Planning, Design and Access Statement

Site address: **Toll Gate Cottage & Blake Lee**
Blakeley Lane
Kingsley Moor
Staffordshire Moorlands
ST10 2PS

Applicant: **Mssrs F. C. & D Carnwell**

Proposal: **2 no Replacement dwellings**

This Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) accompanies an application for the replacement of two existing two storey houses.

The DAS has been written to meet the requirements of Article 4C of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

1 Introduction

1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement accompanies an application for replacement dwellings at Toll Gate Cottage & Blake Lee, Blakeley Lane, Kingsley Moor, Staffordshire Moorlands, ST10 2PS.

1.2 As this is a proposal for the replacement existing houses, some aspects such as the social and economic context are of limited applicability.

1.3 The proposal is to demolish both the existing properties, Toll Gate Cottage and Blake Lee and erect two no appropriately designed, attractive and energy efficient houses using modern construction techniques and materials.

1.4 The redevelopment will also address current issues relating to substandard vehicular and pedestrian access, providing significant improvements to highway safety.

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2 Design principles and concepts

2.1 Assessment and design considerations:

2.1.1 The application site currently comprises of two individual houses, Toll Gate Cottage and Blake Lee that lie adjacent to each other on Blakeley Lane, separated by a portion of land formerly used as an orchard belonging to Toll Gate Cottage and now designated as agricultural land.

2.1.2 Toll Gate Cottage comprises of a one and a half / two storey traditional rural dwelling with rear single storey elements and a series of single storey attached and detached outbuildings. The main two storey element is located only 700mm from the main A52 (major road) highway.

2.1.3 Due to the buildings condition, i.e. damp penetration, water ingress, presence of rot, substandard layout coupled with its proximity to the highway etc, it is considered to be beyond economical repair.

2.1.4 The dwelling has two existing vehicular accesses both of which are considered to be dangerous by virtue of the position of Toll Gate Cottage and the severely restricted visibility.

2.1.5 Blake Lee is a relatively modern two storey house which has the features of an urban estate house. It has been extended somewhat unsympathetically at ground floor level. The combination of a modern estate appearance coupled with the later extensions, in my view, represents a form of development which is not consistent with the rural nature of the site.

2.1.6 It is considered that the existing house presents a jumbled and incoherent arrangement of differing roof profiles and roof pitches, reflecting the uncoordinated development of the various elements that make up the whole.

2.1.7 Blake Lee has a single access onto the main Leek Road (A52) which is also considered to be substandard and dangerous due to the severely restricted visibility caused by the position of existing hedges, trees and Toll Gate Cottage.

2.1.8 All land adjacent to the North and West of the site is currently in the ownership of the applicant.

2.1.9 The site lies within an established residential group of dwellings within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and is also designated as a special landscape area.

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2.1.10 The adjacent and surrounding properties vary in style and materials comprising of traditional stone built farmhouses, rendered cottages, red brick semi detached houses, farm buildings and a timber bungalow. The overriding established form and appearance within the locale is traditional rural two storey, gabled dwellings.

2.1.11 Extensive pre application advice was sought from both the Highway (Mr R Parker) and Landscape / Countryside (Mr S Massey) Departments, in order to establish an appropriate layout whereby highway safety was of paramount importance whilst also addressing the issues of openness and measures / solutions required to mitigate the loss of some hedging and the roadside tree. Both Mr Parker and Mr Massey have subsequently expressed their respective support for the scheme.

2.1.12 It is also proposed to rationalize the form of the replacement dwellings such that they have differing appearance whilst retaining the style and character of the traditional vernacular architecture of the surrounding area, it is intended to achieve this as follows:

2.1.12.1 **Toll Gate Cottage** - a one and a half storey dwelling with a thirty five degree roof pitch in conjunction with plain tiles which provides a traditional, but not over-dominant stepped roof-scape, with the principle ridge line orientated to match the existing building i.e. parallel to the road, whilst the smaller return gables and dentil brickwork to the front and rear serve to break up the mass of the proposal and give the design a traditional feel. The position of the dwelling is such that it allows for a vastly improved, compliant highway access with adequate vehicular visibility, off road parking and turning facility along with much improved amenity for the occupants of the dwelling.

2.1.12.2 **Blake Lee** - a one and a half storey dwelling with a forty five degree roof pitch in conjunction with plain tiles which traditional timber barge boards and open eaves to reflect the style and character of the adjacent properties 1 & 2 Smithy Lane. The ridge line has been orientated at ninety degrees to that of the existing roof to ensure that the new dwelling does not detrimentally impact of the amenity of any of the existing dwellings adjacent to the site. The new house will be sited in the same position as the existing. As with Toll Gate Cottage the proposed layout allows for an improved compliant highway access with adequate vehicular visibility, off road parking and turning facility.

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2.1.13 The new footway formed, using part of the applicants land, is considered to be fundamental to the improvement of highway and pedestrian safety.

2.1.14 Both existing properties still enjoy the benefit of Permitted Development rights and following an assessment of current PD criteria it is considered that both of the existing houses could be extended (actual areas shown on “floor areas” document) without the need for planning consent.

2.1.15 It has been recognised and accepted that it is reasonable to consider an existing dwelling as being that which is built and also that which could be built on to it either under permitted development rights or under an extant planning permission, on the basis that it would be possible for the applicant to build the permitted extensions, at which point they would without dispute be included as part of the “existing dwelling”.

2.1.16 Policy

2.1.17 Policy D5B of the adopted Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996 – 2011 says that inappropriate development within Green Belt will not be permitted except in very special circumstances. Policy N2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan permits the replacement of existing dwellings in the Green Belt, which largely reflects the national guidance in PPG2. Paragraph 3.6 of PPG2 says that the replacement of existing dwellings need not be inappropriate providing that the new dwelling is not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces.

2.1.18 The principle issues relating to this application are:

2.1.18.1 Whether the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt and if so, whether there are any very special circumstances which outweigh the presumption against such development; and

2.1.18.2 The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the rural landscape and openness of the Green Belt and Special Landscape area

2.1.19 A schedule of floor areas has been prepared and attached to this application which shows the areas of:

2.1.19.1 a) existing buildings

2.1.19.2 b) possible extensions using PD

2.1.19.3 c) proposed buildings.

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2.1.20 It is therefore considered that in the context of paragraph 3.6 the proposed replacement dwellings would not constitute “inappropriate development” and consequently, there is no presumption against the proposed development by virtue of the new dwellings not being materially larger than the existing buildings. Furthermore the proposed design solution has been adopted to ensure that the overall height, scale and massing would not have an adverse impact or materially affect the current level of openness of the Green Belt at this location. Indeed the new development by its very nature and design is regarded as an enhancement and improvement to the character and appearance of the landscape. Consequently the proposals would not harm the underlying objectives of Green Belt policy.

2.1.21 Special Landscape areas

2.1.22 N7 states - *development which would injure the visual amenity of the green belt by virtue of its siting, materials or design will not be permitted in locations which are within or visually conspicuous from the green belt.*

2.1.23 N8 states - *in the special landscape area permission will not be given for development which would materially detract from the high quality of the landscape because of its siting, scale, design and materials, and associated traffic generation. In areas where the special landscape overlaps the green belt there will be a presumption against most development in accordance with policy N2.*

2.1.24 It is considered that the proposed scheme design provides a high quality and aesthetically pleasing solution that integrates and respects the nature and character of the existing and adjacent properties, whilst retaining individuality and therefore accords with national and current local plan policy as stated above.

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2.2 Amount:

2.2.1 The proposal is for two replacement dwellings;

2.2.2 Blake Lee: is to be located in the same position on the site with principle windows facing North, South and West thus preventing amenity or overlooking issues with the adjacent properties.

2.2.3 The new development will introduce boundary walls and landscape in order to facilitate access around the building and also to provide an enlarged off road parking and turning area for a minimum of 2 no vehicles.

2.2.4 Toll Gate Cottage is to be resited away from the highway to improve visibility, parking and turning, aesthetic appearance and amenity for future occupants.

2.3 Scale:

2.3.1 Details of siting, dimensions, levels, heights and floor areas can be found on drawings 870-09-03, 04, 05, 06 and “floor areas” document.

2.3.2 Floor levels for Toll Gate Cottage and Blake lee have been reduced by 450mm and 700mm respectively.

2.3.3 The size and layout of the new dwellings have specifically been chosen to reflect and maintain the scale, massing and relationship to both the existing and adjacent buildings whilst providing a thermally efficient sustainable new home suitable for family use.

2.4 Appearance:

2.4.1 The design of the new dwelling incorporates traditional features such as timber barge boards and open eaves to Blake Lee and dentil brickwork to eaves and gables to Toll Gate Cottage, in conjunction with a red brindle waterstruck facing brick, arched window heads, brick and cast stone cills to achieve a rural cottage feel.

2.4.2 The roof pitch of 35 and 45 degrees respectively allow the use of plain tiles which are considered to be appropriate and consistent for a building of this type. The overall roof height has been limited such that the proposed ridge height is either equal to or below that of the existing thus ensuring that there is no adverse impact on the openness of the greenbelt.

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2.5 Landscaping:

2.5.1 The combination of new landscaping to the frontage, new garden walls, hedges, new and replacement trees serves to enhance and strengthen the significant visual appearance of both Toll Gate Cottage and Blake Lee.

2.5.2 See drawing 870-09-03 and 04 for landscaping details.

2.5.3 Hard landscape within the site has been segregated into different areas which will be defined by the use of differing materials, colours and textures to avoid the over dominant use of tarmac.

2.5.4 Paving to the parking and turning areas will either be laid to falls towards areas of landscape or they will be laid as a permeable paving solution comprising of 50 thick concrete block paving – Aquapave or similar on 50 course grit over 100 thick Type 4/20 sub base.

3 Access Issues

3.1.1 Improved access has been a fundamental design consideration from the very outset.

3.1.2 The provision of improved accesses that accord with current legislation, a new footway and vastly improved visibility lines will combine to afford a significant enhancement to highway safety for vehicular and pedestrian users alike.

3.1.3 It is understood from anecdotal evidence that buses currently refuse to stop at the two bus stops closest to the site due to safety considerations, particularly relating to the inadequate visibility cause by the current position of Toll Gate Cottage.

3.1.4 It is therefore considered that the improvements resulting from this planning application could have benefits for the wider population.

3.1.5 As the application site currently comprises two no dwellings, access to all existing services and infrastructure will remain the same.

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4 Consultation

4.1.1 Extensive consultations have taken place with Highways (Mr R Parker) and Landscape / Countryside (Mr S Massey) Departments, following which their valued comments and advice have been incorporated into the proposed design solution.

4.1.2 The Environment Agency's website has been checked. This shows that the site is in zone 1 for flooding. No separate consultation was therefore needed.

4.1.3 As this is a private house and not a public building no consultation has been undertaken with any access group.

5 Conclusion

5.1.1 The existing buildings are deficient in terms of siting, facilities, layout, structure, thermal performance and appearance.

5.1.2 The retention and renovation of the existing buildings is not considered to be economically viable neither would it be environmentally sustainable as it would never be able to attain the performance or comfort levels of new dwellings constructed to modern standards.

5.1.3 The Toll Gate Cottage site was recently the subject of a planning appeal – ref APP/B3438/A/09/2100825. Whilst the appeal was ultimately dismissed by the Planning Inspector it did raise some important issues relating to incursion into Green Belt, impact on the Openness of the Green Belt, inappropriate development, alternative positions for the replacement dwelling within the existing site and the fact that Highway safety was considered to be a "very persuasive argument", in "support of a replacement dwelling in a safer location and with a safer access".

5.1.4 It is my belief that the design solution adopted for the redevelopment of the site, by virtue of the scale, form, layout and use of materials, addresses not only the points raised by the Planning Inspector but also satisfies current national and local plan policies and should therefore be approved.

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