Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND REAR OF 488a WESTON ROAD, WESTON COYNEY

APRIL 2017

Site Address:
Land rear of no.488a Weston Road, Weston Coyney,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 6QD

Applicant:
Mr. J. Hamnett

Proposal:
Erection of detached bungalow (outline)

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 20th April 2017
Job Reference: RDP/2017/063

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy has been instructed by Mr. J. Hamnett to prepare a planning application for the erection of a detached bungalow and garage on land to the rear of no.488a Weston Road, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent.

1.2 The application is submitted in outline and seeks consent for means of access and layout at this stage. Matters of appearance, scale and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval. It is nevertheless anticipated that the dwelling will take the form of a bungalow. The indicative layout plan submitted to accompany the application shows a dwelling with an approximate footprint of 208sq.m. set within a substantial plot that currently forms part of the domestic curtilage of no.488a Weston Road.

1.3 The application site has previously been subject to an application for planning permission for a detached dwelling and garage dating back to 2002 (LPA Reference: SOT/39587). That application encompassed a dwelling set much further westwards within the site than that now proposed, and was refused by the Local Authority for the following reasons:

1. *The proposed development would constitute an undesirable form of backland development on a greenfield site because of its detrimental impact upon the open character of the site and surrounding area. Approval of the proposal would therefore be contrary to City Plan Policy BP10 (1991-2001) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 'Housing' (2000).*

2. *The erection of a dwelling in this location would adversely affect the amenity of occupiers of surrounding properties by way of an increase in noise and disturbance generated by visitors to the site. Approval of the*

proposal would therefore be contrary to Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 'Planning and Noise' (1994).

1.4 An appeal was subsequently lodged against that decision where the Inspector agreed with the conclusions of the Local Authority in respect of the impact of the proposal on the character of the area, but concluded that the proposed development would not unduly harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers provided that the access is appropriately surfaced in a bound material.

1.5 This Planning Statement assesses the proposed development in the context of current national and local planning policy, whilst having due regard to the conclusions within the previous appeal decision on the site.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site is located within the established built-up area of Weston Coyney, as confirmed by the Local Authority's adopted Proposals Map. It comprises a rectangular parcel of land that forms part of the domestic curtilage of no.488a Weston Road, and covers an area of approximately 0.08 hectares (excluding driveway). The site is bordered to the south by residential development in Fernlea Grove, which sit at a lower level to the application site. Further residential development is located to the east of the site fronting onto the Weston Road.

2.2 No.488a Weston Road is set behind the existing properties that front towards the Weston Road, and is one of a number of backland style of developments that are observable within the surrounding area. Others include dwellings rear of the former Weston Service Station, and nos. 464, 466b and 446c Weston Road. To the north and west of the site, beyond the close board

fencing that encloses the site, the site is bordered by woodland associated with the Park Hall Country Park. An aerial photograph showing the site in its surrounding context is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1- Aerial Photograph of Site



Source: Google Earth

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 Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (2009), of which the following policies are considered to be relevant:

3.2 Policy ASP3 of the Core Strategy relates to the Stoke-On-Trent Outer Urban Area and states that for the period 2006-2026, a minimum of 5,100 dwellings (net) will be built in the Outer Urban Area. Such development will be located where this best supports the renewal of the local housing market, communities and town centres, and will seek to address the imbalances caused by a predominance of social housing, and generally improve the quality of the housing stock.

3.3 Policy CSP1 of the Core Strategy relates to Design Quality and states that new development should be well designed to respect the character, identity and context of Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent's unique townscape and landscape and in particular, the built heritage, its historic environment, its rural setting and the settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of centres. New development should also, amongst other criteria:

- promote the image and distinctive identity of the area;
- protect important and longer distance views of historic landmarks and rural vistas;
- contribute positively to an areas identity and heritage (both natural and built) in terms of scale, density, layout, use of appropriate vernacular materials for buildings and surfaces and access;
- be easy to get to and to move through and around and be well connected to public transport, community facilities and services;
- have public and private spaces that are safe, attractive, easily distinguished, accessible, complement the built form and foster civic pride;
- encourage sustainable living in the use of water, energy and reuse of materials and minimises the impact of climate change;
- be accessible to all users;

- be safe, uncluttered, varied and attractive.

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 nationwide. The content of the National Planning Policy Framework has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this document, and is explored in more detail in the Planning Assessment section below.

Appeal Decision APP/M3455/A/1095597

4.2 Within the Planning Assessment below, consideration is given to the conclusions of the Planning Inspector in the determination of the above appeal, which related to residential development on this site, albeit one which was located much further westwards within the site, and which was determined in a different planning policy context.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 Policy ASP3 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to secure the delivery of a minimum of 5,100 new dwellings within the Stoke Outer Urban Area by 2026. The application site lies within the built-up area of Weston Coyney, as shown on the adopted Proposals Map for the City, and involves the erection of a detached dwelling in a sustainable location that is within easy reach local services and facilities, both on foot, and via bicycle and public transport. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Impact on the Character of the Area

5.2 The previous application and appeal on the site highlighted concerns about the impact of residential development on the character of the area. In dismissing the appeal, the Planning Inspector described the site as comprising a grassed area of land which was rural in character. She also noted that it did not have the appearance of a garden and that it was separated from the land to the east (occupied by no.488a Weston Road and its associated outbuilding) by a post and rail fence. The Inspector went on to note a general change in character between those areas immediately to the rear of the properties along the Weston Road to the north of the site, cultivated as gardens, and the areas beyond which retain a rural character adjacent to the Country Park. The Inspector concluded that the proposed dwelling would encroach into the open and rural setting of the land and extend the built form of the area, thereby detracting from its character and appearance.

5.3 I draw some clear distinctions between the previous appeal decision and the current proposal. Firstly, the site as it exists today very clearly has a different character to that which was described at the time by the Planning Inspector. The 'grassed rural character' of the site no longer exists, and the site has a clearly discernable residential character having been laid to turf and maintained as garden to no.488a Weston Road. The land is not subdivided from no.488a and contains within it a greenhouse that is sited alongside the existing outbuilding. A review of historic aerial photographs shows that this land has been incorporated as a garden and laid to turf with associated shrub and tree planting, since late 2006. The greenhouse appears on aerial photographs from October 2007 onwards. The site is furthermore enclosed by close board fencing and collectively these features give the site a distinctly residential character and appearance.

5.4 The previous proposal on the site involved the erection of a dwelling that was to be sited much further westwards within the site, and from the description provided by the Planning Inspector, clearly encompassed a much different character to that which now exists. The current proposal sites the dwelling close to the easternmost end of the site, adjacent to the existing outbuilding which the Planning Inspector noted did not unduly detract from the rural appearance of the site, and in place of the existing greenhouse that currently occupiers part of the site. The western half of the site by contrast will remain open in nature, and have the same appearance as that which it does this present day, and in doing so will avoid any adverse impact on the character of the area. The proposed development is therefore considered to be materially different to that which was previously dismissed at appeal, and accords with the provisions of policy CSP1 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Residential Amenity

5.5 The Local Authority refused the previous application on the grounds that the coming and going of vehicles along the access drive would derive an adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers on either side. However, when the subsequent appeal was determined, the Planning Inspector concluded that the vehicle movements associated with one additional dwelling would not be so significant to cause unacceptable disturbance to the occupiers of adjacent properties. This was subject to the access being surfaced in a bound material, something which the applicant is agreeable to and which can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. There have been no material changes in circumstance since that previous appeal was determined when it comes to matters of residential amenity, and as a consequence the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of policy CSP1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Highway Safety

5.6 The application proposes to take vehicular access to the site via the existing driveway serving 488a Weston Road. This is within the applicant's ownership and it benefits from good visibility along its length down to the Weston Road, thereby enabling users to wait if another vehicle is approaching. Two parking spaces are to be provided on site along with an associated manouvering space to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. There is also good visibility on egress onto the Weston Road.

5.7 The previous application on the site was found to be acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and given that there have been no material changes in circumstance since that application was determined, it is reasonable to conclude that this latest scheme is also acceptable in the context of highway safety. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policy CSP1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Other Material Considerations

5.8 Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing nationally, with paragraph 49 of the NPPF requiring Local Authorities to identify and update annually a five-year deliverable supply of housing. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF goes on to state 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)*

5.9 The Local Authority is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year deliverable supply of housing, and as a consequence the provisions of paragraph 14 of the NPPF are applicable. Paragraph 14 states 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).

5.10 It is considered that this proposal will derive a number of significant 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.

5.11 In terms of the economic 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 through the expenditure associated with the creation of one additional household. The New Homes Bonus is a further economic benefit of the development.

5.12 Social benefits will also be derived from the delivery of a new dwelling to contribute to the Local Authority's shortfall of housing land supply. The nature of the proposed accommodation will also derive benefits. The Local Authority's Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies an increase in the number of persons aged 65+ (17,000) over the coming years, and this reflects comments set out in paragraph 21 of the Planning Practice Guidance (updated 1st April 2016) which confirms that the need to provide housing for older people is *critical* given the projected increase in the number of households aged 65 and over, which account for over half of the new

households (Department for Communities and Local Government Household Projections 2013).

5.13 The NPPG goes on to state that plan makers will need to consider the size, location and quality of dwellings needed in the future for older people in order to allow them to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible, or to move to more suitable accommodation if they so wish. Paragraph 21 of the Planning Practice Guidance further adds that supporting independent living can help to reduce the costs to health and social services, and providing more options for older people to move could also free up houses that are under occupied, adding that many older people may not want or need specialist accommodation or care and may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet a change in their needs.

5.14 The proposed development will help to fulfil these objectives, and will secure the delivery of new accommodation, in a sustainable location, to meet the needs of the identified changing demographic. Accordingly I submit that this amounts to a further social benefit of the development which should be afforded significant weight in the determination of this application.

5.15 The site also occupies a sustainable location, within easy walking and cycling distance of the various services and facilities on offer in the area, as well as being located in close proximity to regular public transport connections. Future occupiers of the dwelling will therefore have a choice of means of transport to access local services and facilities. This is an environmental benefit that should be afforded significant weight in the determination of this application.

5.16 The aforementioned assessment leads me to conclude that the proposed development will deliver a number of material benefits in the context of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and that these benefits lend significant weight in favour of the proposed development.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle owing to the site being located within the established built-up area of the City, and the proposal according with the adopted development strategy for the area. It is furthermore considered that the revised siting of the proposal, coupled with the changes to the character of the site which have occurred since the previous appeal was determined, means that the character of the surrounding area will not be adversely affected by the proposed development. The layout of the site is also such that it will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers, and the previous appeal decision found that the traffic generated by a single additional dwelling would not give rise to harm to residential amenity through the comings and goings of vehicles. The proposal is also considered to be acceptable from a highway safety perspective, and will derive a number of material benefits that weigh in favour of the proposed development.

6.2 The application is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies ASP3 and CSP1 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Strategy, and policies contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

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