Planning Statement of Support

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PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO:
WILLOW VIEW
MOORCOURT ESTATE
FARLEY ROAD
OAKAMOOR
STAFFORDSHIRE
ST10 3BD

FOR MOORCOURT HOLDINGS LTD.

PREPARED BY
CONCEPT TOWN PLANNING LTD

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application of behalf of Moorcourt Holdings Ltd., for the extension of a residential dwelling and erection of a garage at Willow View, Farley Road, Oakamoor, Staffordshire.

1.2 The planning application is a re-submission of a previously refused scheme, application reference no. 08/01845/FUL. Whilst the case officer made no objection to the application in principle, it was refused on the grounds of its scale, massing and design which, it was deemed, would result in a dominant and intrusive dwelling that would detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and would cause harm to the setting of nearby Listed Buildings.

1.3 Subsequent discussions have taken place with the Local Planning Authority Conservation Officer as well as the Development Management Team. Following these discussions, amendments have been made to the previous scheme which addresses the concerns mentioned above that led to the scheme being refused. Accordingly, it is considered that the scheme submitted is acceptable and should be approved.

2.0 THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

2.1 The Moorcourt Estate is formed by Moorcourt Hall and its remaining landholding. The Hall was built in 1861 as a Gentleman's residence, and remained in such use until 1950, with an extension being added in 1914. From 1955 to 1985, the Hall was converted and used as a young women's open prison, operated and run by the Home Office. The estate was subsequently split up and sold to the private sector. In 1992, the Hall was again converted and reopened as a residential home for people with learning difficulties. This use ceased in 2005 and the Hall has remained vacant since. During its operation as an open prison, residential dwellings and quarters were established to house the wardens and staff. As a result, the estate is an eclectic mix of dwellings, all served from an internal formal road network. The subject property is a detached late 1950s building in mature gardens.

2.2 Willow View is located on the Moorcourt Estate, approximately 1km east of the village of Oakamoor. The Alton Towers Theme Park lies approximately 1.5km east of the site.

2.3 The site is currently served by bus services from Oakamoor Village, running approximately every 30 minutes, into Hanley Town Centre.

2.4 In terms of local amenities, the village of Oakamoor has a post office, primary school and a couple of public houses. Services in the nearby village of Cheadle, which lies approximately 6.5km south west of the site include a hospital, pharmacy, doctor's surgery, supermarkets, schools, banks, butcher etc.

2.5 The dwelling currently comprises a two storey late 1950s detached property of a buff brick construction with a pitched roof to the main body of the house covered in concrete tiles. Windows are of timber construction and painted white. The property also incorporates further accommodation, comprising a flat roofed annex, which originally encompassed a garage and link. This was later converted to form additional. This currently sits forward of the main plane of the building, by 600m, or thereabouts.

2.6 The site is bound by a number of additional residential properties. To its west lies 'The Croft', a detached residential property. To the west lies 'The Coach House', beyond which lies 'Moorcourt Hall', both of which are Listed Buildings. To the rear (north) of the site are

the residential dwellings of 'The Woodlands', 'South View' and 'Moorside Lodge', the latter being the former Prison Warden's Accommodation at the time of the Hall being used as a Women's Open Prison. These properties, with the exception of The Coach House and Moorcourt Hall, are all 1950s and 1960s buildings, with no uniformity to the style, vernacular or materials used, and consequently comprise an eclectic mix of residential dwellings. The style and character of the area has instead evolved with the different uses of the subject property and those around it.

2.7 The subject dwelling is situated centrally on the site, set back from the road and has significant mature landscaping surrounding it. Views of the property are limited and further restricted due to the positioning of the dwelling within its setting.

2.8 As previously stated, the site is currently well screened on its eastern and western boundaries, with mature trees (on the western boundary and to the east being the subject of a T.P.O designation). The presence of a number of well maintained and mature trees, as well as other landscaping around the site provides substantial screening onto the site from the Listed Buildings to the west. To elaborate this point further, it is difficult to see the majority of Willow View from either of the Listed Buildings, or to see both Willow View and The Coach House within the same line of sight.

2.9 In terms of boundary treatments, the rear (north) of the dwelling is currently separated from neighbouring dwellings by a retaining wall and further mature landscaping to the north west, between the site and South View. At the front (south) of the dwelling, there is a small brick wall fronting the road, whilst to the west the boundary is formed by wooden post fencing. The eastern boundary and part of the northern boundary is delineated by a row of rhododendron.

3.0 THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

3.1 The development proposes a modest single storey extension of the main dwellinghouse, extending the accommodation above the existing single storey element along the western elevation, and the erection of a double garage set back from the dwellinghouse, serving the existing drive to its west.

3.2 An existing ground floor annex serves the property. This currently sits forward of the main building and the scheme previously refused proposed to extend on top of this structure. The revised side extension has been designed to appropriately respect the original dwelling, and both the ground and first floor has been set back approximately 600mm from the current plane of the host building, to ensure its subservience to the host building. The ridge height is also proposed to be lower than the original dwelling, by approximately 400mm, further lessening the visual impact and dominance of the proposals.

3.3 The proposals also show a new porch area, which has been included within the design, to frame the doorway, incorporating a pitched roof to remain in keeping with the proposed side extension as well as the Listed Buildings to its west, which share this feature. This alteration to the original dwelling will ensure the side extension is of a reduced scale and massing whilst also appearing further set back.

3.4 Other proposed alterations to the main dwellinghouse are replacement roof tiles to be matched to the original, to Local Authority Approval, and a pitched roof bay to the front elevation in matching tile and brick.

3.5 The garage would be set back behind the rear wall of the dwellinghouse by approximately 9.4m, and will sit behind The Croft building, which will provide screening to the garage. This ensures that the proposed garage (a replacement of a previous garage use on the site) will not add to the bulk, massing and appearance of the proposal.

3.6 There are a number of mature trees (a number designated under T.P.Os) at the east and west of the site. It is proposed to retain these trees as they provide valuable screening to the property and maintain privacy between Willow View and The Coach House and Moorcourt Hall as well as significantly enhancing amenity.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, at section 38(6), states that in any decision made under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 In the determination of the planning application currently before the authority, the development plan comprises the following:-

- RSS West Midlands (2004)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 1998)

4.3 The RSS provides a broad strategic framework to inform the preparation of Local Plans and, in particular, the emerging Local Development Framework, which will replace the Local Plan.

4.4 The Local Plan contains more specific policies regarding development in the area, and the policies that are considered relevant are:

- N1 – Open Countryside
- N8 – Special Landscape Areas
- N9 – Design in Special Landscape Areas
- B9 – Listed Buildings
- B13 – Design
- H7 – Residential Development in Open Countryside
- H13 – Extensions to Existing Dwellings

4.5 The policy considerations which were raised in the officers report for the previously refused application (08/01845/FUL) were Policies H13, B13 (A) and (C), and N8.

5.0 MAIN CONSIDERATIONS/POLICY APPRAISAL

5.1 This application is a re-submission of a previously refused scheme, (08/01845/FUL) which was refused on the grounds that its scale, massing and design would result in a dominant and intrusive dwelling that would detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and cause harm to the setting of nearby Listed Buildings.

5.2 With regards scale and massing, extensions to dwellings in the Open Countryside is covered by Local Plan Policy H13, which states that extensions will only be allowed when the extension is "modest" in relation to the original dwelling and does not result in the identity of the original dwelling being lost. In the explanatory notes alongside this policy, "modest" is described as being anything up to 30% of the original dwelling. The proposal would result in a 27% increase to the size of the original dwelling, as the dwelling has not previously been extended. Since the refusal of the previously submitted scheme, the extension has been reduced to address this matter. The annex, which currently sits forward of the plane of the front elevation of the host building, will be re-sited to sit behind. The ridge and eaves heights have been reduced, thus lessening the dominance and intrusiveness of the proposal. Part C of same policy states that garages must be designed as such, and be modest in size and appearance. Part E outlines that design must have regard to the scale, style and appearance of the original dwelling. These issues have been accounted for in the proposed drawings, and details of the design are set out in Section 3 of this report, "The Development Proposals".

5.3 With regard design, Policy B13 sets out the criteria for development proposals. Design should take into account the scale, character, siting, alignment, mass, design, colour and materials of the surrounding area. In this instance, the surrounding area comprises a range of different styles and can be separated into two distinct character areas. The developed area at the west of the estate is characterised by the two listed buildings of Moorcourt Hall and The Coach House. Development at the east of the estate, including the Site itself, is characterised by a number of distinctive 1950s and 1960s style dwellings, which share a number of features. The Site must therefore be seen in the context of the character and setting of all these surrounding building styles. Accordingly, the proposals have been designed to respect the design of the surrounding area. Particular regard is to be had to the Site's inclusion within a Special Landscape Area, with matching materials being used.

5.4 The character and appearance of the surrounding area has been carefully studied, in order to ensure compatibility between the proposals and its setting. There is no uniformity to the style, materials or vernacular around the site, and the buildings have evolved with their uses over the years. The surrounding area comprises of two Listed Buildings to the west of the subject site, and a number of further buildings to its north east and west. It is subsequently considered that the design of the proposal will be compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

5.5 Policy B9 relates to development within the setting of a listed building, and states that where proposals would adversely affect the setting of a listed building, planning permission will not be granted unless substantial planning benefits would occur. As previously mentioned, the setting of the Listed Buildings is within an eclectic mix of building styles. It is considered that, through the design of the proposals, and following lengthy discussions with the Local Authority Conservation Officer, the design of the development would not adversely affect either the setting or appearance and character of the Listed Buildings to the west of the dwellinghouse. The existing landscaping also provides a valuable screen from the Listed Buildings to the subject site. The setback and reduction of the extension significantly lessens the dominance, scale and massing of the proposal and ensures its cohesion in terms of design whilst remaining subservient to the host building.

5.6 Part B of Policy B13 also has regard to the landscaping of design proposals. It states that landscaping of the spaces between and around buildings should enhance the scale and character of the surroundings and existing should be maintained. The proposals will maintain and improve landscaping and boundary treatments throughout the entire site, providing greater privacy to Willow View as well as the surrounding properties, by the introduction of new fencing to the rear (north) of the Site.

5.7 Policies N8 and N9 outline that the designation of the Site as a Special Landscape Area requires an especially high quality design in development proposals. As mentioned above, the proposals have been designed to respect the surrounding area and not appear out of scale or having an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, or of the Special Landscape Area.

5.8 Regard has also been had within the design to the Supplementary Planning Document on Windows and Doors, as the site lies adjacent to a Listed Building. Local features have been incorporated as much as possible, and the larger, more modern window on the existing front single storey elevation is proposed to be removed and replaced by more sympathetic fenestration.

6.0 SUMMARY

6.1 The proposal is for a modest side extension to a residential dwelling, the creation of a porch and gable end on the front elevation, and the erection of a double garage. The extension will be modest in scale, being a 27% increase to the original dwelling size.

6.2 The application is a re-submission of a previously refused scheme (Ref. 08/01845/FUL). The reasons for refusal have been assessed and discussions with the Council have informed the design of the re-submitted application. It is considered that, in terms of design, the proposals are fully in accordance with Council policy as in the adopted Local Plan, as well as being informed by a comprehensive design and character study of the surrounding area, which has no uniformity of style and is an eclectic mix of materials and styles.

6.3 The extension has been designed to be subservient to the host dwelling, and to respect the character and setting of the surrounding area. With regards the Listed Buildings to the west of the site, the existing landscaping provides ample screening to the extension. The proposal will sit back from the plane of the main elevation, and its ridge and eaves heights will also sit lower, ensuring it will not be dominating in terms of scale and massing.

6.4 The garage is a replacement of a former such use on the site, and will sit back from the dwelling and will be well screened by The Croft and the existing landscaping. The garage will therefore not add to the bulk and massing of the proposal and will remain well screened from the Listed Buildings and the estate's internal road network.

6.5 The surrounding area has two distinct character zones, with the listed buildings to the west of the estate, and the more modern dwellings to the east. Therefore, the design proposals have taken into account the character and setting of all buildings in the surrounding area.

6.6 Overall, the proposed development performs well when assessed against the relevant Local Plan Policies, and by means of the landscaping and design, it respects the character and setting of the nearby listed buildings whilst keeping the identity of the original building.