Hewitt&Carr Architects

Planning Statement

Full Planning Application for erection of a detached dwelling at Teanford Mill Upper Tean, Staffordshire for Mr. P. Wilshaw

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared to support an application for the erection of a detached dwelling on land at Teanford Mill, Upper Tean.

1.2. The proposed dwelling will occupy a footprint of 81.7m^2 and stand to a maximum height of 7.2 metres. It will encompass a kitchen, lounge/dining room, study, hall and w.c. at ground floor, with four bedrooms (one ensuite) and jack-and-Jill bathroom at first floor. The total volume of the dwelling will be 478m^3. Access to the site will be taken via new vehicular access that will connect with the vehicular access that services nos.1-6 The Bridge, Teanford.

1.3. A series of existing poor quality structures and containers on the site will be removed to accommodate the proposed dwelling, all of which are in the applicant's ownership and have been in situ on the land for a period long in excess of 4 years.

1.4. The application has been subject to pre-application discussions between the Local Authority and the applicant, where it was confirmed that the principle of development could be supported if the proposed dwelling does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on the site that it is to be removed.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1. The application site lies within the north Staffordshire Green Belt, and is currently occupied by a variety of poor quality storage structures and containers which are spread across the site in a somewhat haphazard manner. An aerial photograph showing the overall appearance of the site shown in Photograph 1 overleaf. These structures are used for the storage of timber and other materials associated with the applicant's business, and are proposed for removal to facilitate the proposed development.

2.2. To the north of the application site lies a two storey former mill building (now used for commercial storage), with further commercial buildings located to the west. To the south-west of the site lies a detached dwelling of modest proportions, with a terrace of 6 dwellings located beyond that to the south. To the east of the site runs the River Tean, whose associated floodplain covers the eastern part of the proposed domestic curtilage, along with the site access. The site access will connect with the existing vehicular access that serves nos. 1-6 The Bridge, and which feeds onto Breach Lane.

2.3. The site as a whole lies close to the edge of the village of Upper Tean, some 1.1km from its centre, and less than 200m from the junction of Breach Lane with

Tenford Lane and the A522 (Cheadle Road), where regular public transport connections are available throughout the day to Hanley, Cheadle, Leek and Uttoxeter.

Photograph 1 – Aerial Photograph of Site (Source: Google Earth)



3.0 PLANNING POLICY

3.1. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (March 2014) and the following policies are of relevance to the determination of this application.

3.2. Policy SS1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, amongst others:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities;
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;
- a healthy, safe, attractive and well-maintained environment;

- development which maintains the distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings;
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas both now and for future generations.
- development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

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 this Core Strategy (and, where relevant, with polices in neighbourhood plans) 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 SS6c of the Core Strategy states that the rural areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. This will be achieved by, amongst others, restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which is essential to local needs, including affordable housing (in accordance with policies H2, H3 and R2), and allowing rural exceptions housing (in accordance with policy H2 and R2). It goes on to state that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.5. Policy SD1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will require all development to make sustainable use of resources, and adapt to climate change. This will be achieved by giving encouragement to development on previously developed land in sustainable locations.

3.6. Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and

complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst others):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;
- 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;
- create, where appropriate, attractive, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate, amongst others, landscaping and designing out crime initiatives;
- protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;
- promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate, in accordance with policy NE1;
- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;
- ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;

3.7. Policy DC3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, and supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment.

3.8. Policy R2 of the Core Strategy states that 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.
- Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.

- Extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.
- The conversion of non-residential rural buildings

3.9. Policy SD4 of the Core Strategy states that development proposed within the floodplain will be guided to first make use of areas at no or low risk of flooding before areas at higher risk, where this is viable or possible and compatible with other polices aimed at achieving a sustainable pattern of development. Development deemed acceptable within areas at risk of flooding due to national or other policies or other material considerations, must be subject to a flood risk assessment. Additionally, approved schemes must be designed and controlled to mitigate the effects of flooding on the site and the potential impact of the development on flooding elsewhere in the floodplain. In all cases, schemes will be determined after having considered both individual and cumulative impacts.

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out guidance in respect of development within the Green Belt. It also seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing nationally and sets out guidance in respect of securing high quality design and safeguarding development from flooding. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is discussed in more detail below.

SMDC Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2016)

4.2. The five-year housing land supply statement assesses completions and consents granted within the District to determine its overall level of housing land supply. The document confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing equivalent to 1.87 years. The content of this document is discussed in more detail below.

5.0 STATEMENT OF CASE

Impact on the Green Belt

5.1. The application proposes the erection of a detached dwelling on a previously-developed site within the north Staffordshire Green Belt. Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy states that the rural areas, within which the site is located, will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. This will be achieved by, amongst others, restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which is essential to local needs, including affordable housing and rural exceptions sites. Policy SS6c goes on to state that strict control will continue to be exercised over

inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

5.2. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF confirms that local authorities should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate within the Green Belt. It nevertheless goes on to list a number of exceptions. This list of exceptions includes:

"limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development".

5.3. The application site is currently used for the storage of materials, predominantly timber, associated with the applicant's business. It is occupied by a large area of hardstanding and a variety of poor quality structures and containers that detract from the character and appearance of the area (see example in Photograph 2 below). As a consequence the site constitutes previously-developed land, and its re-development to accommodate a dwelling is therefore potentially acceptable in the context of Green Belt policy, provided that the resultant development does not have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

Photograph 2 – Appearance of Existing Structures



5.4. The existing structures and containers on the site encompass a collective volume of approximately 483m^3. In footprint terms the existing structures amount to a total floor area of 204.6m^2. The structures furthermore range in height between 1.95 metres and 3.10 metres.

5.5. By comparison the proposed dwelling will encompass a volume of 478m^3 and a footprint of 81.7m^2. It will furthermore stand to a maximum ridge height of 7.2 metres, which is consistent with the character of the surrounding area which exhibits a dormer bungalow and a terrace of two storey dwellings.

5.6. Paragraph 79 of the NPPF confirms that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts being their openness and permanence. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF goes on to list the five purposes of the Green Belt, with paragraph 81 stipulating that once designated, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as enhancing visual amenity or improving damaged and derelict land.

5.7. The proposed development will result in a reduction in the volume of built development on the site in the order of 5.66m^3. It furthermore entails a substantial reduction in the footprint of built development in the order of 122.9m^2. As a consequence the proposal will derive a beneficial enhancement to the openness of the Green Belt and will contribute very positively to the five purposes of Green Belts, in particular by virtue of helping to reduce the sprawl of large built-up areas, preventing neighbouring towns merging together and reducing encroachment of built development. The proposal also entails the reuse of a previously-developed site and thus involves the recycling of urban land.

5.8. Such material benefits weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development, and having regard to the above considerations I submit that the proposed development will not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development and therefore constitutes an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt that accords with the relevant provisions of policy SS6c of the Core Strategy and guidance contained within the NPPF.

<u>Housing Need</u>

5.9. Policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy set out a number of categories of residential development that will be permitted within the rural area. The proposed development does not fall within any of the categories of development listed in these policies and thus is acknowledged to conflict with the Development Plan in this regard.

5.10. However, whilst this conflict is acknowledged, it is considered that material considerations exist to justify a departure from policy. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires local authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later

in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, as is the case with the Staffordshire Moorlands, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20% to provide a realistic prospect of achieving the planned supply and to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.

5.11. The latest housing land supply figures set out within the Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2016) confirm that the Local Authority is only able to demonstrate a 1.87 year supply of housing land. Paragraph 49 confirms that in such circumstances relevant policies for the supply of housing (e.g. policies SS6c and R2) have to be considered out-of-date. As such they should be afforded lesser weight in the determination of this application.

5.12. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF confirms that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date (as is the case here), 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 this Framework taken as a whole; or*

- *Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.*

5.13. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development, those being economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF goes on to confirm that the roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually independent.

5.14. The proposed development will derive social and economic benefits associated with the creation of an additional household. This will assist in delivering new housing to meet the significant shortfall of housing within the District, and will generate additional household expenditure that will support local services and facilities. In this regard I would draw the Local Authority's attention to appeal decision APP/B3438/A/14/2217581 where planning permission was granted for the erection of a single dwelling in the Green Belt. In allowing the appeal, which had been refused owing to the proposal contravening policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy, the Planning Inspector concluded that:

> *"The proposal would add to the local housing stock and make a positive, albeit modest, contribution towards reducing the current deficit of housing in the area. This is a clear economic and social benefit associated with the scheme to which I attach significant weight" (our emphasis)*

5.15. The conclusion of the Planning Inspector in this regard demonstrates the degree of weight that should be attributed to the benefits of this proposed development, which is similar in nature to that considered in the appeal. Further economic benefits will ensue as a consequence of the New Homes Bonus and

the generation of work for local tradespeople during the construction phase, and collectively I submit that such social and economic benefits are considered to weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development.

5.16. Environmental benefits will also ensue having regard to the fact that the proposal involves the reuse of previously-developed land. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF stipulates that planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. These provisions are reflected within policy SD1 of the Core Strategy. The application site is not of high environmental value, and is currently occupied by an array of poor quality structures and containers that significantly detract from the character and appearance of the site. Their removal to facilitate the proposed dwelling will therefore derive a significant beneficial enhancement to character and appearance of the area.

5.17. Further environmental benefits will ensue as a consequence of the sustainable location of the site, which means that future occupiers of the dwelling will not be reliant upon the car to access local services, facilities and employment. The site lies less than 200m from the nearest public transport connections, which provide access to nearby towns on a regular basis throughout the day, and the main village centre is a little over 1km from the site. This is within easy walking and cycling distance of the site, and as such future occupiers of the dwelling would have a choice of means of transportation to access local services and facilities. Such environmental benefits are considered to carry significant weight in the favour of the proposed development.

5.18. Overall it is concluded that there are no specific policies within the Framework that indicate that development should be resisted, and it is considered that the proposal will not derive any adverse impacts to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the aforementioned benefits, as will now be discussed.

Design Considerations

5.19. Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that all development shall 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 also 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. The policy also requires developments to create safe and accessible environments, and protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping. Similar provisions are set out in paragraph 58 of the NPPF.

5.20. The character of the surrounding area varies quite considerably, incorporating a variety of two storey dwellings of differing ages, architectural styles and scales. Materials of construction are predominantly facing brickwork with plain tiled

roofs in the immediate vicinity, with a variety of rendered properties notable along the Cheadle Road.

5.21. The proposed dwelling adopts a fairly traditional style of design, with low ridge height and provision of front projecting gable, and dormer windows extending off the eaves line. In this regard it reflects the overall scale and characteristics of the nearby dwelling to the south-west of the site. Exposed rafter ends are also proposed, along with timber barge boards and vertical soldier headers above the windows in order to give some character to the property. The dwelling will also utilise a complementary palette of materials to match the character of the nearby dwellings to the south and south-west.

5.22. The proposed site layout has been dictated to a large degree by the requirement to avoid constructing the dwelling within the flood plain, which occupies a substantial portion of the eastern side of the proposed domestic curtilage. The layout and general disposition of buildings in the immediate vicinity is fairly sporadic and the proposed siting is not considered to be harmful to the character of the area. Within the site a substantial area of private amenity space will be provided, along with parking and manoeuvring space for at least two vehicles.

5.23. There are no immediate residential properties which are likely to be adversely affected by the proposed development, and this leads me to conclude that the proposed development will not give to significant and demonstrable adverse harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers. The proposal therefore accords with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Landscape

5.24. Policy DC3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment, and supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment.

5.25. The Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment for Upper Tean does not identify this site as being important to the landscape setting of the village, and as such it can be considered to be a less sensitive part of the landscape. It is furthermore noted that the proposed development will be largely enclosed on three sides by existing built development, thereby minimising its wider impact on the landscape. The character of the landscape will in any event be enhanced by the removal of the existing poor quality structures from the site and their replacement with a high quality dwelling, in an area that already exhibits a

cluster of residential properties. The proposed development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policy DC3 of the Core Strategy.

Highway Safety Considerations

5.26. Policy T1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and helps deliver the priorities of the Staffordshire Local Transport Plans, where this is consistent with other policies. It goes on to state that these aims will be achieve by ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development, is accessible by sustainable travel modes, provides adequate parking, and facilitates walking and cycling.

5.27. The application site is located to the north of the existing cluster of properties on The Bridge, and will be approached via a new vehicular access that connects to the existing access off Breach Lane serving those properties. This access will be of sufficient width to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposed development and will lead into an area of parking and manoeuvring space that is sufficient to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. The access onto Breach Lane affords reasonable visibility in both directions on egress, and as such the proposed development will not give rise to harm to highway safety in the locality.

5.28. In terms of sustainability of location, this site is located within easy walking and cycling of the centre of Upper Tean, and also benefits from close proximity to regular public transport connections, as discussed earlier in this statement. As a consequence future occupiers of the dwelling will have a choice of means of transport to access local services. This leads to me to conclude that the proposed development will not give rise to significant and demonstrable adverse impact to highway safety within the locality, and as such the proposal accords with the provisions of policy T1 of the Core Strategy.

Flood Risk Considerations

5.29. Policy SD4 of the Core Strategy states that development proposed within the floodplain will be guided to first make use of areas at no or low risk of flooding before areas at higher risk, where this is viable or possible and compatible with other polices aimed at achieving a sustainable pattern of development. Development deemed acceptable within areas at risk of flooding due to national or other policies or other material considerations, must be subject to a flood risk assessment. Additionally, approved schemes must be designed and controlled to mitigate the effects of flooding on the site and the potential impact of the development on flooding elsewhere in the floodplain. In all cases, schemes will be determined after having considered both individual and cumulative impacts. These provisions are reflected within the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraph 100.

5.30. The part of the site proposed to be developed falls within flood zones 1 and 2, and to this end the applicant has commissioned a Flood Risk Assessment to accompany the application. This has incorporated hydraulic modelling of the nearby Mill Leat / River Tean which has confirmed that the proposed dwelling will be sited at a level which is more than 600mm above the 1 in 100 year and 1 in 100 year plus climate change flood events. It also sets out details of flood alert procedures and evacuation plan to be put in place to ensure that future occupiers of the dwelling are safeguarded from flood events. As a consequence it is submitted that the proposed development will not result in significant and demonstrable adverse impacts in respect of flooding, and accords with the provisions of policy SD4 of the Core Strategy.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1. It is considered that the proposed development constitutes an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, as it constitutes the redevelopment of previously-developed land and will result in a material reduction in the extent of built development on the site, to the benefit of the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal is furthermore considered to constitute a high quality design that will not detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area, or give rise to harm to the surrounding landscape. There will be no adverse impacts in respect of neighbouring amenity, highway safety or flood risk and as such the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS1, SS1a, DC1, DC3, SD1, SD4 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.2. It is furthermore considered that the conflict of this proposal with the relevant provisions of policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy is clearly outweighed by the inability of the local authority to demonstrate a five-year deliverable supply of housing. The proposal will derive a number of social, economic and environmental benefits, and it is submitted that no significant and demonstrable adverse impacts will arise to outweigh these benefits. The Local Authority is therefore requested to grant planning permission for the proposed dwelling in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.