

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

ADDRESS : Land opposite New Inn PH, Leek Road, Longsdon, ST9 9QF
APPLICANT : JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd
PROPOSAL : Erection of dwellings (outline)
DATE : November 2015 **JOB No.** : 2015-2039

DESIGN

Assessment Area

The application proposes the erection of new dwellings on land that sits to the southwest of the junction of Denford Road and Leek Road. The site is opposite the former New Inn PH that has recently received planning permission for the conversion of the building to two dwellings and the erection of two new dwellings on the former car park. The site is within the Green Belt. Given the nature of the proposal and its location, it is considered that the context that will influence the proposal is the character of the existing site, the character of approved buildings nearby and the character of the settlement of Longsdon.

Context

The application site measures about 0.311 ha. and is a small paddock on the south side of Leek Road. To the east of the site (towards Leek) is the former New Inn PH which is a two storey white painted building. The front of the building faces Denford Road, and by doing so also faces the site. To the south of the former pub is the site of the former pub car park. This has planning permission for two large detached houses. These dwellings will have a presence on Denford Road but will also be seen from Leek Road. The former public house has a longer frontage onto Leek Road where its "built-up" character is probably at its greatest. There is then an open stretch of land of about 150m to the edge of the village. To the west of the site (towards Endon) is a further open stretch of land before reaching a cluster of development around the junction of the A53 and Old Leek Road.

Longsdon itself is a small village located on the A53 whose centre (assuming this is the Leek Road/Sutherland Avenue/School Lane crossroads) is only about 200m from the Leek settlement boundary. The village is "washed over" by a Green Belt designation that seeks to prevent development that might prevent the village and the town coalescing.

The Core Strategy proposes the drawing of a village boundary within which new development would be allowed. The application site forms part of a submission to the Council for release for future housing (the SHLAA- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment).

Planning Policy and Evaluation

The Development Plan for the area consists of the "saved" policies of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the recently adopted Core Strategy.

The Local Plan shows the application site located in an area an area of open countryside that has been included in the North Staffordshire Green Belt. The Green Belt extends from the south west side of Leek to the City boundary and is in force to control development that might erode the openness between these major settlements. There are village "insets" where development is allowed in some of the intervening settlements. However, Longsdon does not have a village boundary and all development proposals are to be considered against Green Belt Policy.

The Green Belt policy of the Local Plan was contained in Policy N2. This stated that, except in the case of exceptional circumstances, there is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The Core Strategy policy has left this intact.

The National Planning Policy Framework includes a section on the management of development in the Green Belt. This policy and the Local Plan/Core Strategy policy are similar.

These policies state that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is “inappropriate” and that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. The exceptions to this policy are listed in paragraph 89 of the Framework. These include “limited infilling in villages”. The “saved” policy N3 of the Local Plan describes appropriate infilling to represent “the development of gaps within an otherwise substantially built up frontage” where the gaps “are no wider than two plots of similar width to plots within the surrounding frontage” and where the development would not cause “loss of amenity to the locality”.

In terms of this criteria:-

1. The application site is considered to be part of a gap between the New Inn site and the junction of the A53 and Leek Old Road and as such is seen as an infill plot;
2. The application is in outline and could be conditioned to represent only up to 2 dwellings. The applicant however has in mind the erection of up to 4 large dwellings;
3. The application site does not have an amenity value. It is mostly hidden from the public view by an overgrown hedge.

The application is considered to propose a development that meets the policy guidelines. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Green Belt policy and may be allowed without harming the purposes of the Green Belt.

INVOLVEMENT

The application site forms part of a SHLAA proposal to be allocated for housing in the Council's future housing allocation. The Council's omitted the site from the assessment but representations were made at the last consultation process to re-establish it in the process.

DESIGN

Use

The application proposes the use of the site for residential purposes. The application is in outline and proposes the erection of up to 4 dwellings on the site. This form of development is considered to reflect the nature and character of existing development near the site.

Amount

The application proposes the erection of up to four dwellings on the site. This scale of development up to two dwellings is considered to comply with Green Belt policy. However, a scheme of four dwellings is considered to be inkeeping with the pattern of development nearby especially the four approved dwellings on the New Inn site.

Scale

This is an outline application. The scale of the proposed development is a reserved matter that would be appropriately dealt with in a detailed application.

Landscaping

The site is within a rural setting and benefits from existing boundary landscaping. Some of these may need to be managed in order to meet highway visibility requirements. The application site is capable of accommodating further landscaping.

Appearance

Appearance is a reserved matter that would be appropriately dealt with in a detailed application.

ACCESS

The site has the ability to take an access off either Leek Road or Denford Road with the latter likely to be the most reasonable solution. However, this matter is reserved for later approval but the application drawing does include an indicative access at this point.

VEHICULAR AND TRANSPORT LINKS

The site is close to the outskirts of Leek Town boundary. Leek Town Centre provides shopping, employment and leisure facilities. Public transport routes are accessible to Leek, other parts of the Moorlands and the City of Stoke on Trent.

INCLUSIVE ACCESS

The proposed development is capable of making provision for access by less abled people.