Design and Access Statement

for

New dwelling at
Highfield House, School Lane,
Longsdon, ST9 9QS

Project Reference	**5716**
	Rev - A

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2. Introduction

2.1.Summary

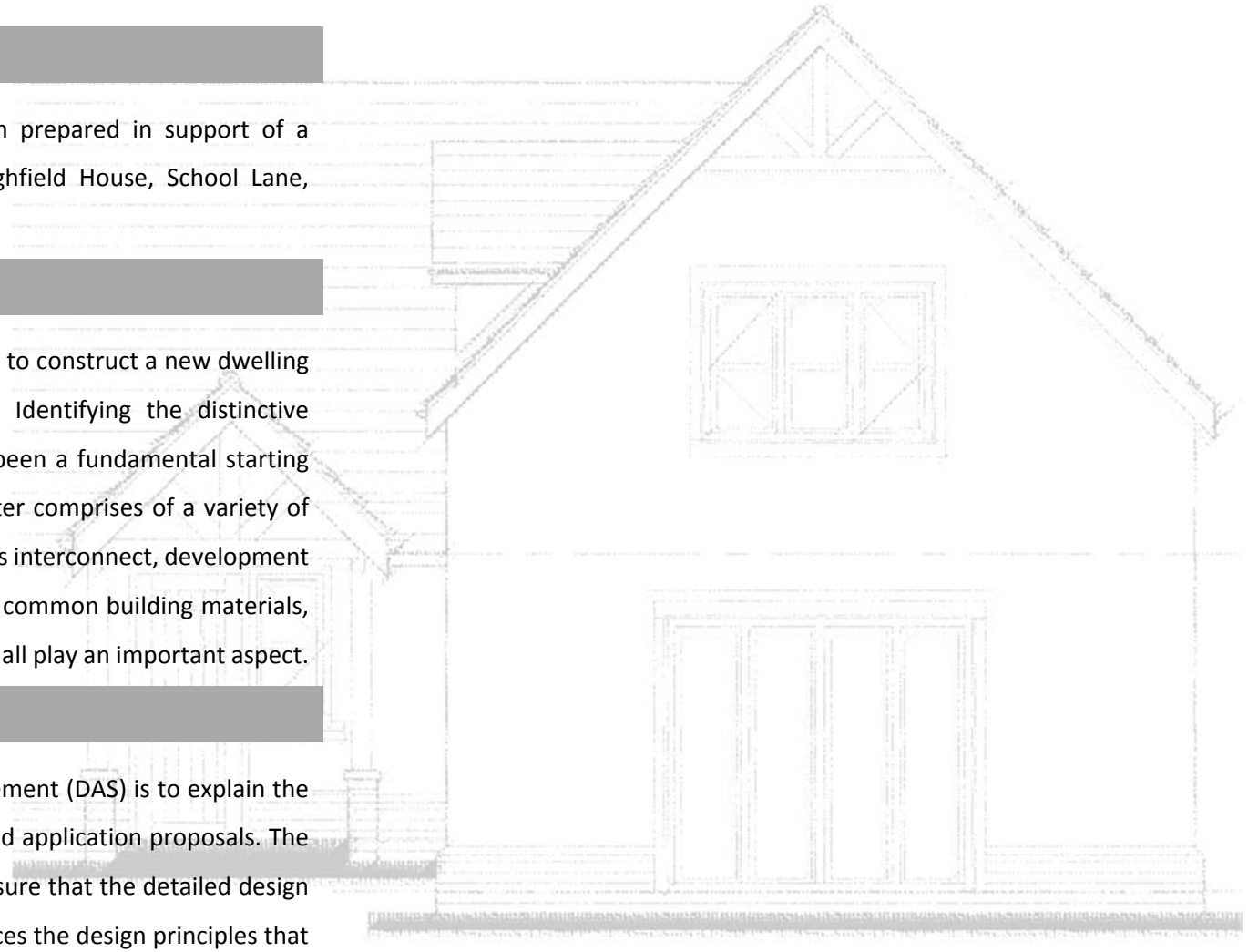
This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for a new dwelling Highfield House, School Lane, Longsdon, ST9 9QU.

2.2.The Vision and Design Objectives

The application seeks full planning permission to construct a new dwelling with associated infrastructure and parking. Identifying the distinctive components that define local character has been a fundamental starting point for the design of the site. Local character comprises of a variety of design elements, from the way in which streets interconnect, development blocks and buildings are arranged, the use of common building materials, visual containment and boundary treatments, all play an important aspect.

2.3.The Purpose of the Statement

The key purpose of the Design & Access Statement (DAS) is to explain the design process, which has led to the vision and application proposals. The DAS will be used by the Local Authority to ensure that the detailed design and the appearance of the application embraces the design principles that have been set out within the DAS. The DAS follows the approach that is



contained within National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), which came into force on 6th March 2014. This states that:

"A Design and Access Statement is a concise report accompanying certain applications for planning permission and applications for listed building consent. They provide a framework for applicants to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. Design and Access Statements can aid decision-making by enabling local planning authorities and third parties to better understand the analysis that has underpinned the design of a development proposal."

In accordance with the above guidance and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2012, the DAS provides information on: use and amount, access, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance. The DAS also demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the scheme and how the design of the development takes that context into account.

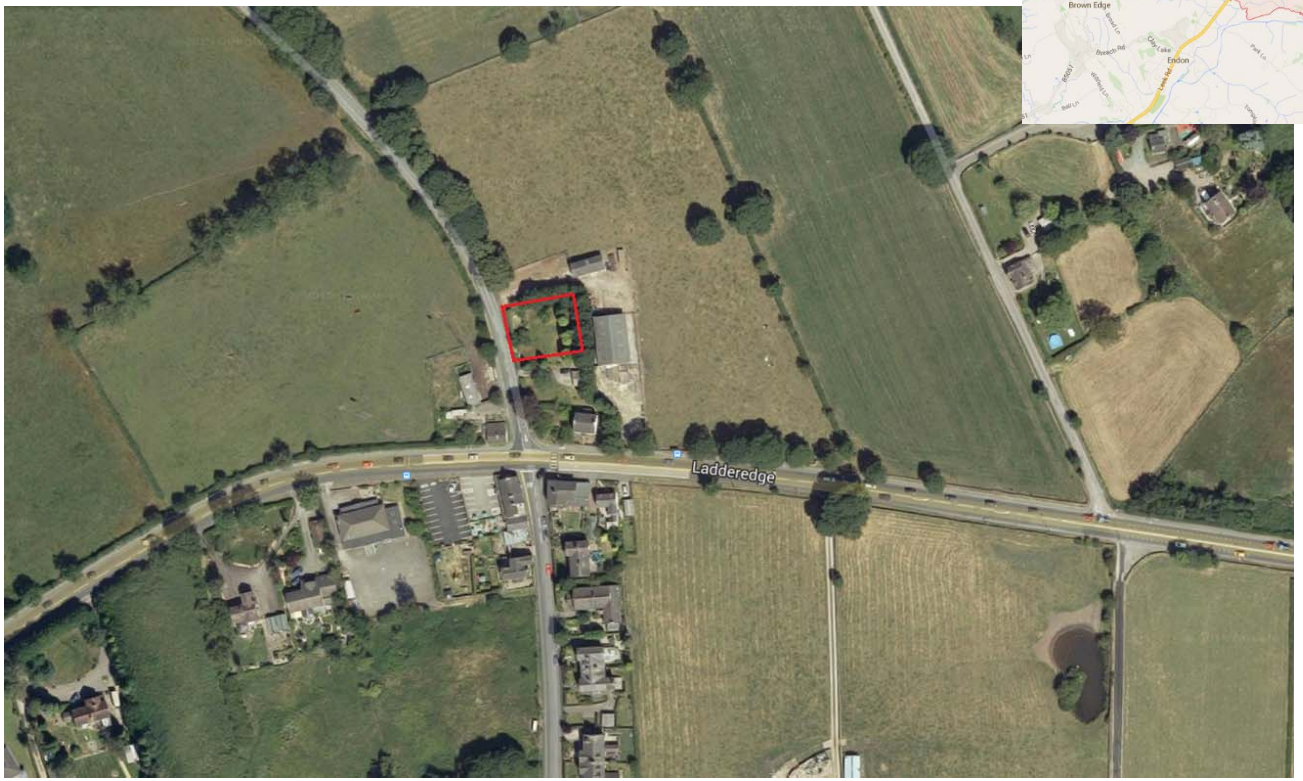
The proposed development has emerged with close reference to Staffs Moorlands DC's design guidance, adopted policies and Local Plan Policies. This Statement seeks to identify the various constraints and influences that have informed the design process and resulted in the submitted design solution hereby presented.

3. Assessment

3.1.Site Location and Context

The site is part of the garden land at Highfield House, School Lane, Longsdon, ST9 9QU. Longsdon is a civil parish and village set between the main town of Leek, to the east and Endon to the west on the A53. The application site is on the right off School Lane.





Aerial View

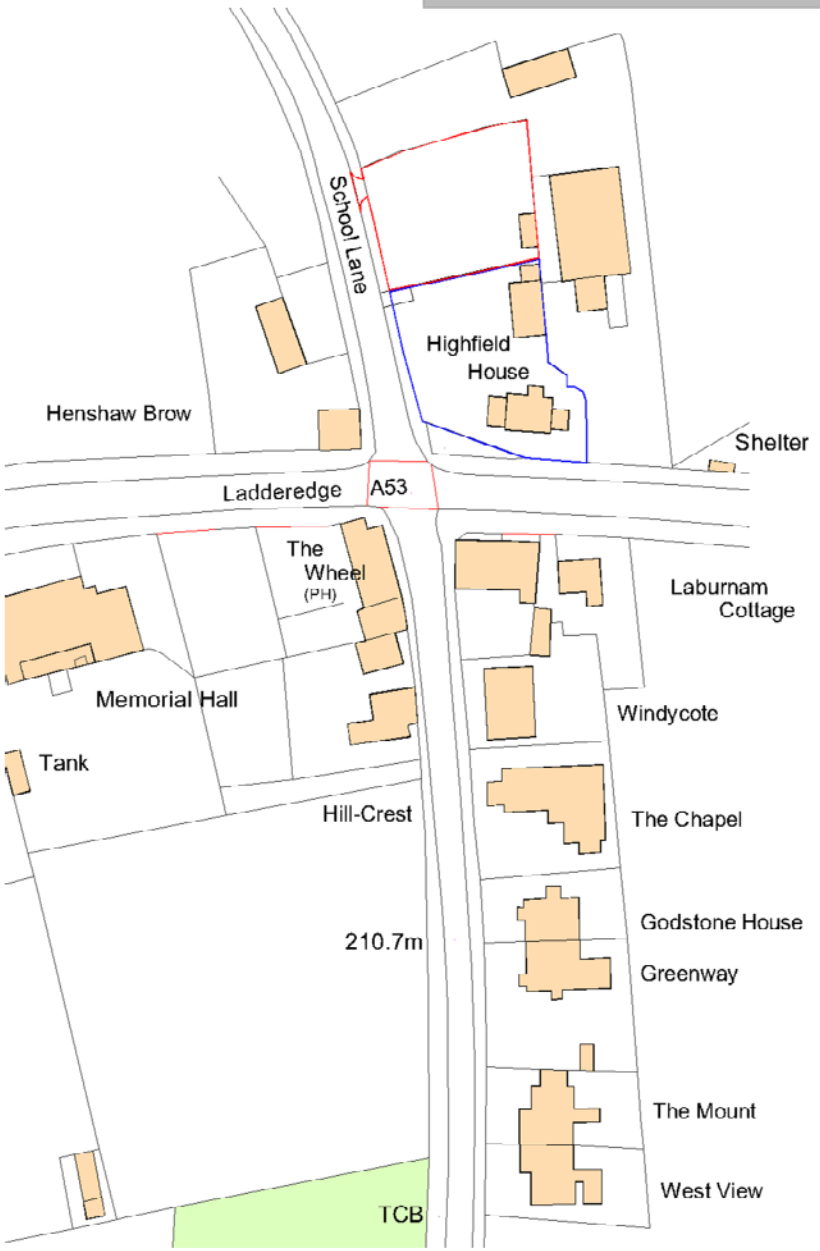
3.2.The Existing Situation

The land is situated to the north east off School Lane and currently forms part of the garden land for Highfield House. Highfield House is a residential period dwelling which has been substantially extended recently. It is constructed of mainly facing brickwork, render and a slate tiled roof. It sits in the grounds of approximately 0.1494 hectares of garden land and has one single constrained access off School Lane, Longsdon. It has recently been granted an additional access (ref: SMD/2014/0603 – dated 15th October 2014) for which these new proposals will utilise. The application site is surrounded by dense vegetation to the 3 existing boundaries. To the north of the site are the adjacent farm buildings with a large fern hedgerow boundary which continues down the north boundary and across the south boundary adjacent to School Lane, forming an effective screen to the site. The land itself is a gently sloping grassed garden, sloping from the north down towards the southern boundary at School Lane.



Highfield House off A53

Existing Location Plan





The existing garden land to the rear of Highfield House, showing the existing garages and outbuildings, substantial boundary vegetation and current access.

3.3.Planning Context and Design Guidance

NPPF - Design Policy and Guidance

"Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development"

The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development and encourages Local Planning Authorities to: *"approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development"*

It goes on to state that it expects Local Planning Authorities to:

"look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible".

In paragraph 14, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is identified as being at the heart of the NPPF and should be seen as a golden thread running through decision-taking. This means that development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Alternatively, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, 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 the Framework when taken as a whole;
- Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The is particularly relevant for housing cases where the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, then policies for managing the supply of housing cannot be considered up-to-date, therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development is triggered under paragraph 14.

In order that proposals contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, paragraph 7 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles, which are identified below:

1. an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
2. a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
3. an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to); replacing poor design with better design, improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and widening the choice of high quality homes.

In order to achieve this, the NPPF also identifies in paragraph 17 the core planning principles which should underpin decision taking. These include:

- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places. Every effort should be made to objectively identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth;
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
- encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas; and
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Paragraph 19 NPPF confirms that the Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth.

Housing

In relation to residential development, the NPPF sets out the Government's key housing objective, which is to significantly increase the delivery of new homes to allow everyone to have the opportunity to live in high quality, well designed homes, which they can afford. To achieve this, the government will:

- Significantly increase the supply of housing;
- Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes that people want and need;
- Widen opportunities for home ownership; and
- Create sustainable inclusive and mixed communities in all areas, including through regeneration and renewal of areas of poor housing.

In order to provide for a wide choice of high quality homes, the NPPF aims to boost significantly the supply of housing. Local planning authorities are required in paragraph 47 to 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% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.

The NPPF records that in order to be considered deliverable, sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.

Housing applications are to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 49). Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

The NPPF requires that decisions should ensure that developments that generate significant movement are located where the need for travel can be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised (paragraph 34).

The frameworks identifies that Transport Assessments should support all developments that generate significant amounts of movement whilst Travel Plans are cited as an important tool to facilitate sustainable transport modes. It also states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where residual cumulative impacts of the development are severe (paragraph 32).

Requiring Good Design

The advice is set out in paras 56 – 68 and is based on the principle 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".

Promoting Healthy Communities

The NPPF encourages developments to facilitate social interaction and the creation of healthy and inclusive communities by integrating and enhancing community facilities and public spaces.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

The NPPF establishes the approach that should be taken in preparing planning applications to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (paragraph 98), and to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere (paragraph 103).

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraphs 109-115 address the protection of valued landscapes. It requires local authorities to create, protect, enhance and manage networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure, to make effective re-use of previously developed land as well as emphasising the protection of undeveloped coasts and National Parks.

Paragraph 111 also addresses use of agricultural land:

"Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality."

Paragraph 118 provides guidance to minimise impacts on biodiversity:

"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- *if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- *development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;*
- *opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged."*

Decision Taking

In relation to decision taking, Paragraphs 186-187 state:

"Local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. The relationship between decision-taking and plan-making should be seamless, translating plans into high quality development on the ground. 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. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area."

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – Policy Guidance

The Development Plan for the area comprises:

- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 1998)
- The Core Strategy (Adopted March 2014)

Policies from the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (SMLP) were largely replaced by the Core Strategy in 2014. However, the development boundaries within the 1998 adopted SMLP are still in force until such time as they are reviewed as part of the Local Plan review in 2016. The development boundaries were adopted in 1998, and were only supposed to apply for the period 2001. The restriction of new development

to locations within settlement boundaries is clearly inconsistent with the Framework. Further, in the absence of a housing land supply, the weight therefore that can be attributed to the existing defined settlement boundaries on the Proposals Map is substantially diminished.

The Core Strategy

The Core Strategy was adopted on the 26th March 2014. It provides the principle Development Plan which replaces the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. It sets out a development strategy which identifies the level of development expected to take place within Staffordshire Moorlands from 2006 – 2026.

Chapter 8 provides the Core Policies for guiding development.

1. Policy SS1 Development Principles underpins the whole Core Strategy and sets out criteria which will be applied to all development proposals, and accordingly should be attributed weight.
2. Policy SS1a set out the model policy for the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, as set out in the paragraph 14 of the Framework.
3. Policy SS2 – Future Provision of Development states Provision will be made for 6000 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed in Staffordshire Moorlands (excluding the Peak District National Park) during the period 2006 to 2026.
4. Policy SS3 – Distribution of Development states development will be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and rural areas. Leek is allocated to take 30% of housing and employment growth.
5. Policy SS4 – Managing the Release of Housing Land states that the release of land for housing across the District will be managed in order to deliver the level and distribution of development set out in policies SS2 and SS3. Since the Council cannot demonstrate a sufficient supply of sites, the presumption in policy SS1a is therefore engaged.

6. Policy SS6b (Smaller Villages Area Strategy):
7. Policy SS6 (Development in Rural Areas):
8. Policy H1 (New Housing): requires new housing development provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in policy H2, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies in SS5 and SS6.
9. Policy R2 (Rural Housing): states Other than sites allocated for housing development in the Site Allocations DPD, only the specific forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the town and the villages.
10. Policy DC1 (Design Considerations): States all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD.
11. DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting): States the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

The key issues for consideration:

- The Principle of development in particular whether the proposed development is appropriate development in the Green Belt;
- Whether any special circumstances exist which would outweigh the general presumption against development in this location, namely the need to address the shortage of deliverable housing land supply in the District;
- Sustainability of Development;

Argument for Development in the Green Belt:

The site is within the Green Belt as indicated on the proposals map of the SMDC Local Plan. Tighter controls on the form of development that can be permitted are measured. New residential development is seen as inappropriate development within the green belt unless very special circumstances apply or it is one of a number of exceptions. However the current Core Strategy does not contain a specific Green Belt policy

therefore the National Planning Policy Framework Green Belt policies should apply. In the Local plan the Green Belt washed over longsdon but in the Core Strategy this is no longer the case.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that limited infilling in villages is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The presumption for limited infilling in identified settlements is reiterated in Policy SS6b of the adopted Core Strategy the preamble to which states that some limited infilling and redevelopment is considered acceptable subject to Green Belt or countryside policies. Paragraph 8.1.66 of the adopted Core Strategy states that *"in order to guide development an Infill Development Boundary will be defined around these settlements within which appropriate development will be allowed*". These boundaries will be more tightly drawn than Development Boundaries to accommodate infilling or redevelopment but to restrict peripheral expansion". At present infill development boundaries have not yet been defined and all applications therefore have to be considered on their own merits.

The lack of an infill development boundary plan should not prevent development which is in accordance with the NPPF. The key question is whether the proposed development is limited infilling and therefore appropriate development within the Green Belt. Without the specific guidance as to where new residential development can be located within Longsdon it must be considered carefully and weighed highly in the final decision. The proposed development is within the core of the village and not peripheral development and as such is in accordance with the Core Strategy SS6b.

The application site is an existing area of domestic curtilage within this landscape and continues the built form of linear development in the core of the village. The application site also comparable in size to the adjacent houses and is capable of providing small scale infill development. This development is clearly not an isolated dwelling in the countryside but represents infill development and as such it should be seen as appropriate development within the Green Belt.

Longsdon is acknowledged within the adopted Core Strategy as a smaller village where new housing development is acceptable. Development loss of this site is therefore justified by the provision of additional housing through the development of an infill plot in a sustainable edge of a village location.

This application forms the 2nd attempt application ref:2015/0231.

The original planning application was given one reason for refusal, which was concerned with two matters:

- Harm to the openness to the Green Belt;
- Harm to the character and landscape setting;

The section demonstrates that the change in the policy context, and design amendments to the proposal, address the reason for refusal.

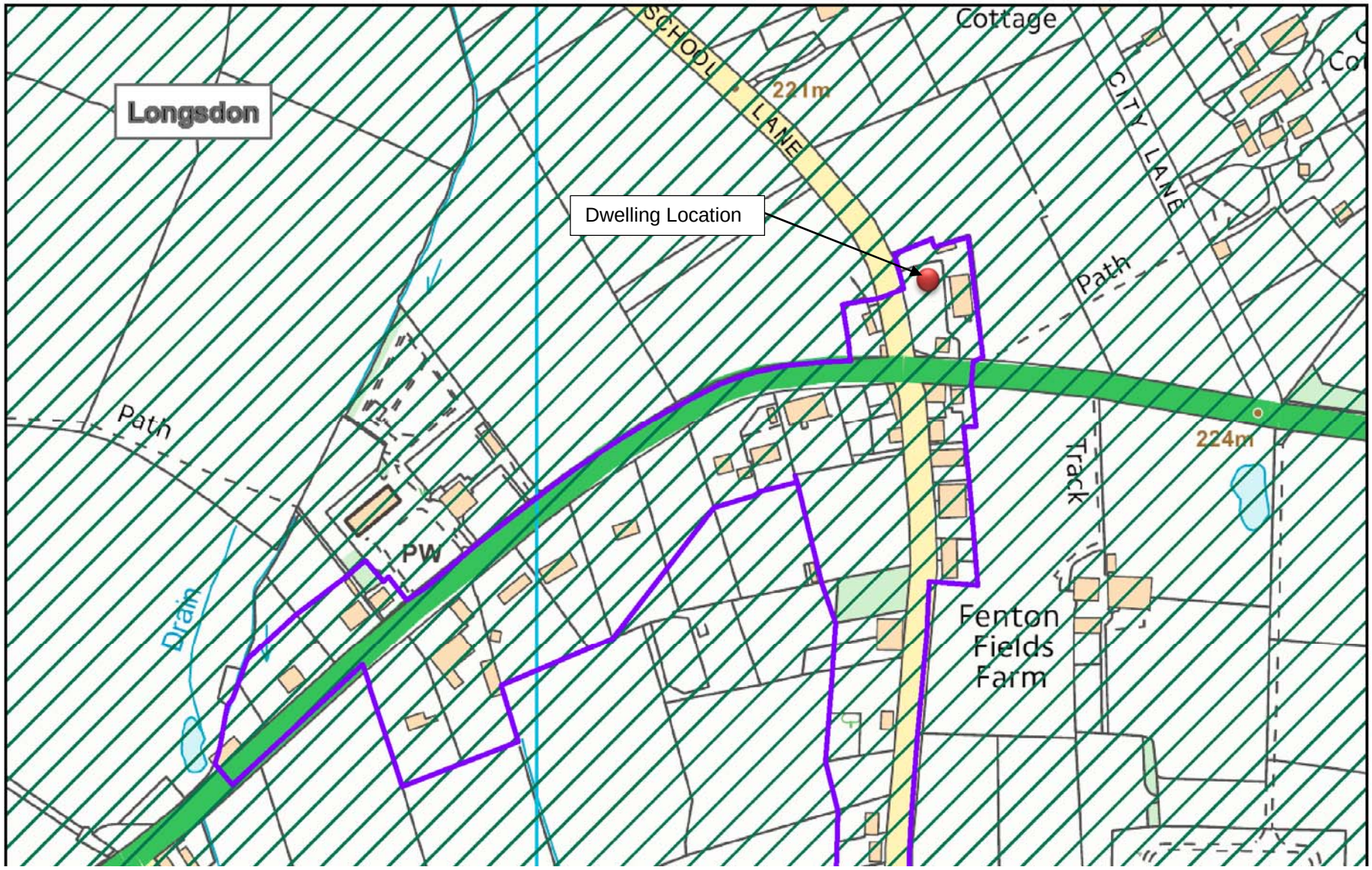
Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries

The Council is currently in the process of developing a new Local Plan, and currently consulting on the Preferred Options Sites and Boundaries. This will form part of the Development Plan, which includes the Core Strategy.
It is firstly important to consider the Core Strategy and its relevant policies in relation to the reason for refusal.
Policy SS6b "Smaller Villages Area Strategy" identifies Longsdon as a "smaller village", which permits infilling development. This is explained within the supporting text at paragrapgh 8.1.66. It also states that an Infill Development Boundary will be defined to guide this development.

Within the reason for refusal, it states that location of the development does not constitute "infill development":

"It is considered that the application proposal falls within the category of "inappropriate development" in Green Belt terms because it would not result in the infilling of a gap between existing dwellings but instead would result in encroachment into the openness of the Green Belt contrary to the provisions of Paragraphs 80 and 89 of the NPPF".

This decision was made prior to the publication of the Preferred Options consultation. It is notable that the entirety of the application site is located within the new Longsdon Development Boundary (Map 4.35).


Longsdon
Dwelling Location
Cottage
SCHOOL LANE
221m
CITY LANE
Path
Path
224m
Track
PW
Drain
Fenton
Fields
Farm

The justification and evidence base for the location of the development boundaries is set out at Section 4 of the consultation paper:
"4.1 *Based on the requirements identified in this document, consideration of relevant evidence and feedback to date, the following maps and tables set out the preferred options sites and boundaries for the Local Plan in Leek, Biddulph, Cheadle and the Rural Areas.*
4.2 *Site assessments of the preferred options sites and options currently not proposed for inclusion in the Local Plan are available on the consultation website. A Sustainability Appraisal of all site options considered is also available to view and comment on the consultation website".*

It is clear that the basis of the Longsdon Development Boundary is predicated on a substantial evidence base, which has considered Longsdon and the application site with robust studies to inform the Local Plan. The inclusion of the application site within the boundary demonstrates a conflict with the application 2015/0231 decision. Logically, if there was harm to the openness of the Green Belt, and character and landscape, the Development Boundary would not have included the application site.
On this basis, it considered that the proposals do not cause the level harm alluded to within the decision notice, and are in accordance with both the Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan.

Recent approval of a dwelling in the Green Belt

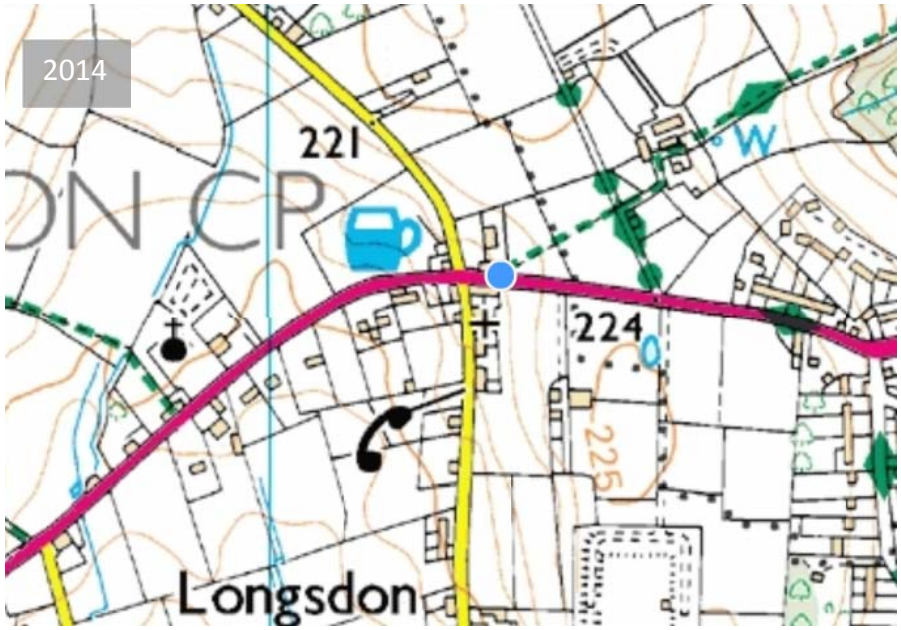
The above has been seen most recently in the approval of a single infill dwelling within Longsdon, approval ref:SMD/2014/0748 which stated:

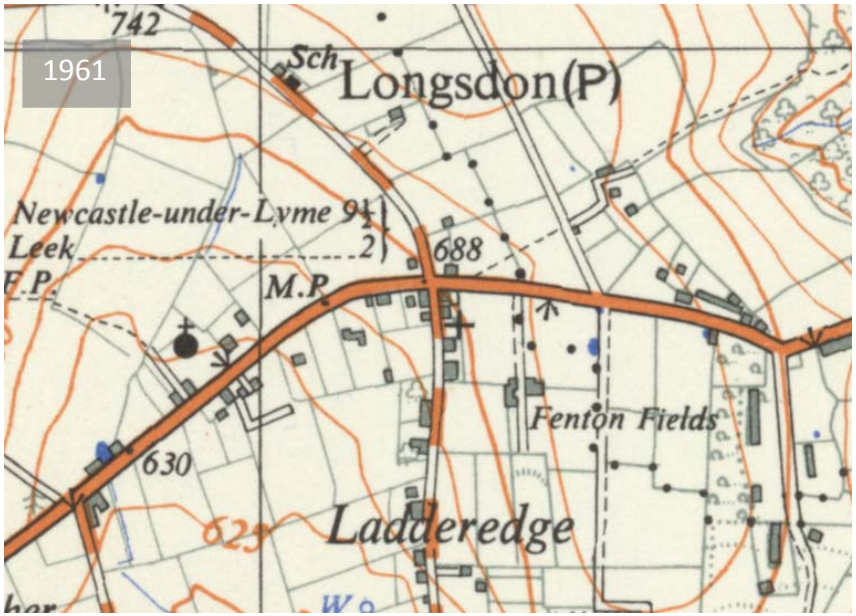
"Local Planning Authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate development in the Green Belt; one of the exceptions is for limited infilling in villages, under policies set out in the Local Plan. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF states that, as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. NPPF paragraph 88 requires Local Planning Authorities to place substantial weight to any harm to the Green Belt. 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. Core Strategy policy SS6 informs that the Site Allocations DPD will identify Infill Boundaries within smaller villages. The 'Smaller Villages Area Strategy' (Core Strategy policy SS6b) identifies Longsdon as a 'smaller village' where limited infilling could be allowed. As such, if the principle of development in this location is accepted then there would be no need for the applicant(s) to demonstrate very special circumstances to justify the proposal. The smaller villages strategy is to seek 'an appropriate level of sensitive development which enhances community vitality or meets a local social or economic need.' When viewing the site in the context of the existing built form it is clear that that the land can be considered as infill development; dwellings are located to the east and west of the site within a linear roadside fronting pattern. The application site is not a back land site, rather it has a generous length of roadside frontage, exhibiting all of the characteristics of an infill site. For the above reasons it is considered that the residential development of this site is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt".

3.4.Historic Development

The historic maps opposite show how the village has changed over 122 years. There has been little growth within the village from 1892 to 2014.



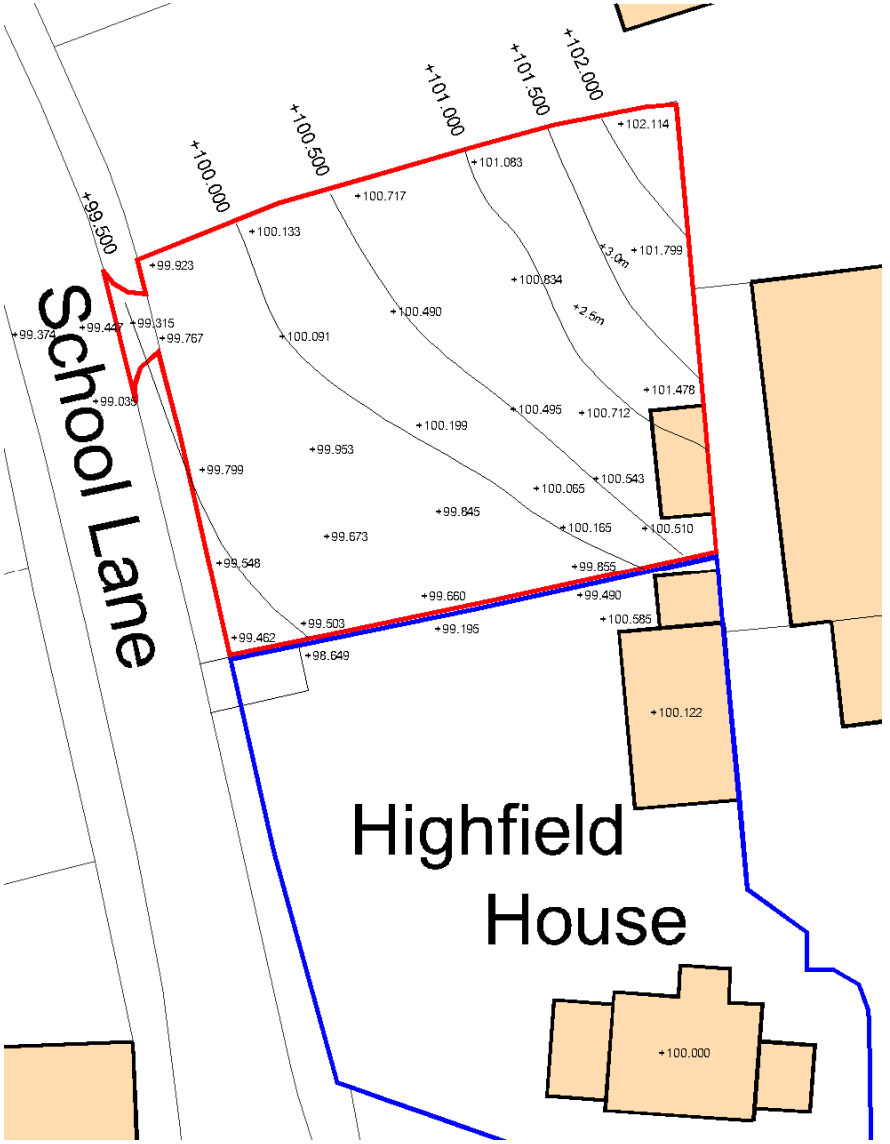




3.5.Topography

The site has a fair slope from the north east of the site (top) falling to the south west (bottom) of the site adjacent to School Road of approx. 3.5m difference. There is also a cross fall from north to south. It is an undulating site hence the vary floor levels designed within the dwelling are to ensure it blends well with the landscape.





3.6.Local Townscape Character

With very little growth in Longsdon there are plenty of distinct dwellings of a period nature with varying architectural styles and merits.







3.7.Nature Conservation and Ecology

The application site comprises an existing lawn area associated with Highfield House and accordingly it is not considered to be of any significant ecological value and therefore no ecological study has been undertaken. Thoughtful design has allowed for the retention of the principal features of ecological value within the application site, namely the boundary hedgerows. Appropriate timing and methods of site clearance and construction site management and appropriate lighting will prevent adverse impacts on the site's potentially limited fauna. There should be no adverse impacts on potential Wildlife Sites in the wider area. Similarly whilst there are a number of existing hedgerows/trees surrounding the existing boundaries of the site, these are non-native conifer trees which provide little if any amenity value. The south west hedgerow will be removed to facilitate the new access and are not covered by a tree protection order or considered to be worthy of protection. Their loss is therefore considered acceptable and accordingly a tree survey has not been commissioned. As a consequence of the above considerations it is considered that the proposed development accords with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 109).

3.8.Water, Drainage and Hydrology

The new dwelling will have its own services of gas, electric and water and will connect into the existing Highfield House sewerage system, all to the approval of the building control department and no issues are envisaged.



4. Evaluation and Design Principles

4.1.Constraints and Opportunities

The assessment of the site and its context has identified a number of constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed development. These are described below. This analysis of constraints and opportunities has informed the development proposals:

- Retention of existing trees, hedgerows and other important landscape features wherever possible;
- Mitigation of visual impact of the proposed development on views from the immediate and wider landscape to the north, east and south east as well as existing residential properties;
- Built development should have regard to the existing built context and character of Longsdon;
- The topography of the site provides an opportunity and constraint in relation to dwelling design;
- Allowance of a safe and secure caravan storage hardstanding away from any visual impact and having regard to security;
- Suitable and acceptable garden land for the existing Highfield House.

4.2.Key Design Principles

The site provides an excellent opportunity for a development which integrates well with the existing residential areas of Longsdon. The site has no overriding environmental designations or physical constraints and provides the opportunity to establish a sustainable development which is both physically and visually well contained.

The following design principles are a direct result of the evaluation of the site's context, constraints and opportunities:

- To promote the highest quality sustainable design, creating a 'place' which is both safe and attractive and which enhances quality of life, health and social well-being;
- To create an enduring high quality built form, public realm and landscape that sensitively responds to its setting by using best practice contemporary design that is rooted in local character whilst avoiding a clumsy pastiche of architectural styles;
- Integration of the development into the existing village scene of Longsdon particularly in relation to scale, density and public realm;
- Built development will respond to the morphology of the existing settlement and will be located in proximity to the existing village edge;
- To provide an appropriate transition with the adjacent countryside with particular reference to existing landscape character;
- Respond to the existing topography and key views into and out of the site;



5. Development Proposals

5.1. Design Evolution

The development proposals have been guided by an iterative design process, which has been informed by the environmental and technical work, which has included an analysis of landscape, ecology, water and drainage, levels and movement. It has also considered the development's relationship with Longsdon and the surrounding context.

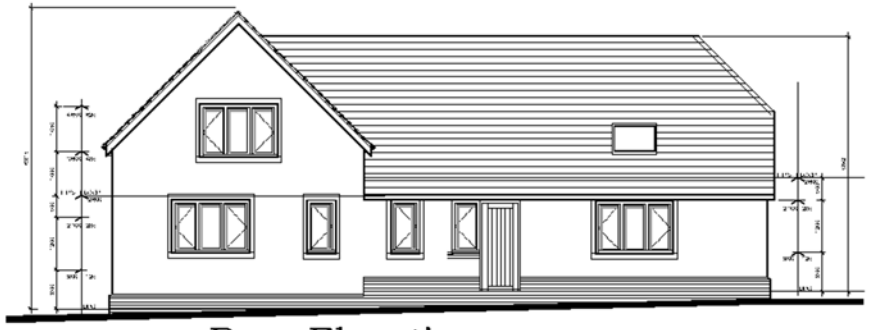
5.2. Use and Amount

The proposed dwelling will be designed to complement the surrounding properties and area. It will be a unique and individually designed dwelling and will contain 4 bedrooms, two with ensuite, and a large family bathroom. Please see drawing ref: SBP5717-PD-14.

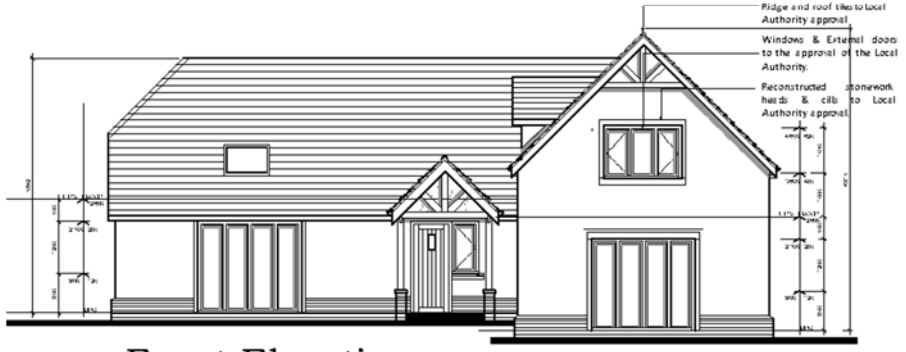
The dwelling's focus will be on energy efficiency and carbon reduction to reduce its ecological footprint.

It has a ground floor footprint of 110sqm (1184sqft) and first floor footprint of 58sqm (624sqft). It will be a 4 bedroom, 1½ storey (dormer bungalow), detached dwelling, with car parking for 4No. cars and a longer drive for a caravan.

Proposed Front & Side Elevations



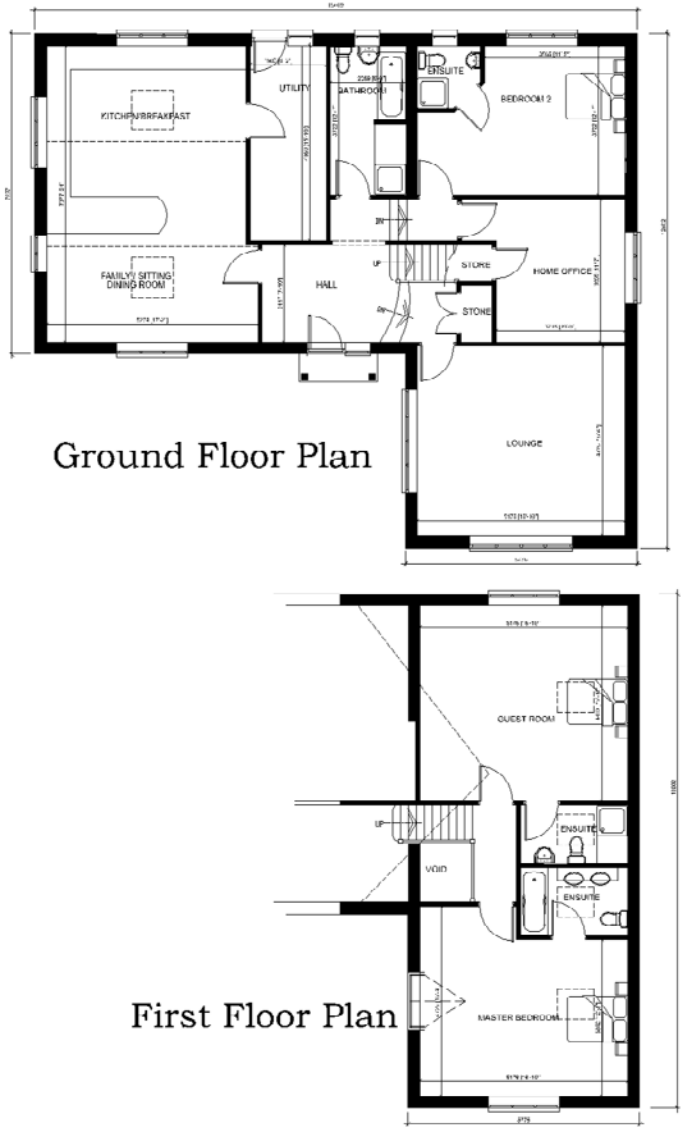
Rear Elevation



Front Elevation

The dwelling will be constructed out of traditional materials and finished in facing brickwork, render with stone detailing and contrasting cottage style windows and a modern interlocking concrete tiled roof. It will have stone detailing in a simplistic style to complement neighbouring dwellings yet providing originality to the streetscene. The final external materials can be agreed at condition stage.

Proposed Plans



The area surrounding the application site is a quiet residential road, with a diverse mix of individual dwelling types. The dwellings are mainly detached and are a variety of heights and sizes with private parking spaces and each dwelling has its own individual character and qualities.

The new dwelling proposed will be orientated on the site as shown on the site plan (dwg ref: SBP5716/PD/12). The orientation and design of the dwelling is derived from the south facing aspect and allowing a driveway around the rear of the dwelling to store a caravan. The main front of the dwelling will provide surveillance down the existing driveway and will sit well within the new curtilage having a large south facing garden.

The existing access allows for the retention of 4No. car parking spaces for Highfield House and will still allow for a suitable width driveway to access the new property.

The existing vegetation/trees will be retained as shown on the site plan and provide good screening with new boundary treatment to split the site, to the Local Authorities approval.

The main garden area to the new dwelling will be to the front with over 286sqm.

The site topography is fairly sloping from north east to south west (to the road) and as such there will be the need for retaining walls, which can be dealt with by conditions.

5.3.Site Plan


Existing substantial hedgerow and trees to remain
Existing hedgerow and trees to rema
New access approval ref: SMD/2014/0603
Hardstanding
Driveway
School Lane
Existing shed to remain
Existing hedgerow and trees to remain
Views
New Boundary line created with new hedgerow.
Existing Garage
Existing acces to Highfield House to remain
Highfield House
N
E
S

5.4.Access

Currently Highfield House is served by a single access off School Lane. A new access was approved under application ref: SMD/2014/0603 – Dated 15/10/2014.

This new access is shown on the site plan ref: 5716/PD/12 and has yet to be constructed on site. The existing access for Highfield House will continue to provide 4+ car parking spaces off road and the current proposal will also allow parking for 4+ cars off road. . The parking area will be hard surfaced, using non-slip surface to enable disabled people to access the properties in a safe manner. The driveway / access to the dwelling will be to a gradient less than 1 in 15 and constructed in a bound material.



5.5.Scale

Longsdon has a diverse mix of dwelling types from bungalows to 3 storey properties. Attention has been given to the dwelling design including the scale and massing with a view of keeping the height of the dwelling to a minimum. Therefore the new dwelling is 1 – 1½ storeys in height and is under 7m in height to the tallest ridge. The existing properties are a diverse mix of shapes and sizes with gabled roofs, dormers and cottage style properties. The proposed dwelling shape is simple and rectilinear with gabled roofs to not over dominate and to complement the adjacent properties.

The scale and massing of the proposal is consistent with the existing dwellings and the surrounding area. Well-proportioned doors and windows in a simple cottage style will provide and enhance the appearance to the property.

The siting of the dwelling achieves satisfactory separation distances to existing neighbouring dwellings. The proposed layout and space standards required around the dwelling is achieved and the surrounding trees/vegetation are to remain undisturbed.

The private garden area is practical, safe and private. The garden is well screened with mature existing hedgerows and not overlooked.

5.6. Environmental Sustainability

National guidance for all residential properties requires all dwellings post 2010 and up to 2015 should acquire a minimum level of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The dwelling will be assessed and will be subject to a full design stage assessment upon approval.

The dwelling will be designed with energy efficiency in mind. The construction will utilise modern methods of build, including increased insulation for the external walling, floor and roof construction. Achieving excellent air tightness, thermal bridging and energy efficiency. Less air movement and leakage provides an indoor building environment that is significantly more comfortable, controllable whilst achieving lower energy bills. Internal water use will be reduced by installing water efficient domestic appliances and low WC cisterns. All timber used in the dwelling will be FSC & PEFC certified from sustainable managed forests and locally sourced if possible which will be of low environmental impact.

5.7. Appearance of Development

The dwelling is situated to the rear of the plot from School Lane overlooking its new south facing garden, set in an elevated position due to the topography. The dwelling design is a simple gabled roof structure with projecting eaves, plinth brickwork to the base and fully rendered elevations in a silicone through coat render for low maintenance, in white. The windows and openings are to have a reconstructed stone surround in buff colour to contrast. All windows and doors to be in a dark grey colour to add depth and contrast. To provide additional character the front entrance porch and gable ends, where shown, are to have a solid timber frame as detailed in a bleached timber. The roof will be finished in a dark slate again to compliment the styling. It is important to use good quality materials to ensure that their look will improve with age and weathering. All the materials will be chosen due to their low maintenance and longevity, and are subject to the approval of the LPA.

5.8.Landscape

The existing site has mature hedgerows to all of the 3 existing boundaries as discussed previously. None of the trees onsite are covered under a Tree Preservation Order. The remaining trees/hedges will be protected during construction (based on the requirements of BS 5837:2005 – Foliage in relation to construction). Grassed lawn areas and hard paved driveways are proposed to the front and rear. The front garden will have lawns and the new boundary will provide a private, safe and secure area for the resident. The parking area will be hard surfaced, using non-slip material to enable disabled people to access the properties in a safe manner.



5.9. Conclusions

The proposal has emerged with close reference to SMDC's design guidance and the NPPF. 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. The proposal should be considered acceptable in principle given that it follows the recent approval (ref: SMD/2014/0748) given nearby off the A53 and as discussed previously.

The dwelling will be sustainable and accessible in line with the NPPF and the services within Longsdon would be utilised by the future occupiers of the proposed dwelling. As such it will help to support services in nearby villages and enhance or maintain the vitality of the rural community. This would accord with the guidance in the NPPF (paragraph 55).

It is considered that the scale, massing and style of the proposed dwelling and the siting would not detract from the setting and introduce additional character within the existing street scene and would represent congruent and harmonious development.

In principle this proposal amounts to limited infill development in a sustainable location and the Authority's lack of a demonstrable 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites now adds significant weight to approving the scheme herby presented.

The concept of village boundaries, now extinguished with the loss of the Local Plan and whilst the Core Strategy makes reference to limited infill boundaries, these have not yet been confirmed and cannot therefore be considered effective. The LPA is therefore currently in a break between the resigned policies of the previous Local Plan and the recently adopted but currently undefined policies of the Core Strategy. This application should therefore be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as confirmed by paragraphs 14 and 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposed replacement dwelling is therefore considered to accord with relevant policies of the Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and should therefore be recommended for approval without delay.