to rear of dwelling house; and raise height of garden wall
LOCATION : The Cottage 17 Main Road Old Dalby Leicestershire

APPLICATION : 23/00584/FULHH

Statement to Committee from Applicant

Dear Councillors,

I apologise that due to previous commitments I am unable to attend the above Planning Committee. My architect will be present to represent me and will address the application on my behalf. I would however like to make a few points in relation to the application.

Conservation Area.

I have owned and lived at The Cottage, 17 Main Road, Old Dalby for the last 27 years. The property was built in 1855 by Rev. William Sawyer owner of the Old Dalby Estate, along with other worker cottages on Main Road along Chapel Lane and adjacent to The Hall, the village school and the Reading Room. Brick built, these cottages were basic and rented/ tithed to estate workers throughout the 19th and into the 20th century. The Cottage, 17 Main Road being detached was slightly larger than others and firstly the Headmistress and later the Head Groom lived there. At some point in the mid 20th century (probably about 1930 -1940) the Estate had most of the cottages pebble dashed in concrete - presumably due to perished brickwork. Only one property has attempted removal just to the front and that has proved problematic and is not recommended.

In the 1980s the Estate was dispersed and cottages sold (See Picture of Cottage approx 1983 at the time of sale). New residents to the village and those who have lived here less than 10 years will not be aware that my cottage auctioned for sale by the Estate in 1984 was then in a pretty poor condition and had limited modern facilities.

The Cottage seen today has only been the Cottage you now see, since 2015.

The Cottage in 1984.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the new purchaser set about repairing, extending and modernising the building. Planning permission to do so was obtained in the late 1980s. Unfortunately whilst structural building work was completed, the owner was unable to complete external and internal finishing, and was unable to undertake repairs to the main building. The house was therefore put on the market in 1995 but due to the condition and the extent of required work, remained unsold for 2 years. I purchased it in February 1997 at a considerably higher price than the mortgage valuation which was low due to the work required.

The front of the house by then was not very visible from the road due to 6 fully grown Leylandi conifers, other trees and 6 foot high privet hedges. The roofs of the attached outhouses and the front porch had fallen through with many slates missing or broken, and there were patches where due to rising damp rendering had dropped off the walls. The front porch was totally covered in ivy, old roses and other climbing plants which had penetrated the walls and the roof and the front date plaque was not visible (I personally stripped this patiently over several weeks once the porch walls had been repaired and re rendered and the roof replaced). The pebble rendering to the entire house was a dirty concrete grey colour and took 5 coats of paint to turn it to white. Trees were removed and hedges reduced to 4ft at the suggestion of the police following a burglary in 2006. The garden to the front had large sheds for building materials and a falling down large green house all of which were removed and the front was professionally landscaped in 2014. With MBC approval I have removed over 15 fully grown trees over the 27 years of my ownership and employ a tree

surgeon to regularly trim/ reshape those that remain - last trim of all trees on the plot was last year in November 2022.

The front garden in 1999.

<u>All in all at the time of my purchase the property had potential but was in an incomplete condition and seen by then neighbours as an eye sore.</u>

It is gratifying that villagers now describe The Cottage as one of the most attractive in the village. This is due to the considerable amount of money, time and effort I have put in to make it so over the 27 years of my ownership.

I do not know when the area was granted Conservation Area status, but assume that the relative condition and changes to The Cottage are noted therein. Without the Planning approvals granted by MBC in the late 1980s/early 1990s, The Cottage would have remained an unimproved and undesirable property. Time had moved on since it was built in 1855 and time has moved on since those improvements in 1990-95.

In 2014 I applied for and was granted permission to build a detached garage. Other than that there has been no other planning application for 40 years.

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A lot has changed in the last 40 years. The reason for the current application is to enable disabled access and ground floor living. As the population ages and mobility issues become ever prevalent it is recognised that properties need to change/ be adapted to enable people to live appropriately in their property. I am now 70 and have a range of medical issues requiring me to address my environment. Additionally my application seeks to restore privacy to my garden and garden living room.

The current porch is too small and the door too narrow to enable disabled access - it does not enable access on a walking frame or other and proves a space too small and difficult to accommodate a carer and person needing support. The stairs coming straight off the porch have a rise of 11.5 inch (maximum rise in modern regulations is 7.5 inch) and are excessively steep proving increasingly difficult to navigate safely and a number of falls have occurred. It is intended to replace those stairs to the modern standard but without a change to the size of the porch the value of so doing would be significantly reduced.

The downstairs living room (a 'new' extension permitted and built in the early 1990s) does not allow access to other rooms except through a narrow internal corridor again limiting disabled access. The proposal for a small extension to that extension, would facilitate movement through to other rooms and thereby will provide ground floor living for disability purposes.

The proposed replacement porch size is smaller than the porch of the single storey Village Hall building which is considered to be comparable as built roughly at the same time by the same Estate with a smaller footprint than The Cottage. The current porch to the Cottage is considered small for the size of the building when compared with other porches in the village - such as on Chapel Lane on buildings which have recently received planning permission and also on Church Lane - both Lanes part of the Conservation area and having buildings older than that of The Cottage. It is noted that no opposition to those porches was submitted by any consultee or resident albeit they are all larger than the proposal made here. However given the expressed concern to my proposal for a new accessible porch, I will be happy to adapt and amend the design of the porch in consultation with relevant Council officers so that disability access can be achieved whilst also achieving a design acceptable to the Council. My objective is to be able to access and live in my property whilst retaining the character and attractiveness I have worked so hard and spent such large amounts of money to achieve. I believe my architect had achieved that but we will adapt as necessary.

The proposed finish to the rear extension has been amended to pebble dash . Cladding had been proposed initially as the Estate had historically built extensions with wood cladding - such as on Chapel Lane (See *Looking Back at Old Dalby - Ann Jalland McKenna*). Concrete pebble dash is not the original finish to these worker cottages and on Main Road a sizeable number of property fronts have wood panelling/ cladding and more have used cladding to the rear. The proposal to use wooden cladding was considered an appropriate finish and consistent with all recent approvals but this is not a major issue and the extension can easily be finished in pebble dash to suit. The proposed small extension to the extension will barely be seen from the street and does not overlook or impinge on any neighbouring property so the finish only really has an impact on the owner.

The proposal to increase the height of a section of my garden wall arises due to now being overlooked with consequent loss of privacy to my garden, patios and garden living room.

My garden wall is "L" shaped and on the shorter side of the "L", the wall supports an octagonal slate roof of a gazebo rising to about 3.7 meters as can be seen in the photos. The proposal is to raise the height of the other side of the "L" wall following the line of the gazebo, to try to regain privacy. The footings to the walls have proved sound and unproblematic from my purchase in 1997 and the walls are well built (approx 1986). They have supported the current slate roof for 25 years plus with no problem of any sort. Providing the footings to these walls have not been damaged by the neighbouring development they should be perfectly capable of supporting a rise in height. There are no windows to the new development to the rear of the walls so no issue of loss of light to that new building. If unacceptable then it will be necessary to undo expensive landscaping and put back expensive fully grown trees (some 6 trees were removed between 2002 and 2019, as I now find

the loss of privacy to my patio garden and house, due to now being overlooked, is seriously restricting my ability to enjoy my home and garden and privacy must therefore be restored.

I trust that these points and information will aid the Committee in making its decision on my planning application.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra A. Taylor