

2 NO REVIEW

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Dear Mr McLoughlin

NEW HOUSE, PARADISE FARM, SOUTH NEWINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE (Second Review)

Thank you for inviting the Panel to review the emerging designs for the new house at the above site. The Panel had the opportunity to visit the site with you and Jaynie Ford ahead of our meeting at Paradise Farm on 22nd March 2013. We are grateful to Richard Parr of Parr Walker Architects and Luciano Giubbilei for their presentations. We welcome the opportunity to review how the project has progressed.

Since the Panel were last invited to review the scheme in November the project has been refined and improved. The Panel were previously impressed by the clear concept behind developing the new home. We feel that this has been reflected and enhanced through the developing relationship with the landscape. The setting of the building has been a key area of work and one which we feel is starting to address our earlier concerns.

We believe that this site offers the opportunity for the development of a unique family home connected to the landscape. We feel you are well on your way to achieving this aspiration.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The site at Paradise Farm is located just to the south of the village of Wigginton and a short distance from South Newington. The site is currently home to stables, with the old farm house, barns and ancillary buildings located at the centre of the site, other than this collection of buildings the site is undeveloped. We understand the proposal is to build a new home for Mr and Mrs Ford and their family on the site. The core of the site will retain the stable function which will continue.

Certain areas of the wider estate have suffered from some mismanagement which is in the process of being repaired. Part of the plan for occupying the site includes rationalisation of the stables and works to the wider landscape, including hedgerow management.

The area of the site chosen for the new house is on the south facing slope of the gentle valley which runs through the site. Given its location the house is unlikely to be visible from many

691-394.1 New House, Paradise Farm, South Newington (Second Review)

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vantage points; the work to test this has begun and will need to continue as the design develops. The estate is crossed by a number of rights of way, which will remain open and do not pass near the house.

There is a strong presumption against isolated residential development in the countryside but the intention is to make the case for an exception under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 55). The Panel is mindful of the wording of the NPPF.

SITING

The access and approach to the new home have been carefully considered as part of clarifying the choice of location of the new building on the site. We feel that the level of thought and care that has gone into this has helped support and define the siting of the building. This has been elegantly alluded to in a series of evocative sketches which have been useful in generating an appropriate response to its setting.

One of the main areas that the team have focused on as the design has evolved has been the building's relationship with the lie of the land. The chosen location for the house is on a steeply sloping hill side. While this allows the home a pleasant orientation and access to far reaching views, it also means the form of the building needs to be responsive to its topography. We feel that the modifications to the design, of enclosing and greater embedding the northern wing, and defining it in distinction to the emerging and more open southern wing has been successful. This has improved this relationship. The difference between the two wings should not lose the notion of them as single building; we are keen to see that the fluidity of the roof design is maintained as a distinctive feature of both wings.

LANDSCAPE

The concept which is being promoted for dealing with the gardens and wider landscape has the potential to create an attractive setting for the new building. Much work has been done on this and it is starting to be resolved successfully.

We feel that the less formal, more naturalistic approach to the wider landscape, including recognition of and respect for the unique characteristics of this particular locality, would be most appropriate and compliment the design to the house. It is the median between the domestic landscape and countryside where greatest attention will be needed; a balance between the formal and informal areas will need to be struck.

The immediate interfaces with the building could do more to respond to and reflect the wider topography of the site. Elements of the landscape here might help to compliment the building design. This could perhaps be refined with reference to the linear nature of the site established by the home, the contours and the terraces or furrows, rather than creating an artificial plateau on which the house and garden sits. The size of the home has reduced since our previous review which has helped in this regard. We feel this much more layered approach, reducing the need to model the existing land form, might help blur the boundaries between the natural and manmade. This more refined and subtle response to levels could be addressed or mitigated within the elements which exist in the current design, for example the reflecting pool and seating areas of the loggia terrace.

The land also has a potential role to play in the sustainability of the new home and estate. We are interested to hear how the house could be innovative in the way which water and energy are

supplied and managed on site and how these systems could be built into an attractive, biodiverse and productive landscape.

ARCHITECTURE AND DETAILED DESIGN

The Panel note the level of thought that has been applied to the design of the building to date. The attention to detail will be critical in the successful delivery of this project. The choice of the mixture of local materials is sound and will help to ground the building in its context. The application of these materials and techniques will require access to the requisite level of crafts and skills to be able to carry this out.

Dealing with reflectivity of glass during the day and light at night, both from within the house and exterior lighting, will need to be carefully considered. We support the principle of minimising the amount of outside lighting and using trees and planting to screen the worst effects of this.

We feel the approach being pursued on the site has the potential to be a useful example of how buildings and estates can consider aspects of sustainable design in the countryside, and build confidence that others can successfully respond to this agenda. Communicating this and other aspects of the development process could perhaps be supported through the use of standards such as Code for Sustainable Homes. Additionally, further information on the relationship of the estate and home in their operation with regards to water, power and resources would also provide interest.

We feel there is the potential to communicate the story of the development to a wider audience. This might help share the lessons explored through this project, its materials and craftsmanship, the approach to site-wide issues of sustainability and its connection to the Oxfordshire countryside. Aspects of ecology and biodiversity would also form an important part of the story of this reoccupied landscape.

I hope you find our advice helpful but do please contact me if anything in this letter is unclear.

Yours sincerely



ROBERT OFFORD
Panel Manager

cc Duncan and Janie Ford
Tracey Morrissey, Cherwell District Council
Richard Parr, Parr Walker

Panel members present: Richard Portchmouth (Meeting Chair), Paul Acton, Ian Deans

This review has been commissioned by McLoughlin Planning on behalf of Duncan and Janie Ford, with the knowledge of Cherwell District Council.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Since the scheme was not the subject of a planning application when it came to the Panel, this letter is offered in confidence to the addressee and those listed as being sent copies. There is no objection to the letter being shared within the respective practices/organisations. SERDP reserves the right to make the guidance known should the views contained in this letter be made public in whole or in part (either accurately or inaccurately). The letter would also be made available to any public inquiry concerning the scheme. SERDP also reserves the right to make the guidance available to another design review panel should the scheme go before them. If you do not require this letter to be kept confidential, please let us know.