Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

# PLANNING STATEMENT

## LAND OFF RIVENDELL LANE, LEEK

## JANUARY 2017

**Site Address:**
Land off Rivendell Lane, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 5RH

**Applicant:**
Birchendel Holdings Ltd.

**Proposal:**
Erection of 2no. Detached Two-Storey Dwellings

**Planning Statement:**
**Date Issued:** 23rd January 2017
**Job Reference:** RDP/2017/001

**Report Prepared By:**
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## 1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Birchendel Holdings Ltd. to prepare a planning application for the erection of two detached dwellings on a parcel of land to the east of Rivendell Lane, Leek.

1.2 Plot 1 will comprise of a dwelling with a footprint of 152sq.m. set within a plot that extends to some 785sq.m. The dwelling will stand to approximately 7.2 metres in height above the current ground level. It adopts a bespoke, split-level style of design that takes its design cues from dwellings within the surrounding area. The dwelling will encompass a garage at lower ground level, with a kitchen, dining room, living room, utility, w.c. and ensuite bedroom at ground floor, with three further bedrooms (one ensuite) and bathroom at first floor. The plot will be accessed via a new vehicular access that will feed off Birchall Lane to the southeast.

1.3 Plot 2 will comprise of a dwelling with a footprint of 105sq.m. set within a plot of some 708sq.m. in area. The dwelling will also stand to approximately 7.2 metres above the existing ground level, and as with Plot 1 it adopts a bespoke style of design incorporating a catslide roof. The dwelling will encompass a lounge, kitchen, dining room, hallway, utility and integral garage at ground floor, with three bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor. Access to this plot is to be taken off Rivendell Lane towards the northernmost end of the site, beyond the existing electricity sub station.

## 2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site comprises part a vacant parcel of land that is laid to grass, and which occupies an modestly elevated position above the adjacent highway, particularly at its southernmost end. The site furthermore slopes

up gradually in an easterly direction towards its boundary with The Moorings. The site as a whole extends to just under 0.15 hectares and lies within the residential development boundary of Leek. The site is surrounded by residential development in an area which has evolved greatly over the years with numerous instances of infill development having taken place. Dwellings within the locality vary in terms of their scale, massing and appearance, with plot sizes also of varying sizes, including large spacious plots, particularly to the east/southeast, and much smaller, tighter plots, particularly to the west/southwest. The site occupies a sustainable location within easy walking and cycling distance of the numerous services and facilities on offer within Leek and furthermore lies within the established settlement boundary for the town.

## 3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 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. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Stafford Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (2014) of which the following policies are of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy relates to Development Principles and states that the Council will expect development to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, amongst others, easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community; development which maintains the distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings, and development that secures high quality, sustainable environments.

3.3 Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole;*
  or

- *specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

3.4 Policy SS2 of the Core Strategy states that 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.

3.5 Policy SS3 of the Core Strategy states that development will be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and rural areas. It identifies that some 30% of the total residential provision outlined in policy SS2 will be allocated within Leek.

3.6 Policy SS5a of the Core Strategy states that the Council will seek to consolidate the role of Leek as the principal service centre and a market town through a number of actions. These include, allocating a range of deliverable housing sites both within the urban area and, on land adjacent to the urban area. Sites within the urban areas shall be in locations across the town which have good accessibility to serves and facilities with encouragement given to previously developed sites.

3.7 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that new development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Proposals should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance. Development should also protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

## 4 Other Material Considerations

***National Planning Policy Framework***

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting sustainable development and seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing nationally. It furthermore states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The content of the National Planning Policy Framework is explored in more detail, where relevant, in the Planning Assessment below.

***Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2016)***

4.2 This document sets out the Local Authority's performance in respect of housing land supply and housing delivery. It confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing land equivalent to 1.87 years supply.

## 5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application site lies within the settlement boundary for Leek wherein a substantial degree of new development is to be targeted over the plan period (policies SS2 and SS3 of the Core Strategy refer). The site also lies within easy walking and cycling distance of the town centre, with half hourly bus services operating nearby on the Cheddleton Road. These bus services offer connections with both the town centre and Hanley, and as a consequence future occupiers of the dwellings will have a viable means of alternative transportation to the car to access local services and facilities. The proposed development is therefore considered to fully accord with the provisions of policies SS1, SS2, SS3, and SS5a of the adopted Core Strategy and is therefore acceptable in principle.

5.2 There are also other material considerations that weigh in favour of the proposed development, notably the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that:

> *"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development".*

5.3 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF goes on to state that:

> *"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"*

5.4 The latest housing land supply figures for Staffordshire Moorlands, as set out in the Local Authority's Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2016), confirm that the Local Planning Authority is only able to demonstrate a 1.87 year supply of deliverable housing. This falls significantly short of the 5-year supply required by paragraph 49 of the NPPF, and as a consequence, the provisions of paragraph 14 of the NPPF require that planning permission is granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significant and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

5.5 This proposal will derive a number of benefits having regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development set out in paragraph 7 of the NPPF. In terms of the economic and social dimension of sustainable development it is considered that the proposal will derive benefits to the local economy, both to local tradesmen during the construction phase, and though the expenditure associated with one additional household. The proposal will also secure the delivery of two new dwellings that will make a valuable contribution to the supply of housing within the District and in turn help the Local Authority to meet its shortfall in housing delivery. Such benefits are considered to be worthy of significant weight.

5.6 In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the proposal would derive a number of benefits. The proposal would deliver a high quality design that responds positively to the constraints of the site and the character and appearance of the surrounding area (as discussed below), and will furthermore secure the erection of two dwellings in a sustainable

location where future occupiers would have a choice of means of transport to access local services and facilities. I submit that these aforementioned benefits lend further weight in favour of the proposed development.

Design & Impact on the Character of the Area

5.7 The surrounding area exhibits a wide variety of property styles including large dwellings in the Arts & Crafts style, smaller dormer bungalows, bungalows and typical estate style houses associated within the 1980s and 1990s. Consent has furthermore been granted recently at two nearby sites (Westerdale and Birchall House) for dwellings with a more contemporary style. Dwellings are typically of brick and tile construction, or of a render and tile construction, with some properties exhibiting both. There is also a healthy mix of both gabled and hipped roofs, which in the main tend to be steeply pitched. There is no strong, prevailing vernacular to respond to. To the east and southeast of the site, dwellings tend to sit within larger, more spacious plots, whilst to the west, southwest and northwest of the site dwellings are set within more compact plots.

5.8 The proposed development encompasses bespoke designed dwellings that work positively with the constraints of the site. Plot 1 adopts a split-level, split gable style of design that takes its cues from the split gable design of Brattalid on the opposite side of Rivendell Lane. It utilises a complimentary palette of materials to that exhibited in the locality, and its overall scale and massing is broken up by the split-level design approach adopted. The dwelling will furthermore sit within a substantial plot that is of commensurate size to other plots within the locality, including the recently permitted schemes at Birchall House (SMD/2016/0324) and Westerdale (SMD/2014/0842). Its overall ridge height of 7.2 metres above the existing ground level is furthermore considered to be in keeping with the wide variety of building scales exhibited along Rivendell Lane and Birchall Lane.

5.9 Plot 2 is smaller in footprint to Plot 1, but will also sit within a substantial area of domestic curtilage. Its design is more traditional in terms of its overall form and proportions owing to this part of the site being flatter in nature. Its gabled design with catslide roof style roof is in keeping with the widely varying character of the area, and it will furthermore utilise a matching palette of materials, as per the approach adopted for Plot 1. Its overall ridge height of 7.2 metres is commensurate with other dwellings in the locality, as is its overall plot size, like Plot 1, is in keeping with the plot sizes exhibited in the surrounding area.

5.10 Both plots will encompass substantial landscaping and planting throughout in order to soften the overall impact of the development and anchor it into the streetscene. This can be secured by way of a planning condition, but is indicated in general on the submitted Site Plan. Such landscaping, coupled with the bespoke design of the proposed dwellings, will serve to ensure that the proposed development will not give rise to significant adverse impacts to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposed development therefore accords with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Neighbouring Amenity

5.11 The proposed dwellings have been sited within their respective plots to ensure that they do not result in any conflict with the Local Authority's informal space about dwellings standards, with the properties opposite located in excess of 28 metres from the proposed dwellings. As a consequence the proposed development will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity, and the proposal therefore meets the requirements of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Highway Safety

5.12 The application proposes the creation of a new vehicular access point onto Birchall Lane to serve plot 1, with a new vehicular access onto Rivendell Lane to serve plot 2. Both access points will benefit from good visibility in both directions on egress from the respective sites. Each dwelling will furthermore benefit from a minimum of two off-street parking spaces and associated turning and manouvering space to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. As a consequence, the proposal will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts to highway safety within the locality.

Impact on Trees

5.13 The application site is bordered by a number of trees along its eastern boundary. However, the dwellings do not encroach into the root protection areas of these trees and therefore will not adversely impact on their long term health or condition. The applicant is nevertheless agreeable to the installation of tree protection measures to accord with BS5837:2005 in the interests of safeguarding the trees during construction. In doing so the proposed development will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts to trees within the locality.

## 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 This proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development that is acceptable in planning terms having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Leek;*
- *Leek is a target for significant housing growth up to 2026;*
- *The provisions of the NPPF mean that the proposal should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development;*
- *The site lies within easy walking and cycling distance of local services and facilities and benefits from regular public transport connections nearby;*
- *The proposed development incorporates dwellings that are of an appropriate design, and which are in keeping with the widely varying character of the surrounding area;*
- *The proposed development will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers;*
- *The proposal will safeguard existing trees on the site and will not give rise to any highway safety concerns.*

6.3 For these reasons the proposed development is considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS1, SS2, SS3, SS5a and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.4 It is furthermore submitted, having regard to the provisions of paragraphs 49 and 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, that this proposal should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this regard it is considered that the proposal amounts to a sustainable form of development and no adverse impacts are considered to exist to *significantly and demonstrably* outweigh the benefits of the development.

6.5 The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant full planning permission for the proposed development.