Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

THE COTTAGE, HILL TOP, BROWN EDGE

JUNE 2016

Site Address:
The Cottage, Hill Top, Brown Edge, Staffordshire, ST6 8TY

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. Corbett

Proposal:
Proposed alterations and extensions to dwelling

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 6th June 2016
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Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Corbett to submit a full planning application for alterations and extensions to an existing detached property known as The Cottage, Hill Top, Brown Edge.

1.2 The proposal entails the demolition of an existing single storey conservatory that is attached to the southernmost gable of the existing dwelling, along with the demolition of an existing car port that is attached to the existing detached garage to the south of the dwelling. The conservatory will be replaced by a part first floor extension and part two-storey extension to the existing south projecting wing of the dwelling. The accommodation proposed will encompass an enlarged kitchen at ground floor, with an additional bedroom and bathroom at first floor.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt, and comprises a substantial triangular shaped plot that extends to approximately 0.35 hectares. Located at the northernmost end of the site is the existing two storey detached cottage, with white render elevations and Staffordshire Blue plain clay tile roof. It exhibits a series of dormer windows on its southern elevation and has a large southerly projecting wing. To the south of the cottage lies a large detached outbuilding that comprises a two-storey garage and mono-pitched carport. The latter of these is proposed for demolition. Vehicular access is taken direct off Hill Top which forms the western boundary to the site, and serves a large parking and manouvering area. A further detached outbuilding is located in the south-easternmost corner of the site, with the remainder of the site laid out as residential

amenity space. An aerial photograph showing the site in its surrounding context is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph of Site



Source: Google Maps

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 (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

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 SS6c of the Core Strategy states that the rural areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, and promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that the Council will meet essential local needs by (amongst others) allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2. It goes on to state that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.4 Policy R2 of the Core Strategy seeks to restrict housing development within the rural areas to a limited number of forms. The list of appropriate forms of

development includes the extension of existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.

3.5 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 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 confirms that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should only be permitted where very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm by inappropriateness and any other harm. It sets out a number of categories of appropriate development, which includes the limited extension of buildings provided that they do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, as well as the replacement of existing buildings where they are in the same use and are not materially larger in size. The content of this document is explored in more detail in the Planning Assessment below.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and proposes the extension and alteration of an existing dwelling. Policy SS6c of the adopted Core Strategy allows for the extension or replacement of an

existing rural building as a means of meeting essential local needs. It nevertheless requires proposals to also accord with the provisions of policy R2 of the Core Strategy and confirms that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Policy R2 of the Core Strategy confirms that extensions to existing dwellings will be acceptable provided that:

> *"they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area".*

5.2 These provisions broadly reflect the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out the Government's approach to development within the Green Belt. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 88 of the NPPF goes on to confirm that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt, and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

5.3 These provisions are reinforced through paragraph 89 of the NPPF which confirms that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate within the Green Belt. It nevertheless goes on to list a number of exceptions, which includes:

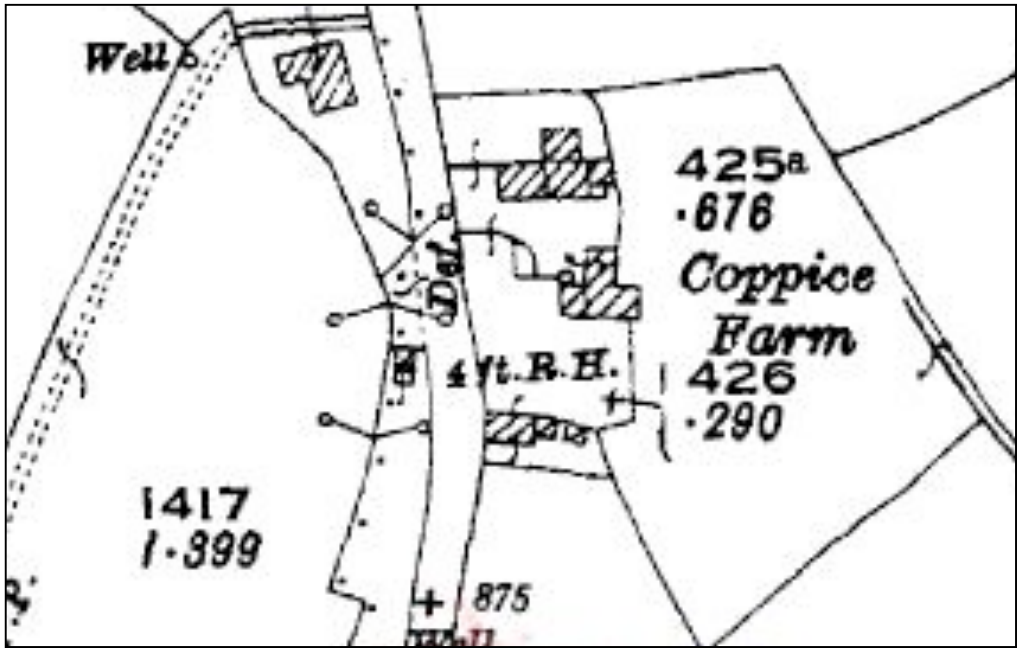
> *"the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building"*

and…

"the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces";

5.4 Following a review of the site history and consideration of historic Ordnance Survey maps (see Figure 2 below), it is considered that the original dwelling comprises the main two-storey section of the dwelling that runs east/west across the northern end of the site. The single storey front additions and the south projecting wing all appear to constitute previous additions.

Figure 2 – Extract of Historic Ordnance Survey Map (1924)



Source: old-maps.co.uk

5.5 A number of previous additions have been made to the property which has increased its overall volume by more than the 30-40% increase that would usually be considered to constitute a proportionate addition. Accordingly, any further additions to the dwelling over and above this figure are likely to

be considered to constitute a disproportionate addition, and thus a form of inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

5.6 However, in this instance, the applicant acknowledges the Green Belt status of this site and in order to provide a much needed additional bedroom at first floor level for their growing family, they have decided to propose the demolition of the existing ground floor conservatory, along with the existing mono-pitched car port to the side of the detached garage, in order to off-set the impact of the proposed part first floor, part two-storey extension.

5.7 The existing conservatory encompasses a volume of approximately $43m^3$, whereas carport amounts to some $111m^3$. The demolition of these structures would therefore represent a total demolition of existing buildings in the region of $154m^3$. The proposed part first floor, part two-storey extension will add a total volume of approximately $55m^3$, and as such will represent a net overall reduction in built volume across the site of approximately $99m^3$. I would therefore respectfully submit that this proposal accords with the provisions of paragraph 89 of the NPPF in that the development will not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original dwelling having regard to the proposed demolition of the existing conservatory and carport. The proposal furthermore involves the replacement of a building that is within the same use as the existing building and which is not materially larger.

5.8 Nevertheless, if the Local Authority disagrees with this interpretation and concludes that the proposal amounts to a form of inappropriate development I would submit that the substantial net reduction in overall built development on the site, as discussed above, and the resultant enhancement to the openness of the Green Belt that will ensue, amounts to

a demonstration of very special circumstances sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.

5.9 I reach this conclusion having regard to the provisions of paragraph 80 of the NPPF which sets out the five purposes of Green Belts, which will be positively enhanced as a consequence of this proposal, and the provisions of paragraph 81 of the NPPF, which seeks to secure beneficial enhancements to the Green Belt, including its visual amenity and landscape. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle and accords with the provisions of policies SS6c and R2 of the adopted Core Strategy.

Design

5.10 In terms of design, 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 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.

5.11 It is submitted that this proposal will add value to the local area, by virtue of the removal of the existing conservatory, which relates poorly to the existing dwelling, and the existing car port. The proposed extension adopts a gabled design that reinforces and respects the character of the existing cottage, and incorporates a dormer window facing the road that takes its cues from those in the southern elevation of the existing dwelling. The larger dormer window on the eastern elevation is designed to maximise available headroom in the new bedroom, reflecting the fact that the extension has had to incorporate a low ridgeline to match that of the existing cottage. This element of the proposal is located away from public view and thus will not have any

appreciable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

5.12 The overall scale of the extension will not dominate the original cottage, which will maintain its presence and elongated form within the site, and the proposal will further reinforce the character of the site by utilising a matching palette of materials and eaves detailing. Having regard to these considerations I submit that the proposed development will be of a high quality and add value to the local area, and not result in detrimental harm to its character and appearance.

5.13 The proposal is not considered to raise any implications in terms of impact on neighbouring amenity as there are no immediate properties who might be overlooked or adversely impacted by the development, and the proposal involves no requirement to change the vehicular access. The proposal is accordingly considered to meet the requirements of policy DC1 of the adopted Core Strategy.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is submitted that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms, having regard to the following conclusions:

- The proposed extensions and alterations will not result in a disproportionate addition to the original dwelling having regard to the proposed demolition of the existing conservatory and carport;

- If the Local Authority nevertheless concludes that the proposal amounts to inappropriate development, it is submitted that the substantial enhancement to the openness of the Green Belt that would ensue as a

consequence of this development constitutes very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the limited harm to the Green Belt;

- The scale and design of the extension relates well to the existing cottage and will not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;

- The proposal will not give rise to any harm to neighbouring amenity, nor to highway safety.

6.2 As a consequence the proposed development is considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS6c, R2 and DC1 of Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.3 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully request to grant planning permission for the proposed extensions and alterations in accordance in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within policy SS1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.