



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Two New Commoner's Dwellings and Outbuildings
SITE ADJACENT TO ANDERWOOD COTTAGE, NR BURLEY, HAMPSHIRE, BH24 4HS
For Forestry Commission



Access lane from main road



View inside site of existing storage shed

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1. INTRODUCTION

Roderick James Architects LLP has been assisting the Forestry Commission with the design for the proposed two new Commoner's houses and associated outbuildings at their site adjacent to Anderwood Cottage, near Burley in Hampshire.

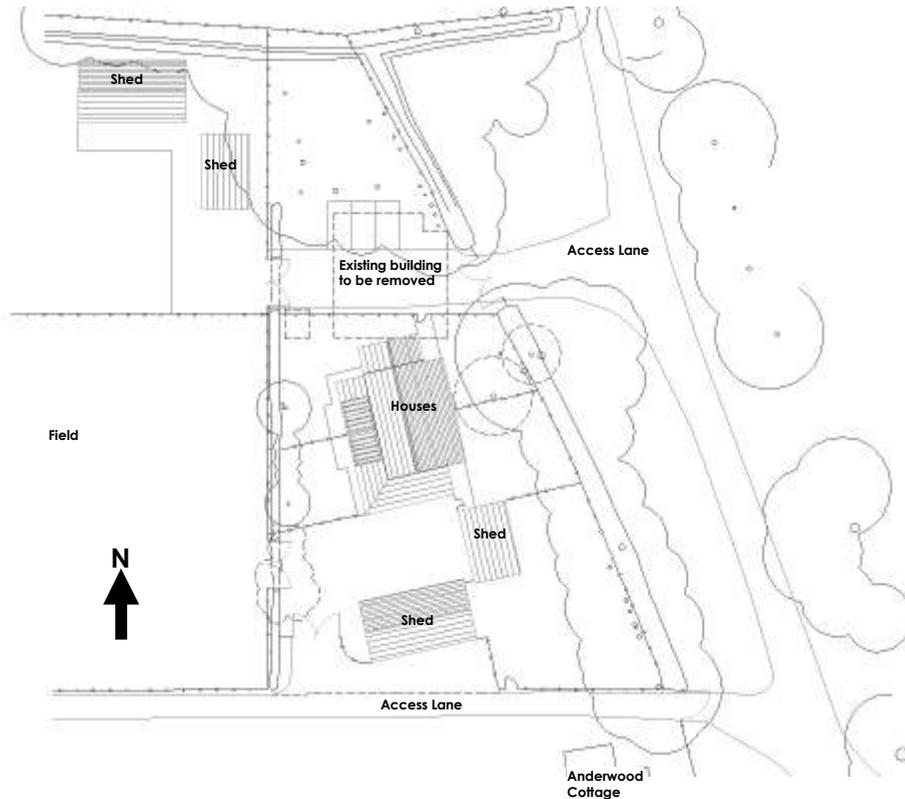
The site was selected by the Forestry Commission following consultations with the New Forest Commoners Defence Association regarding the selection of a suitable site for new commoners' housing on the Crown lands.

The Anderwood site was used in the past as a depot by the Forestry Commission civil engineering team and was considered surplus to requirements in 2006. The site has been considered an ideal brownfield site for development as commoners' housing due to the adjacent agricultural holding owned by the Forestry Commission.

2. ASSESSMENT OF PHYSICAL CONTEXT;

The proposal for the site has been carefully considered with regard to the surrounding landscape and the visual impact in the New Forest. The site contains a corrugated steel storage building under Forestry Commission ownership and therefore the site can be considered pre-developed.

The site is sloping gently from North-East to South West and is approximately 0.2 hectares in area. The site is accessed via an existing lane to the East and another existing access lane is located to the South of the site separating the site from Anderwood Cottage, its only neighbouring building (also under Forestry Commission ownership).



The North and East boundaries are formed with a mature beech hedge and various other trees (i.e. oak, willow, Scots pine). The Western boundary is largely open to the adjacent field and the Southern boundary is open to the second access lane.

The proposal is to construct the new houses adjacent to the existing storage shed, with other single-storey agricultural buildings placed around the houses to form two new smallholdings for commoners.

3. JUSTIFICATION OF NEED BY FORESTRY COMMISSION;

The provision of affordable housing is a particular issue for the commoning community. A lack of affordable and available housing in the New Forest makes it very difficult for younger commoners who wish to continue the commoning tradition and in the longer term this could jeopardise the future of commoning¹. If commoning were to decline, there would be adverse effects upon the New Forest's cultural heritage and designated landscape and habitats. Removal or a significant long-term reduction in grazing pressure would lead to impoverishment in the plant and animal communities comprising the Open Forest. From a nature conservation perspective this would particularly impact on those features for which the Forest is designated and would therefore be catastrophic and unacceptable².

The Forestry Commission is already a major provider of affordable rented holdings and land to commoners³ in the New Forest. Based upon the findings of the 1991 Illingworth Report, the Commission maintains a policy to retain property in the New Forest to provide opportunities for affordable housing with associated back-up land for practising commoners. The rentals charged by the Commission of commoners are discounted, with houses being let on 4 year fixed term assured shorthold tenancies, dependent upon the household remain in commoning throughout that time.

Uniquely, given the location of the Commission properties and land holding, it is able to rent holdings to commoners within the central parishes of the Perambulation – the heart of the commonable lands. This is in contrast to recent trends that are seeing the distribution of

commoners' housing moving away from the central parishes and into the Waterside and suburban fringe³. At the present time, the majority of the Commission's agricultural land is let to commoners along with 29 houses.

Currently, some 27 commoners, who are not Commission employees, have registered their interest in renting a house from the Commission.

The proposal to build two new houses for affordable rental to commoners at Anderwood comes about as the Commission is committed to reinvesting capital released from the sale of non-commoning assets elsewhere in the Crown lands. The Anderwood site is adjacent to agricultural land in the Commission's holding that will be linked to the new houses to form two viable commoning holdings. The site was selected in discussion with the Commoners' Defence Association.



Adjacent agricultural land to be linked to proposed commoners houses

The Commission is willing to enter into a Section 106 agreement with the National Park Authority for the purpose of:

a) Ensuring, in perpetuity, the occupation of the dwellings by practising commoners.

b) Ensuring, in perpetuity with each house, the close association of a minimum of 2 acres of enclosed grazing land.

References:

- 1 Strategy for the New Forest, 2003 (NFC)
- 2 New Forest SAC Management Plan, 2001 (EN)
- 3 New Forest Commoners' Housing Review, 2005 (CDA, NFA, HWT)

4. INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL INTERESTS;

The proposed scheme has been developed following extensive pre-application consultations with Claire Ings (Senior Planning Officer) and Paul James (Building Design Officer) of the New Forest National Park Authority.

The overall design of the scheme has been worked up in dialogue with representatives from New Forest Commoners Defence Association (NFCDA) to ensure that the layout of the houses, relative to the agricultural land and buildings forms a functional commoning unit. The internal house components have also been agreed with representatives from NFCDA to ensure functionality as a commoning family dwelling.

The Access Statement has been written following consultation with the following documents as our main sources of reference:

- o DCLG Circular 01/2006.
- o "Design and Access Statements" by CABE.
- o Approved Document to part M of the Building Regulations (2004).
- o "Guide to Access Statements" by Disability Rights Commission.
- o "Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide" by Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- o The "Lifetime Homes" standard for domestic parking.
- o "Accessible Thresholds in New Housing: Guidance for House Builders and Designers" by the Stationary Office.

5. DESIGN PRINCIPLES;

Roderick James Architects LLP specialise in the design of houses in sensitive locations such as Conservation Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Coastal Preservation areas and National Parks.

The proposed design for the two new houses at the Anderwood site utilises a mixture of traditional building materials and vernacular building forms with an exciting, contemporary internal arrangement to provide houses suitable for modern living requirements. The proposal also includes robust and simply detailed outbuildings to provide essential stables and storage for the commoners to maintain their smallholdings.

The new buildings will form a low-key collection of timber buildings reflecting a rural arrangement of buildings that you would expect in such a location.



The buildings will be constructed from locally sourced timber and will utilise good quality, natural materials that will blend in with the New Forest setting. All appropriate forms of sustainable building will be incorporated into the design (including maximum insulations levels, rainwater harvesting, ground source heating etc). The buildings have been designed to meet level 3 of the BRE's Code for Sustainable Homes including the integration of a home office to enable the commoners to run their smallholdings from home.

The following design approach for the proposed house has been discussed and agreed with the Local Authority Planning:

- Simple, traditional, rural building forms, to harmonise with agricultural and rural settings.
- Low-key courtyard arrangement of buildings.

- Good quality, locally sourced, external materials to include untreated timber cladding, natural slate roof finish and timber joinery.
- Simple, robust detailing and careful selection of natural external materials to ensure that the proposed building will mellow with age and be in-keeping with its surroundings.

6. ACCESS;

- External access to the houses to be provided via private drive areas from the existing access lanes. Adequate parking areas are to be maintained to ensure good access to the front door is provided at all times.
- Proposed finished floor level to be minimum 150mm above the external ground levels to comply with Building Regulations.
- Approach to the principal entrance of the house to be via a minimum 900mm wide hard-paved footpath with a maximum 1:20 gradient.
- Access to the proposed house at the principle door to be an "accessible threshold" designed in accordance with guidance contained within "Accessible Thresholds in New Housing: Guidance for House Builders and Designers" by the Stationary Office.
- The principle entrance door to the new house would give a clear minimum unobstructed width of 775mm in strict compliance with Approved Document to Part M of the Building Regulations (2004).
- All ground floor corridors to be minimum 1200mm wide to enable wheelchair users to access all doors to habitable rooms (including ground floor WC) with doorways providing clear opening width of 750mm minimum.
- The houses to include a WC accessible to wheelchair users in the entrance storey. WC to be centrally located (opposite door) in minimum 900mm wide WC compartment, with minimum 750mm clear space in front of WC.
- All electrical switches and sockets to be installed at appropriate heights between 450mm and 1200mm above finished floor level.

7. RODERICK JAMES ARCHITECTS LLP PROFILE

Roderick James Architects has become, over the last fifteen years, the leading architectural practice specialising in green oak frame buildings. The practice originated with the original idea of the 'Barn house', as demonstrated at Roderick's own house, Seagull House near Dartmouth in Devon.

Our aim has always been to work closely with clients on their designs and to develop ideas to enable them to realise their dream project.

The practice is at present designing, detailing or completing over seventy individual new houses across the country in addition to several waterside buildings, a church, several visitor centres and restaurants, often in very sensitive locations.

The practice became a registered RIBA practice in 2002, and we are now designing award winning contemporary buildings in addition to our established traditional timber framed houses.

The practice designs warm, friendly, textural buildings with dramatic spatial qualities. Our practice is rooted in the traditions of the past but we are working on designs that use the most contemporary materials in innovative ways.

We look for simple, cost-effective solutions that combine quality with local craftsmanship resisting expensive purpose made components wherever possible.

The preferred approach is for everyone working on the buildings to be fully committed to their completion and the team expect the process to be enjoyable, but efficient. The practice wants the end result to be something with which everyone is proud to have been involved.

