

PLANNING STATEMENT

**LAND ADJ. FORMER SNEYD ARMS,
WHISTON**

MARCH 2017

Site Address:

Land adjacent the former Sneyd Arms, Ashbourne Road,
Whiston, ST10 2HZ

Applicant:

Mrs. C. Wainscott

Proposal:

Erection of detached dwelling

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 15th March 2017

Job Reference: RDP/2017/042

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy has been instructed by Mrs. C. Wainscott to seek full planning permission for the erection of a detached dwelling on land adjacent to the former Sneyd Arms Public House, on the north side of the Ashbourne Road, Whiston.

1.2 The application represents a resubmission following the refusal of application SMD/2016/0493 which had also proposed the erection of a detached dwelling. That application was refused under delegated authority for the following reasons:

1. *The proposal is contrary to policies SS6c and R2 of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted March 2014) which seek to restrict development within and ""Other Rural Areas"" (as defined in the Core Strategy) other than the case of a number of specified exceptions, none of which apply to the proposal. The proposed development would undermine and conflict with these policies which set out the spatial strategy for housing development in the District. Furthermore, the site is not considered to be in a sustainable location and would therefore lead to a significant increase in car journeys and therefore emissions to the detriment of the environment. The proposal would therefore not be in line with para. 49 or Section 10 'Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change..' of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).*
2. *The proposed dwelling, by virtue of a combination of its scale, height, width and siting so close to a neighbouring existing dwelling, would appear as a cramped form of development which does not respect the relatively open nature or spacious form of development in the surrounding*

area, harming its character and appearance and which would also appear overbearing to the occupants of the neighbouring dwellinghouse. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policy DC1 'Design Considerations' of the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted March 2014) and would also conflict with Section 6 of the NPPF relating to design.

3. *Overall, the social and economic benefits of the residential scheme when considered together would not be sufficient in this case to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the environmental harm identified above contrary to Policies SS1, SS1a, SS6c, R2 and DC1 of the Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document and the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework).*

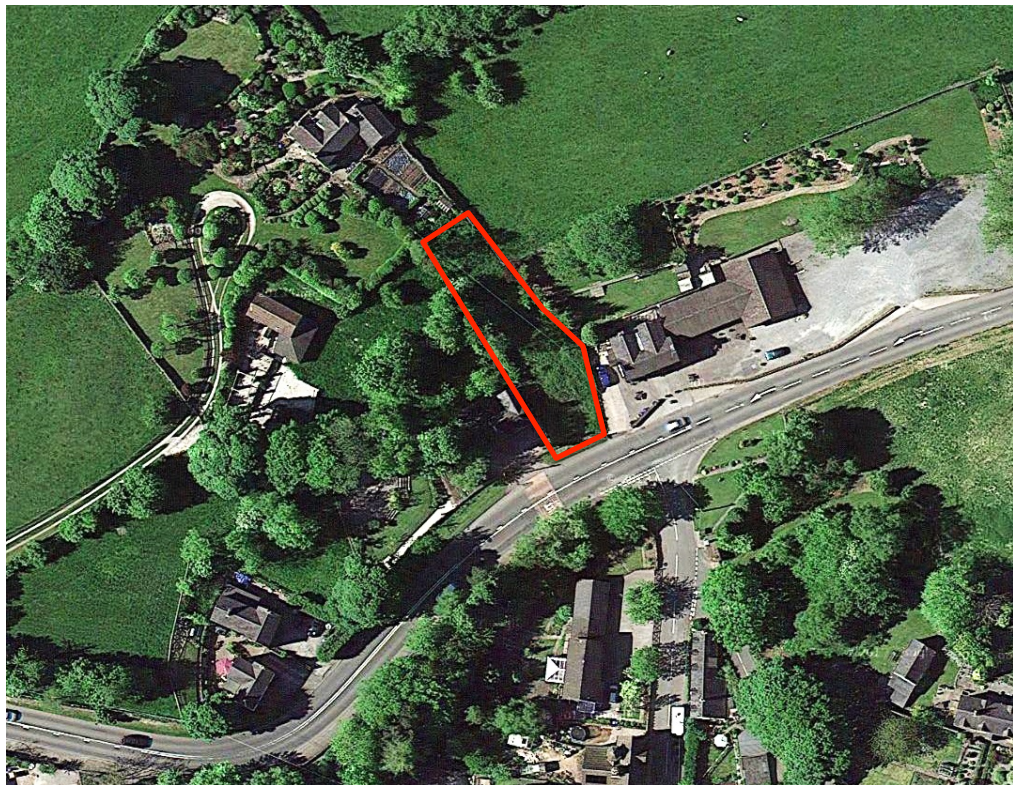
- 1.3 The application has been revised following this previous refusal to reduce the footprint of the proposed dwelling, and to achieve a greater degree of spaciousness between the dwelling and its respective site boundaries. The resultant dwelling will occupy a footprint of 72.5m² (reduced from 84m²), and stand to a maximum ridge height of 6.9 metres (down from 7.9 metres). The accommodation proposed will encompass an open plan kitchen/dining room, utility, w.c. living room and hallway at ground floor, with three bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor. Access to the site, as before, is to be taken direct off the Ashbourne Road, with parking for two vehicles and associated manouvering space to be provided.

2 Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site encompasses a parcel of overgrown land that extends to some 0.05 hectares in area. It lies between a detached two-storey dwelling to the west (Brook Cottage) and the former Sneyd Arms Public House and its

associated curtilage to the east, and is enclosed on its southern and eastern boundaries by a low dry stone wall. To the north/northwest of the site, at an elevated level to the application site, lies further residential development (The Croft). The Ashbourne Road forms the southern boundary to the site, beyond which lies further residential development. An aerial photograph showing the site in its surrounding context is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph of Site



Source: Google Maps

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 the area comprises the

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy relates to the ‘Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development’ and 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.*

3.3 Policy SS2 of the Core Strategy relates to the ‘Future Provision of Development’ and 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.

3.4 Policy SS3 of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Distribution of Development' and states that housing will be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and rural areas. It identifies that some 28% of new housing over the plan period will be delivered within the rural areas.

3.5 Policy SS6b of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Smaller Villages Area Strategy' and states that these villages, of which Whiston is identified as one, will provide only for appropriate development which enhances community vitality or meets a local social and economic need of the settlement and its hinterland. It goes on to confirm that local community, social and economic needs will be met by (amongst others):

- *Enabling new housing development which meets a local need, including affordable housing*

3.6 Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Area Strategy' and states that these 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. The policy goes on to state that the Council will meet essential local needs by (amongst others):

- *restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which is essential to local needs.*

3.7 Policy H1 of the Core Strategy states that new housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure. It goes on to state that all development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified local

housing market needs and the strategy for the area, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision. The policy also states that new dwellings should be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers, whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing occupiers.

3.8 Policy R2 of the Core Strategy relates to Rural Housing and states that only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the towns and villages:

- *Affordable Housing;*
- *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 where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for*

conversion and it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable.

3.9 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy relates to ‘Design Considerations’ and states that all development should 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 (NB: not yet published). It goes on to state that 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;*
- *protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;*
- *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.*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development and seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing nationally. It also sets out guidance in respect of securing high quality design. The content of this document is explored in more detail, where relevant, in the Planning Assessment below.

Staffordshire Moorlands Annual Monitoring Report (2015-2016)

- 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.

Staffordshire Moorlands Emerging Site Allocations DPD

- 4.3 The Local Authority has recently consulted on its Preferred Options Consultation, and within this document a residential infill boundary for the village of Whiston was identified. The site is encapsulated within the proposed settlement infill boundary.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 Policy SS2 of the adopted Core Strategy confirms that provision will be made for the delivery of 6000 additional new dwellings within the Staffordshire Moorlands over the plan period to 2026. Policy SS3 goes on to confirm that of those 6000 dwellings, some 28% are to be delivered within the rural areas (equivalent to 1,680 dwellings), of which the village of Whiston forms part.

- 5.2 The proposed development is acknowledged to conflict with the provisions of policies SS6b, SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy, as the proposal does not involve a dwelling that is essential to meet an rural need (e.g. an agricultural workers dwelling). However, whilst this conflict is noted, it is considered that there are material considerations relevant to this proposal which serve to justify approval of the proposed development.
- 5.3 The application site is located outside the settlement boundary of the previous 1998 Local Plan, but is encapsulated within the draft settlement infill boundary within the emerging Site Allocations DPD. Although the Site Allocations DPD is yet to be adopted, it represents the most up-to-date position of the Local Authority and thus I would suggest can be afforded some weight in the determination of this application. The provisions of the Core Strategy, including policy SS6b, allow for new residential development within such infill boundaries.
- 5.4 The Local Authority furthermore continues to have a substantial shortfall in housing land against the 5 year plus 20% buffer required by paragraph 47 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, and 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”*

(my emphasis)

- 5.5 The Local Authority is only able to demonstrate a housing land supply in the order of approximately 1.87 years, which represents a very significant shortfall against its housing requirements. As a consequence, the provisions

of policies SS3, SSS6b, SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy have to be considered out-of-date, and as such they should be afforded lesser weight in the determination of this application.

- 5.6 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF is explicitly clear that where the development plan is absent, silent or 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 the Framework as a whole” (my emphasis).*

- 5.7 The proposed development will deliver a number of material benefits. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These roles are mutually dependant and should be jointly sought to achieve sustainable development.

- 5.8 In terms of the economic dimension of sustainable development it is considered that the proposal will derive significant benefits to the local economy, both to local tradesmen during the construction phase, and through the expenditure associated with the creation of one additional households. The New Homes Bonus is a further economic benefit of the development. In terms of the social dimension of sustainable development the proposal would secure the delivery of a new dwelling that will contribute to the supply of housing within the Borough and in turn help the Local Authority to meet its substantial shortfall in housing delivery. Such economic and social benefits are considered to be worthy of significant weight.

- 5.9 In this regard I would draw the Local Authority’s attention to the conclusions of the Planning Inspector in determining appeal reference

APP/B3438/A/14/2217581 at a site within the Staffordshire Moorlands (see Appendix A) where the Planning Inspector, in granting consent for a single dwelling, commented as follows:

*“16. The Council have confirmed they cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. 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**” (my emphasis)*

- 5.10 This appeal decision demonstrates the degree of weight that should be attributed to the aforementioned benefits, even where it relates to the provision of just one dwelling. Similar conclusions were raised by another Planning Inspector in their determination of an appeal at a site in Rookery, Newcastle-under-Lyme (APP/P3420/A/14/2222484 – copy enclosed as Appendix B) where it was concluded that:

*“11. The development would provide a new house, which would be capable of providing accommodation for a family. This is a **significant benefit** of the scheme. The Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing”. (my emphasis)*

- 5.11 In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, this site is considered to be reasonably well located in terms of its accessibility to local services, which include a wide range of social and physical activities at the village hall, a playground and football pitch, a church and a golf club. However, it is recognised that there are no shops or schools within the village and this will weigh against the proposal. Nevertheless, there is a bus service

that operates Mondays – Saturdays providing access to Leek and Cheadle, as well as access to some of the larger villages which have local shops, schools and employment opportunities, most notably Ipstones and Kingsley. This bus service is located adjacent to the application site, and as such future occupiers of the dwellings would not be *reliant* upon the car as their sole means of transport, and any necessary journeys undertaken by car would be relatively short.

- 5.12 In reaching this conclusion I would draw the Local Authority’s attention to the appeal decision enclosed as Appendix C wherein consent was granted for the erection of two dwellings in the countryside adjacent to a small village, served by only a public house and a 3 times a day bus service (APP/Y3425/A/12/2184621). The Inspector concluded in paragraph 8 that:

*“There are few services in Sutton village. Consequently the future occupants of the proposed houses would be likely to be reliant on shops, schools and services outside the village, including those in Newport town centre about 3km away. The route to Newport is not particularly attractive for walking on a regular basis because of the limited street lighting and footpath provision. However, there are some bus services each day. Although these are limited in frequency they do provide access to Newport, as well as Telford, Eccleshall and Hanley. There is also some potential for cycling. Consequently, **future occupants of the proposed development would have some alternatives to the use of a car. Furthermore, although occupants would be reliant on a car to some degree, given the distance to Newport, this would not necessarily lead to unduly long car journeys**”*
(my emphasis)

5.13 The same can be said for the application site which lies a short journey from the settlements of Cheadle, Ipstones and Kingsley, and as such there will be alternatives available to future occupiers aside from the car, and any car journeys undertaken to access local services and facilities would not be unduly long. The Local Authority will also be aware of similar conclusions being reached about short journey times by the Planning Inspector who conducted and allowed the recent Endon Riding School appeal (Appeal Ref. 3140510).

5.14 I also note in this regard the conclusions of the Planning Officer who dealt with application SMD/2015/0609 at the nearby former Ashbourne Road Garage in Whiston. In reaching his decision to grant planning permission for the erection of two dwellings on the site the Planning Officer commented that:

*“In terms of the connectivity of the site it is considered **that the proposal would be reasonably well connected to the settlement boundary of Whiston** and is adjoined by existing residential development on either side of the site providing a residential feel when approaching the settlement. There is a bus stop close to the site on Ashbourne Road. It is also noted that **the site falls within the proposed new draft infill boundary for Whiston** as drawn in the Site Options Consultation Booklet which would inform the Site Allocations DPD. **The site is not considered to be locationally unsustainable or isolated**”. (my emphasis)*

5.15 Similar conclusions can be reached in respect of this site. The development essentially amounts to infilling between the neighbouring residential cottage to the west, and the former Sneyd Arms Public House to the east. It is

furthermore bordered to the rear by additional residential development. The site is therefore considered to be well connected to the existing settlement, and will not appear as an incongruous use within the area. There are furthermore bus stops located immediately adjacent to the site as discussed above. The site also lies within the draft settlement infill boundary for the village, and these considerations, taken as a whole, lead me to conclude that the provisions of policies SS6b and R2 of the Core Strategy are clearly outweighed by other material matters.

- 5.16 In reaching this conclusion I have had regard to the recent determination of a number of planning applications elsewhere in the District which raise similar planning issues, as will now be discussed:

SMD/2016/0822 – Land Adjacent to Whitehaven, Longsdon

- 5.17 This application had proposed the erection of two dwellings on a parcel of land located outside a recognised settlement boundary in the village of Longsdon. It was therefore regarded as being within the rural area (and also designated as green belt). Longsdon, like Whiston, is identified as a ‘smaller village’ within the adopted Core Strategy, and planning permission had previously been refused on the site owing to the location of the site within a ‘smaller village’. In approving the revised application, the planning officer nevertheless concluded that:

*“... since the previous decision in January 2016 **there is less weight given to the policies in the Council’s Core Strategy regarding the location of future housing provision.** This is because the Council has a lower supply of housing land (at approximately 1.8 years supply of land) than it was able to demonstrate in Jan 2016 and it states in the NPPF that where*

there is a less than a five year land supply, more weight should be given to allowing new housing in sustainable locations”

(my emphasis)

- 5.18 The delegated report then goes on to discuss the sustainability of the site, stating that:

*“It is debatable whether or not Longsdon could be described as a sustainable location as **it is a small village with limited services.** However, **more weight should be applied to allowing new housing proposals due to the greater pressure for housing in the District than last year**”.* *(my emphasis)*

- 5.19 This led the planning officer to conclude the following:

*“Policy SS6b (Small Villages Strategy) is deemed to hold less weight than it would have done a year ago due to the **worsening housing land supply situation**, I consider that the principle of two new houses on this particular infill site is now acceptable”.* *(my emphasis)*

- 5.20 I draw favourable comparisons between the recent approval of application SMD/2016/0822 and this revised submission, in that the application site also lies within the rural area within a ‘smaller village’ that has limited services, and that the pressure for new housing continues to grow. This recent approval is therefore considered to lend weight in favour of the proposed development.

SMD/2016/0729 – Land at The Malthouse, Foxt

- 5.21 This application had proposed the erection of a detached bungalow on a parcel of land within the rural area in the village of Foxt. Foxt is also identified as a ‘smaller village’ within the adopted Core Strategy. In granting planning permission the planning officer commented that:

“Policy SS6b recognises that there is a need to strictly control new development and restrict it to limited infilling and redevelopment within Infill Boundaries. However, the infill boundaries have yet to be defined although the plan explains that these will be drawn more tightly than the Development Boundaries around large settlements to accommodate infilling or redevelopment but to restrict peripheral expansion”

- 5.22 The planning officer went on to conclude that:

*“Although the extent of the infill boundary is unknown, the application site **would clearly fall within it being situated at the heart of the village between the property known as the Malthouse and the Fox and Goose Public House and within a ribbon of development.** The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle. (my emphasis)*

- 5.23 I draw favourable comparisons between this recently approved scheme and the current proposal in that both involve development within a ‘smaller village’ on sites that lie within the emerging infill boundary of the respective villages. In the case of Whiston, the site lies between existing residential development to the west and north, and commercial development to the east within an established ribbon pattern of development that extends along this part of the Ashbourne Road. It is also closely related to the heart of the

village. The recent approval in Foxt is therefore considered to lend further weight in support of the proposed development.

- 5.24 Having regard to all of the commentary above, it is submitted that the provisions of policies SS6b, SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy are clearly outweighed by other considerations, and that planning permission should only be refused if any adverse impacts would arise to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development when assessed against the NPPF taken as a whole.

Design & Layout

- 5.25 The previous application was refused on the grounds that the scale, height, width and siting of the dwelling so close to a neighbouring dwelling, would appear as a cramped form of development which did not respect the relatively open nature or spacious form of development in the surrounding area.
- 5.26 In response to these concerns, the size of the proposed dwelling has substantially reduced, both in floorspace terms and in height. The resultant dwelling sits more centrally within its plot, and achieves a greater degree of spaciousness to its respective site boundaries. The height of the dwelling has also been reduced by 1 metre to reduce the scale and impact of the proposed building. The accompanying streetscene drawing demonstrates that the revised scale of the proposal is in keeping with the scale and height of the buildings on either side.
- 5.27 The proposed dwelling is furthermore of a high quality design that will compliment its surroundings, adopting a symmetrical front elevation, traditionally proportioned windows and subservient lean-to extension. Its modest two-storey form with front-to-back gabled roof is furthermore in

keeping with the character of surrounding developments, in particular those either side. The proposal also embraces a palette of materials that reflects the character of the surrounding area, including red facing brickwork, plain grey tiled roof and stone quoins. The detailed design of the dwelling will therefore not give rise to significant and demonstrable adverse impacts to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

- 5.28 On approach to the site along the Ashbourne Road from the west, the set back position of the dwelling will serve to limit its visual intrusion within the streetscene, and on approach from the east it will read as part of the cluster of existing buildings in this vicinity and not appear as an incongruous or harmful addition to the area. When approached from Whiston Eaves Lane to the southeast, views towards the site will see the dwelling in the context of the two storey developments either side, and against the backdrop of the dwelling located to the north at a much higher level. It will therefore not appear incongruous or harmful in views from this direction.
- 5.29 The proposed development will also achieve a satisfactory standard of residential amenity for neighbouring occupiers and future occupants of the property. The dwelling has been sited such that it will not block the existing site facing kitchen window of Brook Cottage, and the re-positioning of the dwelling further away from this window will serve to reduce the impact of the development on those neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.30 Future occupiers of the dwelling will also benefit from a good standard of residential amenity, with a large area of private amenity space to the rear of the site. Whilst some overlooking of the site frontage may occur from the neighbouring kitchen window, this area is to be utilised for the parking and manouvering of vehicles. There will be no direct overlooking of any areas of private amenity space, nor any overlooking of principal windows and as a

consequence it is considered that the proposed development will not give rise to significant and demonstrable harm to neighbouring amenity or the amenity of future occupiers.

- 5.31 It is therefore considered that this revised proposal has served to address the design concerns raised by the previous submission, and will not result in significant and demonstrable adverse impacts to outweigh the benefits of the development as a whole. The proposal is furthermore considered to accord with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 It is considered that the proposed erection of a dwelling on this site represents an appropriate form of sustainable development having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The Local Authority is unable to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing;*
- *The NPPF is clear that there should be a presumption in favour of applications for new housing and that where policies for the control of housing are out-of-date (as is the case here) that planning permission should be granted unless adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits;*
- *The proposed development will generate a number of significant benefits associated with the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;*

- *The site lies within the emerging residential infill boundary of Whiston;*
- *The Local Authority has recently granted planning permission for dwellings within other 'smaller villages' finding the need for housing to outweigh the restrictive provisions of policies SS6b and SS6c;*
- *The scale, height, width and siting of the dwelling has been revised to avoid a cramped form of development, and will relate well to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.*
- *The development will not give rise to significant and demonstrable harm to neighbouring residential amenity or the amenity of future occupiers of the dwelling;*
- *The proposed development will not give rise to highway safety;*

6.2 It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords with the provisions of policies SS1, SS2, SS3, and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The conflict of the proposal with policies SS6b, SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy is acknowledged, but is considered to be clearly outweighed by the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework as discussed in the Planning Assessment above.

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