

YORKSHIRE DESIGN REVIEW SERVICE
PANEL REPORT

YDRS 257: Steep Lane
Design Review 2



Status of Report:	Confidential
Date of Review:	6th May 2021
Scheme Description:	Single Dwelling Subject To Paragraph 79 Criteria
Stage:	Draft
Proposals Presented:	Design Workbook, Landscape Proposals
Scheme Representatives:	John Wybor, Architect Andrew Stevenson, Chartered Town Planner Jane Betts, Landscape Architect
Panel Members:	Tom Lonsdale (Chair), Landscape Architect Ric Blenkharn, Architect
Client:	Joe Sawrij
YDRS Staff:	Jamie Wilde, Design Review Manager

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Introduction

The Panel thanks the project team for returning to review with a revised scheme that has clearly reflected on the comments provided at the initial review. The design has moved significantly in a positive direction and is greatly improved, possessing signs of exciting and site-specific design. A much better explanation of the narrative and the client's family history in the area is welcomed which makes a much more compelling case for the proposal.

Overall the project team have taken a big leap forward, and are encouraged to make another positive stride in the same direction. The comments and guidance below highlight areas of potential for further refinement as the detail is developed.

Siting

The project team are commended for reassessing potential options for the siting and orientation of the dwelling rather than restrict it entirely to the former car-park area. The current preferred option, moved south-eastwards, has a stronger rationale for a composition embracing the whole site and cottages in a cluster typical of this area of Pennine landscape. It is felt that the previous concern relating to the proximity and dumb elevation parallel to the cottages has been addressed resulting in a much more respectful and subtle siting. The visual impact from the cottages towards the proposed house has been reduced whilst maintaining a degree of visual interest and ample splays of visibility

Landscape

Setting the dwelling back from Steep Lane has created a more open feel, which has mitigated the Panel's previous concern about the impact on openness. This is further balanced by the considerable benefit to the overall landscape by restoring the site from its despoiled and abandoned condition, which jars in the agriculturally managed surroundings.

More could be made of the opportunities around the wetland area, the pond and the overall connection to and relationship with water on the site. Water is a defining characteristic of the area and a comprehensive strategy to enhance the scale and functionality of the features should be sought. Depending on the reliability of the spring the pond could be made much bigger. At present it is a timid acceptance of a small body of open water dwarfed by the surrounding vegetation. The reliability of the spring should be assessed and options to enhance the stream should be explored. The spring, stream and ponds are the site's key assets which should be exploited further, capable of enhancing both the ecological habitat and outdoor amenity for the house, with differential marginal treatment on each side of the main pond. Rills are also welcomed for surface water runoff, combining with the wetland management for a good SUDS regime.

More work could be done on the entrance and arrival to the site. Enclosing the entrance courtyard with drystone walls instead of vegetation could be explored. Going further perhaps a greater sense of enclosure could be achieved through the inclusion of a drystone wall that wraps from the leisure block in the south towards the garage block that helps to define and distinguish the surrounding site from the courtyard. The entrance still feels a little municipal with the formally marked parking bays. Either separate the pedestrian and vehicular access or make them one shared surface. The

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journey towards the front door should be considered along with thought around the choice of flooring materials for the entrance and parking. Friendly welcoming gates are encouraged and perhaps could be supported by a layby before the gates to create a more practical and welcoming area.

Drystone wall restoration promises to give the site a very strong sense of local character but it needs to be self-evident what function each length performs by adjusting their form and detail. Those west, south and east of the site function to contain livestock, so restore them as they are and speak with the farmer to see if they can be raised so that the supplementary fencing can be removed. On Steep Lane the wall acts as a retaining wall and then will have to transition neatly into the entrance arrangement. Think about the visual language of the wall and the experience it can add to visitors and passers-by, so that the walls collectively define a clear enclosure of restored and upgraded landscape to complement the agricultural fields without.

Architectural Design

From where the project was a few months ago the design is a tremendous improvement that is now on the right track.

The drystone wall elements are a positive design move that can root the proposal in its context. The project team should demonstrate how this will be read as an edge to Steep Lane. This could be done through high quality 3D visuals.

The orientation of the southern block could perhaps be rotated clockwise so that the element plays open to the east to provide a more generous and enjoyable courtyard space that would improve the relationship with the pond and provide better spill-out living quarters for the family to enjoy. At present the Panel feel that its narrowing focuses the space inward but this is a subjective judgement.

Options to strengthen the entrance to the house. Think about the journey and experience of entering the house. At present the entrance is a double height space with a single door. Could it be friendlier and more generous, matching the overall ambition for the rest of the house and site. The two bedrooms to the east will have great views down the valley. The two northern bedrooms have no aspect to the garden which is a disappointing consequence of the strong and efficient pattern of circulation: further study may produce a way of achieving both.

Battering the north side of the elevation could make for some striking windows. The east and west elevations come together well.

There is one opening on the southern elevation with both timber and stone above it. That could be resolved and neaten up.

The Panel support the increased height of the living room in the revised design. Overall the materiality is a satisfying and well-reasoned set of choices that reflect the local character and the prospective occupants' field of business. It also underpins the laudable ambitions of the scheme's environmental performance: if true net zero carbon can be achieved it will set this development apart in a manner worthy of Paragraph 79. To that end the panel are pleased to learn that independent certification under Passivhaus will give the necessary authentication.

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Report drafted by Jamie Wilde, Yorkshire Design Review Manager

Checked and approved by Tom Lonsdale, Panel Chair, Landscape Architect

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