PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING DESIGN & ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

- Date Issued: January 2017

SITE ADDRESS:

- Churnet Side Garage, Off Abbey Green Road, Leek, ST13 8SA

APPLICANT:

- M & J Lownds

PROPOSAL

- Demolition of existing buildings and erection of new store and workshop for Class B2 use.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the demolition of existing buildings at Churnetside Garage and the erection of a new purpose built store and workshop for Class B2 use.

1.2 This statement analyses the site, the proposal and the policy context within which it is made. Thereafter it provides justification for approval of the proposal primarily on the basis that the development would support the sustainable growth of an existing and established edge of town centre business without harm or detriment to the character and appearance of the site and wider surrounding area. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed development would be prejudicial to any of the surrounding land uses, detrimental to highway safety or exacerbate any flooding issues.

2 APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SETTING

2.1 The application site comprises of an irregular shaped parcel of land which extends to some 1,164 sq metres. It lies at the end of a narrow unmade private access road off Abbey Green Road, Leek. The northern boundary of the site runs contiguous with the River Churnet with open countryside beyond. A public footpath lies on northern side of stream. The eastern boundary of the site lies adjacent to Brough Park, a designated nature conservation area. Other industrial units lie on southern side of access track . For the purposes of the development plan the site lies on the outer edge of the town development boundary within an area of open countryside. Due to its close proximity to the River Churnet the majority of the site also lies within Flood Zone 2 although a very small corner lies within Flood Zone 3.

2.2 The application site has been in industrial use since 1970 and for the last 13 years has been home to the applicant's business, Moorlands Plant & Machinery . The site comprises of a collection of buildings which have been added on a piecemeal basis and comprise of a number of differing materials as well as portacabins which are loosely arranged around the perimeter of the site. A certificate of lawfulness for use of the site as a motor vehicle repair garage was granted in 1978 under reference number SMD/1978/1334. A subsequent certificate of lawfulness for use of one of the buildings as a single dwellinghouse was also granted in 2009.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The application seeks consent to rationalise the site by demolishing two existing prefabricated buildings and an adjacent scaffold pole shelter and replace them with a purpose built store and workshop. A number of portacabins and containers will also be removed in order to facilitate the development. The proposed building would have an 'L' shaped footprint with the storage building being sited alongside the southern boundary of the site and the proposed workshop running at right angles to this. The proposed building would measure 16m along its southern elevation and 21.429m along its eastern elevation. The proposed storage building would have an

eaves height of 4.198m and an overall ridge height of 5.035m. The proposed workshop building would have an eaves height of 3.512m and an overall ridge height of 4.15m. Both of the buildings would be clad on the roof and the walls in plastisol sheeting.

3.2 The scheme is shown on the submitted drawings numbered 3582-01A; 3582-02A and 3582-03A which have been prepared by Ivan J Cooper on behalf of the client.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan, which in this area comprises of the adopted Core Strategy (2014). Policies in the Development Plan conventionally seek to safeguard environmental interests and aim to resist developments which are likely to give rise to significant adverse environmental and amenity effects.

4.3 Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications (para 12). The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.4 The most relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles); SS1a (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development), DC1 (Design Considerations); E1 (New Employment Development); E2 (Existing Employment Areas); SS6c (Other Rural Areas Area Strategy); SD1 (Sustainable Use of Resources), SD4 (Pollution & Flood Risk) T1 (Developments and Sustainable Transport) and T2 (Other Sustainable Transport Measures). For the sake of brevity

these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

5. ASSESSMENT

5.1 This section address the main planning issues that are likely to arise during the consideration of the planning application. It is considered that the main issues in this case are the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the area, amenities of neighbouring land uses and properties, transport and highways and flood risk. Each of these issues is discussed separately below.

Principle of development

5.2 As set out in section 2.2 of this statement, the lawful use of this site is for motor vehicle repairs (Class B2). The proposed development would continue the use of the site and rationalise the use of the existing site by providing purpose built storage and workshop facilities.

5.3 Section 1 of the NPPF focuses upon building a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 19 highlights the Governments committment to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable grown. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. The principle of extending the floor space of an existing B2 business use within the confines of the site broadly conforms to adopted CS policies E1, E2 and S6C subject to the consideration of other factors such as the impact on the appearance of the area and landscape, highway safety and neighbour amenity. These issues are discussed in further detail below.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

5.4 The specific design and conservation policies of the CS seek to promote local distinctiveness by means of good design and the conservation, protection and enhancement of historic, environmental and cultural assets along with the District's landscape and the setting of settlements. policy DC1 sets out design criteria relating to new development to reinforce local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area. These provisions are reinforced by paragraphs 56 and 58 of the NPPF.

5.5 The proposed development would result in a positive enhancement of the character and appearance of the site and the wider surrounding area due to the removal of a number of incongruous buildings and structures which are poor in terms of their form, design and materials. The proposed store building will also allow a number of the items currently stored externally to be brought under cover which will also

improve the character and appearance of the site. The replacement buildings would provide purpose built accommodation and their overall size, scale, form and appearance has been carefully designed to ensure that they would not be visually intrusive. They appear as functional buildings constructed from appropriate materials having regard to the nature of their proposed use. The existing mature landscape belt adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is particularly substantial and due to the modest size and scale of the proposed buildings would provide considerable screening from the adjacent public views and the open countryside beyond. The proposed building would be seen in the context of the site and existing built development and would not result in encroachment into open countryside. The character and appearance of the area would not therefore be harmed. In this regard the proposal would accord with CS policy DC1 and Section 7 of the NPPF which together seek to ensure that new development is of good quality design that functions well and adds to the overall quality of an area.

Amenities of neighbouring land uses and properties

5.6 National planning policy dictates that at the heart of its core principles planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. This is further reiterated in CS Policy DC1 which seeks to protect residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight. sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping as informed by the Council's Space About Dwellings SPG.

5.7 With the exception of the applicant's own dwelling there are no residential properties in close proximity to the application site. The other buildings alongside the access track are all in employment uses with the nearest residential dwellings being on Abbey Green Road. It is important to note that the site currently operates without any restriction on operational activities, opening hours or vehicle movements . The existing facility has no restriction on operational hours and is currently operational for 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Due to the nature of the site it is essential that no planning conditions are attached to any permission which would restrict or in any way comprise the current lawful use of the site. Whilst the proposed development seeks to provide purpose built facilities for the site it is not considered that these would generate any further activity or result in any intensification of the use of the site. The proposed buildings would not adversely affect amenities of the neighbouring land uses or any of the surrounding buildings.

Transport & Highways

5.8 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states: Plans and decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all

people and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe is reflected in CS Policy T1 Development and Sustainable Transport.

5.9 CS Policy T1 states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces the reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and helps deliver the priorities of the Staffordshire Local Transport Plan, where this is consistent with other policies.

5.10 The submitted application does not propose any alterations to the existing access arrangements. A submitted parking plan shows that there is adequate parking provision within the site to accommodate the needs of both the dwelling and the business including space for staff and visitors.

Flood Risk

5.11 According to the Environment Agency's floodplain map, 2014 [Figures 1 & 2 attached] the majority of the application site is located within Flood Zone 2 with a small section of it situated in flood zone 3 which has a potential risk of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources. The recommendation from the EA is to maintain the existing floor level at the very least.

5.12 The submitted plan indicates that the proposed development in relation to the river wall will be in approximately the same position as the garage to be demolished hence there will be no encroachment on the buffer zone. The application site level has also been raised historically and the design flood level for the proposed buildings would be no lower than that which exists on the existing buildings. The proposed development is of the size described and shown on the drawings, therefore there would not be a significant increase in built up area throughout the site as the existing buildings and structures have a total hard standing of approximately 203 square metres compared to 247 square metres which would be created by the proposed extension thereby resulting a net increase of just 44 square metres. Since there will be no significant increase in surface runoff rates, it is unlikely that the proposals will have any major adverse effect on the existing surface water flooding issues either on or off site.

6. Conclusion

6.1 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.

6.2 Having regard to the above considerations it is concluded that the principle of development is wholly acceptable on this site as it will allow the sustainable growth of an existing and established business. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with National and Local planning policies and can be undertaken without unacceptable adverse effects on the landscape, community, environment or transport links.

7. DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

DESIGN

Use

The application proposes the demolition of a number of rudimentary buildings and structures and their replacement with a purpose built workshop and store building. These proposals are completely in keeping with the established and permitted use of the site.

Amount

This amount of development is considered to comply with National and Local development plan policy and is in keeping with the nature and character of the site.

Scale

The application proposes the demolition and removal of approximately 203 sq metres of built development (75 sq metres storage cabins and 128 sq metres of existing buildings) and its replacement with a purpose built workshop and store which would have a floor area of 247 sq.m.

Landscaping

The application site benefits from extensive and mature landscaping alongside its northern boundary and therefore views of the application site when viewed from the public footpath on the opposite side of the River Churnet are minimal. They are also seen against the backdrop of rising ground beyond. It is not therefore considered that any additional landscaping will be required as part of this proposal.

Appearance

The replacement workshop and store have been designed so that they propose functional modern buildings which are intended for their purposes. Their size, scale, form, design and materials are in keeping with the other units along the access track and the locality.

Access

The proposed development would be served by the existing access track which has previously been held to be acceptable.