Design and Access Statement

in support of :

Proposed Residential Development,

The Old Dye Works,
Off Mill Street,
Leek,
Staffordshire.

10/00463/OUT 24 MAY 2010

Introduction

Design and access statements have been provided in response to the Governments changes to the planning application process outlined in circular "avoidance on changes to the Development Control System which came into effect on 10 August 2006.

The statement provides an analysis and narrative of the proposals and is in line with guidance produced by CABE entitled "Design and Access Statement" how to write, read and use them.

The proposal consists of demolition of an existing inhabitable factory premises as shown by the photographs within drawing ref. C17248-04.
Once demolished it would allow re-development of this brownfield site to provide five dwellings complete with off road parking and individual private amenity garden space.

Use

The development area is partly occupied by an existing factory with the remaining area offering over spill carparking to The Retreat. An insight into the history of the site can be offered by Ordinance Survey (0S)

1878 – 1925 - Site was vacant acting as gardens to a number of houses.

1925 - A large building adjacent to the southern boundary appears to be extended into part of the site area.

1937 - Site appears to be indicated as its current layout with a building covering the majority of the site boundary.

1964 - Site is recorded as a Dye Works.

The applicant originally purchased this site as part of the premises "The Jester" Public House. During the period spend running and expanding this growing business, an application was submitted to convert part of the building into providing further hotel accommodation which was passed (era 1984). This work however did not take place. The existing buildings were occupied and used as a commercial business premises by Roger Goodwin Pine Services from 1998 – 2008. Due to general deterioration of the building fabric and a series of break-ins, the tenant decided to re-locate. (Refer to letter under appendix 2)

In November 2008, the landowner appointed Louis Taylor Estate Agents to advertise the premises for sale or to let. However to the present time on submitting this application, there has been virtually no interest in the premises (as stated in a letter from Louis Taylor dated 2 February 2010 appended to this statement. (Refer to appendix 3) It is understood that one key planning policy consideration for changing the building use from commercial to residential under Planning Policy is that a full marketing exercise has been carried out, which from the appendix 3 we can demonstrate has taken place.

Given the lack of interest in the building and the growing burden of owning a dangerous structure, Mr Barlow, the applicant met with Mr R Duncan of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to discuss what future the site held. Mr Duncan replied in the form of a detailed letter dated 13 November 2008, a copy of which is appended to the rear of this statement. (Refer to appendix 4.) This letter raised a number of points which we shall endeavour to address within this statement.

Amount

It is proposed that:

- The site will contain seven dwellings in a terraced style. There will be eight car parking spaces provided which given the proximity of the site being within walking distance of Leek town centre we feel that a single space per property is considered reasonable. This provision would also reduce the occupants reliance on private car use in line with planning policy guidance T1-2.

- The position of the building and car park area is indicated on the site layout plan drawing ref C17248-03.

Layout

The car park position comes as a result of a restricted vehicle access being located to the southeast end of the site. This in turn dictates where the dwellings have to be located with the remaining proportion of the site being for private amenity space for each dwelling. A further consideration in locating the housing was to provide a clear aspect from principle windows with minimal impact on the adjacent users.

Scale

The site is located inbetween Mill Street and Belle Vue Road, albeit in each case is adjoined by sites in third parties ownership. There is a considerable difference in ground level between the site frontage facing Mill Street and the rear, therefore any development would have to set levels and height to relate with the existing gradient and the mass/scale offered by the existing factory premises.

The proposed building area will be a considerable reduction of what currently exists based on a provision of a single car parking per dwelling and an area for private garden.

Appearance

Given that this is an outline planning application, we wish to treat the detailed design as a reserved matter at this time.

Landscape

The site is occupied a large Sycamore tree facing towards Mill Street and a few saplings as indicated below.



Sycamore

Height - 9.5m

Stem dia. At 1.5m high – 450mm

Branch spread – 11m

Age class – Mature

Physiological Condition - Moderate - vigour. Moderate quality, broad spreading tree on the edge of a sloping area of site adjacent to the existing building. Good visual amenity but only fully visible from Mill Street.

Structural condition – Failed to be managed with no pruning having taken place, set close to existing building. Growth suppressed over half its spread due to proximity to existing building.

Summary

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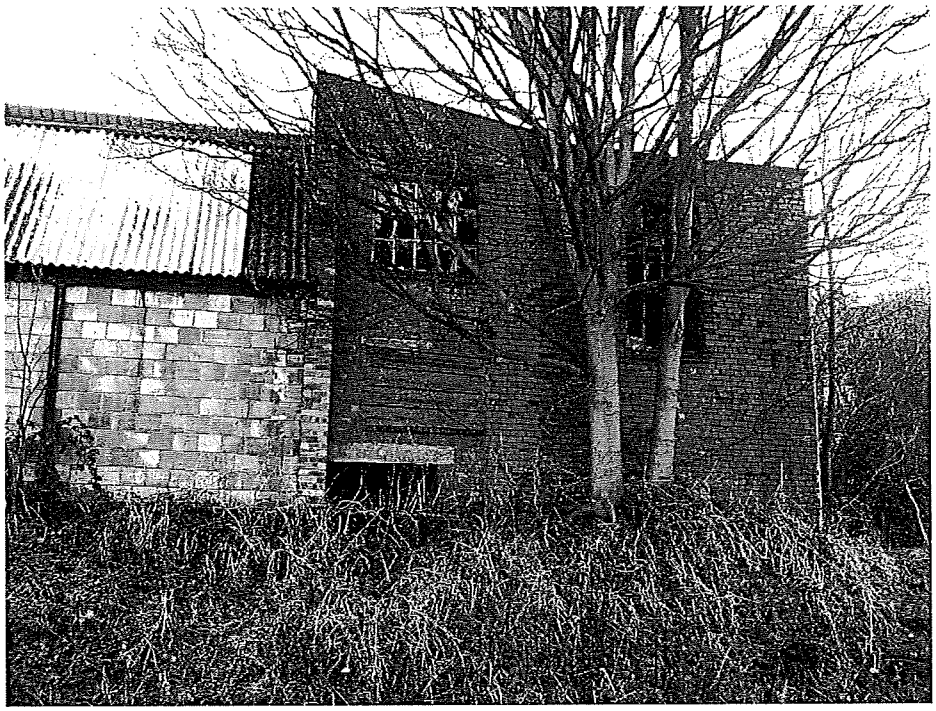
The main tree appears to be in sound condition, however being self set it is in a location which is uptight against existing brickwork on one side and has a steep gradient on the other. This has resulted in a poor root formation with some roots visual above ground level as shown in the below photograph.



Given the trees location and level we feel that its retention would cause a number of problems, these being:

- It would restrict development in an area of the site which is most viable for the proposed dwellings. To avoid the tree would mean setting the dwelling back which inturn would reduce private garden space.
- To retain the existing root structure would mean setting the floor level of any adjacent properties to a similar raised level.
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It is therefore proposed that the tree be felled and replaced with a number of heavy standard trees located to the car parking area and if required a number within the private rear gardens. Although indicated on the site layout plan as proposed, we would expect the detail and location of these trees to be resolved under a detailed full application.

Ground Conditions

Given the of the history premises as a former a Dye Works, the applicant chose to appoint GRM Development Solutions to provide a detailed desk-top study into the sites history.

A copy of this report forms part of the supporting information to accompany this application under Appendix 1. (ref GRM/P4799/DS.1) dated January 2009.

Access

The site is currently accessed by vehicles from Mill Street through 'The Retreat' private carpark and into the West end of the site as indicated on the site layout plan C17248-02.

For the purpose of this statement, compliance with the current edition of the building regulations part M are assumed to be covered within the detailed design, as this is a mandatory requirement, however, this does not form part of this application. As regards general access by foot it is proposed that the building is founded at a level which both relates to that of the existing buildings floorslab level, doesn't result in steep rear gardens and ensures the proposed dwelling form is in keeping with the mass of the existing Dye works. However even with these considerations there will still be a steep gradient access from either Mill Street or Belle Vue Road making access by a wheelchair user very restrictive.

Biological and Geological Conservation

With the majority of the site currently being occupied by a redundant semi-derelict building, the main impact on its removal would be to any potential nesting birds, owls or bats which the building may shelter. It is therefore accepted that a detailed daytime survey would be expected to be carried out by an ecological consultant licensed by Natural England, the results of which including any recommendations would form part of any supporting information to accompany this application.

As an overview should the redevelopment take place the percentage of site to building area would vastly improve resulting in additional open space providing natural habitat for local wildlife.