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Planning
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PLANNING STATEMENT

June 2015

Site Address:

The Holly Bush Public House, 181 High Lane, Brown Edge,
Staffordshire, ST6 8QA

Applicant:

The Peacock Group

Proposal:

Erection of 3no. detached dwellings and creation of
new car park and vehicular access to serve public house (outline)

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 30th June 2015

Job Reference: RDP/2015/080

Report Prepared By:

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Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by The Peacock Group to submit a planning application for the erection of three detached, two storey dwellings on the car park of the Holly Bush Public House, High Lane, Brown Edge, along with the creation of a new car park and vehicular access to the rear of the public house. The application represents a re-submission following the withdrawal of application SMD/2015/0114.
- 1.2 The application is made in outline and seeks approval of matters of layout, scale and means of access. Matters of appearance and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval.
- 1.3 The plans accompanying the application indicate the retention of the existing public house, and the erection of three detached dwellings, each comprising of three/four bedrooms along with a kitchen, dining room and living room. The dwellings will stand to 8 metres to their ridge and will each occupy a footprint of 87.49sq.m. Each dwelling will also benefit from two parking spaces and direct access off High Lane, along with a substantial area of domestic curtilage to the rear. The application also proposes the creation of a new vehicular access to the east of the public house, along with the provision of a new car park to the rear of the site. A substantial beer garden area will also be retained.
- 1.4 Pre-application discussions have been entered into with the Local Authority in respect of this revised scheme, who are supportive of the proposal as it allows for the retention of the local heritage asset, and the provision/retention of a pub garden space is seen as positive. It was noted that the proposal would involve the loss of the existing car park, but it was

considered that the proposal represents a good compromise to safeguard the community interests and could be recommended for support.

- 1.5 Pre-application discussions have also been entered into with the Local Highway Authority who have confirmed that the provision of the new vehicular access and car park would be acceptable to them. The level of parking provision was furthermore considered to be quite adequate.

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located within settlement boundary of Brown Edge and comprises the Holly Bush Public House and its extensive car park and beer garden. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area, nor does the building constitute a Listed Building. The public house has nevertheless recently been registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and has been classified as a non-designated heritage asset by the Local Authority.
- 2.2 The application site fronts onto High Lane and benefits from two vehicular access points which serve either end of the car park. The public house itself sits forward within the site towards its north-easternmost end. To the south-west of the site lies a vehicle repair garage, whilst to the north-west lies an area of public open space. Beyond High Lane to the south-east lies residential development, whilst to the north-east lies the vehicular access to the Brown Edge playing fields.
- 2.3 The site is previously developed and therefore constitutes a brownfield site. The village benefits from good public transport connections to the wider area, including hourly services to Hanley (Stoke-on-Trent) and less frequent services to Leek, Buxton and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

3. Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be relevant:

3.2 Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole;*
- *or specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

- 3.3 Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy relates to Development Principles and states that the Council will expect development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, amongst others, easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community; development which maintains the distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings, and development that secures high quality, sustainable environments.
- 3.4 Policy SS3 of the Core Strategy states that development will be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and rural areas. In identifying land for new development or in considering planning applications, development shall also be compatible with the settlement hierarchy identified in policies SS5-SS6 which seek to distribute new residential development between the three market towns of Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph (72% in total), with the remaining 28% distributed within the rural areas, focused on the 'larger villages'.
- 3.5 Policy SS6A of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Larger Villages Area Strategy' and states that these settlements (of which Brown Edge is one) shall retain and enhance their role as rural service centres, providing for the bulk of the local housing needs of the rural areas. The policy goes on to state that their role as rural service centres will be enhanced by protecting services and facilities which are essential to sustain rural living, and that local housing needs will be met by increasing the range of available and affordable housing types and allocating a range of deliverable housing types primarily within the urban area in location across the village with good accessibility to local services and facilities.
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- 3.6 Policy C1 of the Core Strategy states that the District Council will resist proposals involving the loss of community facilities unless:
- i. an alternative facility of the same type is available or can be provided in an accessible location in the same locality; or
 - ii. a viability appraisal including a marketing exercise by a qualified professional demonstrates that there are no options for continued use Staffordshire Moorlands as a community facility which are financially viable and it can be demonstrated that loss of the facility would not disadvantage local residents.
- 3.7 Policy H1 of the Core Strategy states that new housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in policy H2 of Core Strategy. Policy H1 goes on to state that all development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified local housing market needs and the strategy for the area, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision. It adds that residential development on unidentified 'windfall' sites will be permitted up to a maximum size of 9 dwellings within the Development Boundaries of the towns and larger villages. The policy also states that new dwellings should be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers, whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing occupiers.
- 3.8 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that new development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Proposals should be
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designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of new housing throughout the country, and encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. It also promotes the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages. The content of this document is explored in more detail, where relevant, in the Statement of Case below.

Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2014)

- 4.2 This document sets out the Local Authority's performance in respect of housing land supply and housing delivery. It confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing land equivalent to 2.17 years supply.

5 Statement of Case

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that development proposals should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, and that proposals which accord with an up-to-date plan should be approved. Development that conflicts with an up-to-date plan should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 5.2 This application represents a re-submission following the withdrawal of application SMD/2015/0114, which sought consent to demolish the existing public house and erect 6 new dwellings in its place. The pub has recently been registered as an Asset of Community Value as well as a non-designated heritage asset, and its proposed demolition had raised considerable concern amongst local residents. The applicant has listened to these concerns, and has now revised the proposals to retain the public house. As a consequence, the proposal no longer involves the loss of a community facility, and as such is consistent with the provisions of policy C1 of the adopted Core Strategy. It is nevertheless hoped that efforts are made by local residents to frequent the premises on a more regular basis to make it a more viable long-term proposition.
- 5.3 The application still seeks consent to erect new dwellings on the existing pub car park, but this is considered to be entirely appropriate and consistent with local and national planning policy. The loss of the existing car park is to be compensated for through the creation of a new car park to the rear of the site, accessed via a new vehicular access to the east of the public house.
- 5.4 Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will expect development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, amongst others, easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community; development which maintains the distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings, and development that secures high quality, sustainable environments. Policy SS3 of the Core Strategy adds that new development should be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and the rural areas.
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- 5.5 Policy SS6A of the Core Strategy relates specifically to the 'Larger Villages Area Strategy' and states that these settlements (of which Brown Edge is one) shall retain and enhance their role as rural service centres, providing for the bulk of the local housing needs of the rural areas. The policy goes on to state that their role as rural service centres will be retained and enhanced by (amongst others) meeting local housing needs by increasing the range of available and affordable housing types and allocating a range of deliverable housing types primarily within the urban area in location across the village with good accessibility to local services and facilities. The emerging Site Allocations DPD suggests that Brown Edge will need to accommodate in the order of 65 dwellings over the plan period.
- 5.6 The application site lies within the settlement boundary of the Brown Edge, and comprises a brownfield site that can be satisfactorily serviced and benefits from close proximity to local shops, schools and public transport connections. The site is therefore considered to constitute a sustainable location for new development, and is consistent with the provisions of policies SS1, SS3 and SS6A of the adopted Core Strategy.
- 5.7 The provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reinforce these conclusions. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that that Local Authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements, with an additional buffer of 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.
- 5.8 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF goes on to state that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with paragraph 14 confirming that where a Local Authority is

unable to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing, planning permission should be granted unless:

“any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole” (my emphasis)

5.9 The latest housing land supply figures for Staffordshire Moorlands, as set out in the Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2014), confirm that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing land equivalent to 2.17 years supply. This is substantially below the five year deliverable supply that the Local Authority is required to provide under the provisions of paragraph 47 of the NPPF. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 14 of the NPPF is therefore relevant to this proposal.

5.10 The NPPF confirms in paragraph 7 that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The proposal will contribute positively to the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development through the retention of the public house (a non-designated heritage asset and asset of community value) and the support that occupants of the dwellings will give to other services on offer within the village and the wider area through additional household expenditure. The erection of the new dwellings will also derive significant social benefits associated with helping the Local Authority to meet its significant shortfall in housing land supply. The proposal will furthermore fulfil the environmental role of sustainable development owing to its reuse of previously developed land, something which is explicitly supported by the NPPF, with paragraph 111 and Core Planning Principle 8 stating that:

“planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value”.

- 5.11 In this regard I draw comparisons between the proposed development and a recently allowed at appeal at Biddulph, where consent was granted for the erection of a new dwelling in the Green Belt (see Appendix A). In allowing the appeal the Planning Inspector concluded that:

“16. The Council have confirmed they cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The proposal would add to the local housing stock and make a positive, albeit modest, contribution towards reducing the current deficit of housing in the area. This is a clear economic and social benefit associated with the scheme to which I attach significant weight”

“17. The appeal scheme through the construction of the dwelling and expenditure associated with an additional household in the area would deliver further economic benefits. I afford modest weight to these considerations”

- 5.12 Similar conclusions can be reached in respect of the current submission, and I submit that the comments raised by the Planning Inspector serve to demonstrate the significant weight that should be afforded to the aforementioned benefits.

- 5.13 Overall, I conclude that this proposal represents an appropriate form of sustainable residential development in one of the ‘larger villages’ as defined

within the Core Strategy (policy SS6a refers), and will involve the reuse of a brownfield site which is one of the key planning principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed development would also comply with the development strategy envisaged for the Staffordshire Moorlands as set out in policies SS1, SS3 and SS6A of the Core Strategy, and would assist in meeting the acknowledged shortfall in housing land supply thereby reducing pressure for new developments on the edges of existing settlements. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Layout, Scale & Means of Access

- 5.14 Paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, stating that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The NPPF goes on to state in paragraph 58 that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; should establish a strong sense of place by creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, and should create safe and accessible environments that are also visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 5.15 These provisions are reflected in policy DC1 of the Core Strategy which seeks to ensure that proposals respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscape, character and appearance. Policy H1 of the Core Strategy adds

detached properties that are set back from the site frontage in way that reflects the established character of the area.

- 5.18 The proposal will furthermore safeguard the existing public house and retain its presence and prominence within the streetscene, whilst also safeguarding its aesthetic and architectural value as a non-designated heritage asset. The significance of this non-designated heritage asset will therefore not be adversely affected by the proposed development. It is furthermore noted that the proposed layout of the site incorporates the retention of a large beer garden area, including space for gazebos / marquees in order to facilitate the use of the site for local events.
- 5.19 In terms of the layout of the residential component of the scheme, the space achieved between the proposed dwellings is reflective of the surrounding area. Existing dwellings in the local area typically have a distance between themselves that ranges between 1-4 metres. The proposed development by comparison exhibits distances well within this established range (typically 2 metres) and will therefore reinforce the character of the local area. Low-level frontage walls will also be provided to enclose the plots, supplemented by soft landscaping, to further reinforce the character of the local area.
- 5.20 In addition to the above considerations, the proposed layout has also been designed to ensure that it meets the Local Authority's informal amenity standards that are set out in Appendix 3 to the now redundant Local Plan. These require that an interface distance of 22 metres be achieved between dwellings that have principal windows facing one another. The proposed development will accord with this standard, achieving an average distance of 23 metres between the proposed dwellings and the properties opposite.

- 5.21 The standards in Appendix 3 also require a minimum garden area of 65sq.m. to be achieved, with a mean length of 11 metres. The proposed development will comfortably meet these two requirements with each property benefiting from a minimum rear garden area of 220sq.m. and a mean length of some 21 metres. As a consequence the proposed development is considered unlikely to detract from the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.22 The presence of the adjacent repair garage is noted, but it is considered that its operations are confined principally to within the existing building, and that the provision of appropriate glazing to the proposed dwellings will serve to avoid any adverse impact on the amenity of future occupiers. The presence of the retained beer garden is also acknowledged, but it is considered that future occupiers of the adjacent dwelling would be aware of the presence of the public house when purchasing the dwelling, and any impacts could be mitigated through the provision of landscaping/planting and fencing along the easternmost boundary of the closest dwelling. In doing so the residential amenity of future occupiers will be satisfactory.
- 5.23 In terms of matters of scale, the surrounding area is characterised by two storey development. These vary in terms of their ridge heights and range between 7 and 9 metres. The proposed development by comparison proposes dwellings that will stand to a maximum ridge height of 8 metres. This is considered to be in-keeping with the established character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.24 Properties within the surrounding area vary considerably in terms of their width, with narrower terraced properties being typically 4 metres in width, semi-detached properties between 5 and 9 metres in width, and detached

properties ranging between 7 and 12 metres in width. Property depths are similarly varied, ranging between 6 and 15 metres. The proposed development by comparison incorporates dwellings with a width of 9 metres and a depth of 10 metres, which is considered to be entirely in-keeping with the established character of the local area.

5.25 This assertion is reinforced by the density of the proposed development. The existing properties surrounding the site exhibit plot/development ratios that vary considerably from smaller terraced plots with very high plot/development ratios, to more spacious detached and semi-detached plots that range between 17% – 28%. The semi-detached and terraced properties opposite the site exhibit plot/development ratios between 22% and 27%. By comparison, the proposed development will encompass plot/development ratio of some 22% which compares favourably with the range exhibited within the immediate area. As a consequence of these considerations I consider the layout and scale of the proposed development to respect and reinforce the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

5.26 In terms of means of access, paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that

“Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe”. (my emphasis)

5.27 The existing site is served by two vehicular access points that serve an extensive car parking area. These access points will be modified to serve two of the three dwelling plots, with a further dropped kerb added to serve the central plot. Each dwelling will benefit from an integral garage along with

frontage parking to ensure that the District Council's maximum parking standard of 2 spaces per dwelling is met. Associated manoeuvring space will also be provided to enable vehicles to leave the site in a forward gear. Visibility splays are accommodated to give each access appropriate visibility on egress, and as a consequence I consider it unlikely that this component of the development will result in any adverse impact on highway or pedestrian safety.

5.28 The application also proposes the creation of a new vehicular access to the east of the public house to serve a new rear car park. This car park will encompass a total of 20 parking spaces which is considered to be quite sufficient for a community pub such as this. Pre-application discussions with the Local Highway Authority have confirmed that this level of parking provision is acceptable, and that the new vehicular access will also be appropriate subject to appropriate visibility splays being provided. These visibility splays are duly shown on the submitted layout plan.

5.29 Concerns had previously been raised by some local residents about the loss of the existing pub car park as a community parking area. However, this is privately owned land and not a designated public car park. The loss of the existing car park is to be mitigated in highway safety terms by the provision of the new car parking area to the rear of the pub, and will not lead to severe impacts to the local highway network. As such I consider it would be unreasonable to seek to resist this proposal on the grounds of the loss of the existing pub car park.

5.30 A further consideration in respect of highway safety is the proximity of the site to existing public transport connections. There are bus stops immediately adjacent to the site which provide hourly connections to Hanley

(Stoke-on-Trent) and the associated services and facilities that it has on offer. The site is also located within comfortable walking distance of the post office, mini-supermarket and newsagents, as well as the local school, and as a consequence future occupiers of the dwellings needn't be reliant upon the car as their sole means of transport, and that as a result the proposal will help to deliver sustainable travel patterns.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

6.2 It is considered that the proposed development represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The application site constitutes a brownfield site within the settlement boundary of a larger village, and the proposed development constitutes a sustainable form of development;
- The proposal entails the retention of the existing public house, thereby safeguarding the Asset of Community Value and non-designated heritage asset;

- The Local Authority is unable to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing and as such planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts arising would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development;
- The proposed development will contribute to meeting the Local Authority's recognised shortfall in housing supply, and will result in economic benefits associated with additional household expenditure;
- The proposed layout of the development is in-keeping with the established development pattern that characterises the surrounding area, including its relationship to surrounding development and plot/development ratios;
- The proposed layout will not result in any harm to neighbouring amenity;
- The proposed scale of the development is in-keeping with the character of the surrounding area;
- The proposal provides adequate parking and manouvering space in accordance with the Local Authority's standards and will not have an adverse impact on highway safety.

6.3 As a consequence of the above points it is considered that the proposed development meets the requirements of policies SS1, SS3, SS6A, C1, H1 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, as well as meeting the requirements of the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.4 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant outline planning permission for the proposed development.