Design & Access Statement

The Malthouse, Foxt Lane, Foxt, Stoke-on-Trent. ST10 2HN

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1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of an application for the construction of one single storey dwelling within the curtilage of **The Malthouse, Foxt Lane, Foxt, Stoke-on-Trent. ST10 2HN** to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

The site is wholly owned by the applicants.

2.0 Site Location and Context Assessment

The Malthouse is a Two Storey dwelling set within a clearly defined site boundary within the village of Foxt, which is classed as a smaller village by the Local Authority.

The application site is currently laid out as domestic gardens and is surplus to requirement. There are no trees within the site or on the site boundary.

There are open fields adjacent to the site which are currently arable and which will be unaffected by this proposal.

The village benefits from a number of local facilities including public houses, a church and a village hall.

The site is not in a Flood Zone, washed over by a Green Belt designation and has no heritage value.

Proposal

The Applicant wishes to construct a single storey family bungalow with 2 bedrooms on land to the North of the present dwelling.

3.0 Design Component

The application seeks full planning permission to construct a new dwelling with associated infrastructure and parking space.

The application site comprises an existing garden area and accordingly it is not considered to be of any significant ecological value and therefore no ecological study has been undertaken.

Appropriate timing and methods of site clearance and construction site management and so forth together any appropriate external lighting will mitigate any adverse impacts on the site's potentially limited fauna.

There should be no adverse impacts on existing or potential Wildlife Sites in the wider area and no buildings are being refurbished or demolished which would affect wildlife.

The new dwelling will have its own services and will connect into the existing main sewerage system which at present runs through the site. The proposal is to divert this sewer in accordance with the requirements of Severn Trent Water. Approval of the building control department will be sought and no issues are envisaged.

Scale – the proposal is for a single storey family home with 2 bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, lounge, study and 2 bathrooms. The design is illustrated on the attached drawings.

Layout – the site will be laid out to reflect the existing buildings on the site and will minimise overlooking to ensure privacy is maintained.

Appearance – The proposal relates to the existing built context and character of Foxt in terms of appearance and materials, designing and laying out suitable and acceptable garden land and external amenity space, thereby ensuring that the development is physically and visually well contained.

Landscaping, surfacing and boundary treatment: the property will benefit from private garden and amenity space e.g. surrounding garden areas will have suitable planting, lawned areas and pavings, with new boundary treatments and will provide a private, safe and secure area for the future residents.

Hard surfaces will be designed to have minimal visual impact.

The Applicants have complied with the LPA's design guidance.

Sustainability Issues
The Local Context: the area in which the proposal is intended to be situated is an existing mature residential area comprising predominantly detached and semi-detached property.

The Built Form: this will comply with current energy efficiency standards.

Waste and Recycling: external space will be provided for the storage of the recycling bins provided by the Local Authority.

There are reasonable local public transport links to Leek and Cheadle.

The completed development will generate normal household waste – a mixture of recyclable and non-recyclable materials. The amount of the different waste types will be typical for dwellings of this size, normally requiring one regular and one recycling collection every two weeks. The proposed dwellings will have space for storage that will enable recycling separation before collection.

4.0 Planning Policy

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*".

Para 11 – 16 sets out the Governments position on the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

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.

The following paragraphs within the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant which relate to good design 56- 61 and 64.

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.

As the site is located within the Special Landscape Area conserving and enhancing the natural environment is paramount. 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 for example.

Local Planning Policy
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)

The Core Policies for guiding development are identified as being;
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.
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.
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.
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.
Policy SS6 (Development in Rural Areas) *The rural areas comprise of the following development categories: Larger villages Smaller Villages Other rural areas. In total these will provide for around 1,680 new dwellings and 7.2 hectares of employment land between 2006 and 2026*
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. Development in the rural areas like the other parts if the District *will need to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the character and role of each area within its hierarchy.*

The key issues for consideration:
The Principle of development in particular whether the proposed development is appropriate development in the Special Landscape Area
Whether there are any reasons to approve the application which 'outweigh' the general presumption against development in this type of location, namely the need to address the shortage of deliverable housing land supply in the District particularly in rural communities;
Sustainability of Development again in particular within rural communities
The need to deliver housing across the District not only to meet local need but also to meet housing targets. The LPA state in the Core *Strategy that the annual development rate for the period 2013 - 2016 will have to increase significantly in order to complete 1,100 dwellings over the whole* (Plan) *period.*

<u>Policy H1 New Housing Development</u>
The proposal complies with the key principles of Policy H1;
All housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area
Residential development and redevelopment on unidentified (windfall) sites will be permitted
All new dwellings should aim to be built to "Lifetime Homes" standard in accordance with the current national advice and targets. All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing occupiers. All new dwellings must meet the sustainable design and construction requirements set out in policy SD1.

The application proposal concurs with these requirements.

SS6b - Smaller Villages Area Strategy
These settlements shall provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a local social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

2. Meet local community, social or economic need by: Enabling new housing development which meets a local need, including affordable housing (in accordance with policy H2); Allowing for rural exceptions housing in appropriate locations on the edge of settlements (in accordance with policy H2). This will be additional to the housing provision for the rural

Rural Policies - Spatial Objectives SO6.
To maintain and promote sustainable regenerated rural areas and communities with access to employment opportunities, housing and services for all.

R1 - Rural Diversification All development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment. The development of this area of land will not have a negative impact on the local economy.

R2 - Rural Housing
Other than sites allocated for housing development in the Site Allocations DPD, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the town and the villages: Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H2. A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.

However, the policy text states that the key issue surrounding residential development in the countryside is that it is essential for the LPA *that all applications for planning permission for new dwellings in the countryside are scrutinised thoroughly to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF.*

The applicant contends that this site is not isolated as it lies within the curtilage of an existing group of buildings and is within walking distance of the facilities and services within the village of Foxt.

Design Policies
The new dwelling has been designed to be single storey to ensure that it is subservient to the host property – The Malthouse, thereby minimising its impact on the street scene in this location.

Highways and Access
This is not an isolated site in the countryside but is on the edge of an established village. The access and egress onto the plots will be of a similar standard to existing neighbouring property with adequate turning space within the property boundary to allow forward access onto the road. There is good visibility in both directions in this location and the speed limit of 30mph is appropriate given the width and design of the road in this location.

No new access roads will be required and the construction traffic required to create the plots would be able to access the site using the existing access.

5.0 Access

Vehicular access will be from the exiting road which runs through the village and a new access point will be required.

Pedestrian Permeability
Pedestrians will continue to be able to use existing pavement areas.

There are no known Public Rights of Way affecting the site.

6.0 Commentary

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 Core Strategy states *that a major issue for smaller villages is the loss of local population through lack of housing opportunities. The proposed strategy for the smaller villages therefore seeks to allow an appropriate level of sensitive development which enhances community vitality or meets a local social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland,* (para 8.1.64).

The LPA are keen *to ensure that the character and life of the settlement is not undermined* by the approval of inappropriate development. This site is not in an unsustainable location and is within the curtilage of an existing developed site; in that respect, it is not in the countryside and is not isolated as defined by para 55 of the NPPF.

The site is not isolated or inaccessible but within a mature residential rural location with a local strong identity.

In the circumstances, it is respectfully requested that as the planning application accords with adopted local and national policy that permission be granted.