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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Planning Portal Reference: PP-04784310

Holly Ash, Ford Hayes Lane, Hulme, Staffordshire Moorlands, ST3 5BJ

Proposed application of outer skin of bricks with stone quoins to existing dwelling incorporating alterations to position and size of windows, and retention of use of land surrounding dwelling as domestic garden.

The Application Site

The site comprises of a former agricultural building which was granted a Certificate of Lawful Development for use as a single private dwellinghouse on the 27th August 2015 (SMD/2015/0440) and a modest area of land surrounding it.

Proposal

The application building is a two storey detached house. It is situated on the north side of Ford Hayes Lane about half way between its junction with Hulme Lane and the City boundary. It forms part of a larger parcel of land that is farmed by the applicants.

The application building measures 19m long x 12m deep and is two storeys high. It has a gabled form. The building has been constructed of a single skin of concrete block except for the east facing gable of which about a third consists an uninsulated sheet of profiled metal sheet. The roof consist of profiled metal sheet which is also uninsulated.

The exterior of the concrete block walls contain ties that are ready to receive an exterior skin. There are four fireplaces in the building each having a metal flue.

The existing windows are made of uPVC, are of differing designs and colours. The majority are top-hung.

There are two porches on the building. The front (south facing) is of timber construction, has a gabled roof and is open fronted. The rear porch (north facing) is of concrete block construction and has a sloping metal sheet roof.

The proposal has two elements to it- to apply a brick skin and tiled roof to the building and to regularise the use of a modest area of land around the building to provide a domestic garden.

1. Brick skin and tiled roof. This proposal is aimed at achieving two things- to give the building a more attractive appearance and to provide a modern standard of insulation to the applicant's home.
2. The area of land around the building included in the application site has been used as a garden for the same amount of time as the building has been used as a dwelling.

Planning Policy

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area is the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and "saved" local plan policies.

1. "Saved Policies".

The principal part of the local plan policies that have a part to play in this proposal is its designation of the site as Green Belt.

2. The Core Strategy

Core Strategy R1 Rural Diversification states that new development in the rural areas will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character and appearance and biodiversity of the countryside. It also states that development in the Green Belt will need to be supported by very special circumstances.

Assessment

The alterations to the building are not considered to breach Green Belt policy. The National Planning Policy Framework considers that proportionate additions to existing dwellings in the Green Belt are considered to be appropriate. The internal volume of the application building will not alter as a result of the proposal. The external increase in mass caused by the proposed outer brick skin will be minimal. The proposed removal of the single storey brick addition on the western gable will reduce this minimal increase further. For this reason it is considered that this element of the proposal will not breach Green Belt policy.

The proposed alterations of the building will improve the appearance and character of the countryside. The application building has an appearance that is not conducive to its domestic use. Its appearance is a product of its history which started as an agricultural building. That history is now closed and its current and future use is a single dwelling. The proposed changes will deliver that.

The proposal would also enhance the sustainable credentials of the application building by introducing modern heat insulation.

The garden element of the proposal is contrary to Green Belt policy. The application is therefore required to show very special circumstances.

The application building has a unique history. It started its life as an agricultural building. The granting of the CLUD application by the Council shows that the building has been used as a dwelling for more than ten years. During that period the building has naturally developed a curtilage without which access between it and the public highway would have been impossible. The residential curtilage has been used for more than ten years. The applicants are convinced that the statutory declarations that supported the lawful use of the application building as a dwelling could equally contest to the use of the application site as a garden. There is little doubt that the use of the building as a dwelling and the use of the site as its garden ran concurrently. It is inconceivable that the building could be used without a residential curtilage around it. The building is separated from the public highway and without a curtilage, access to the site by foot and car could not have been achieved. The submission of a CLUD for the garden has not been pursued because it has been decided to seek planning permission with the application to skin the application building with bricks and construct a tiled roof. This is considered to a substantial very special circumstance in favour of the proposal.

The second very special circumstance relates to the reasonable need for a dwelling to have a garden. The proposed area is modest and reasonable for the size and location of the application building.

Conclusions

The Council is required by law to determine the proposal in accordance with current development plan policy. These point to the need to protect the Green Belt and the appearance and character of the countryside.

For the reasons stated above it is considered that the proposal does accord with the policies of the development plan and therefore, in accordance with planning legislation, the proposal should be granted planning permission. There are considered to be no material other considerations that would justify this not happening.

Yours faithfully,

David Breakwell
For Horsley Sparrow Consultancy Limited