Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

OAK RIDGE, GRATTON LANE, GRATTON

JUNE 2017

Site Address:
Oak Ridge, Gratton Lane, Gratton, Staffordshire, ST9 9AQ

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. Cliff

Proposal:
Erection of replacement dwelling

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 15th June 2017
Job Reference: RDP/2017/095

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Cliff to seek planning permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling at Oak Ridge, Gratton Lane, Gratton.

1.2 The existing dwelling comprises of a detached bungalow that dates from the 1960s, and which occupies a footprint of 166 square metres. It is proposed to demolish the existing dwelling, along with two garage structures located to its immediate north and northeast, and replace them with a detached two storey, cottage style dwelling.

1.3 The resultant dwelling will encompass a kitchen, lounge, dining room, conservatory, study and utility at ground floor, with three bedrooms, family bathroom, and master bedroom with dressing room and ensuite at first floor. The proposed dwelling will occupy a footprint of 155 square metres and stand to a maximum ridge height of 6.9 metres.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and comprises an existing detached bungalow which is located in an elevated position above Gratton Lane which lies to the west. The property sits within an irregular shaped curtilage that extends to approximately 0.76 hectares. To the immediate north of the dwelling is a detached, brick and tile garage, whilst to the northeast is a detached concrete sectional double garage. These buildings sit within a large area of tarmac hardstanding that extends to the northern boundary of the curtilage. To the south of the dwelling is a further domestic outbuilding comprised of an elongated garden shed. The site as a whole is surrounded by agricultural land, with the dwelling

comprising part of a scattering of individual properties within the immediate locality.

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

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

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

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

3.3 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,*

3.4 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.

3.5 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.*

3.6 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. 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 (NPPF) confirms that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should only be permitted where very special circumstances exist to clearly outweigh the harm by inappropriateness and any other harm. It goes on to set out a number of categories of appropriate development, which includes the erection of replacement buildings. The NPPF furthermore sets out guidance in respect of design and safeguarding protected species. The content of this document is explored in more detail in the Planning Assessment below.

5 Planning Assessment

Impact on the Green Belt

5.1 The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and proposes the erection of a replacement dwelling. Policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy seek to restrict new housing within the rural areas to that which is essential to local needs. The policy goes on to list a number of categories of acceptable development, which includes:

> *"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".*

5.2 These provisions reflect national planning guidance contained within paragraph 89 of the NPPF which sets out a number of exceptions to the usual presumption against the erection of new buildings within the Green Belt. The list of exceptions includes:

> *"the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces"*

5.3 The proposed development does not involve the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area. The existing dwelling comprises a detached bungalow of fairly unremarkable appearance that dates from the 1960s. It does not encompass characteristics that are typical of Moorlands vernacular or other dwellings within the surrounding area and to this extent it detracts from the character of the area.

5.4 The proposed replacement dwelling will furthermore not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the character of the rural area than the original dwelling, nor will it be materially larger. The existing dwelling and its two detached garages encompass a collective footprint of some 221 square metres, and a total volume of 692 cubic metres. The proposed replacement dwelling will have a footprint of 155 square metres, and a total volume of 724 cubic metres. This represents a reduction in built footprint in the order of 30%, and an increase in overall volume of less than 5% beyond that which currently exists on the site. The proposed dwelling will furthermore not be

materially taller than the existing dwelling on the site, encompassing a 1m increase in ridge height, which represents an increase in the order of 15% over the existing. These dimensions are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Comparison between Existing & Proposed Dwellings

	Existing	Proposed	Difference
Footprint	221	155	- 30%
Volume	692	724	+ 5%
Height	5.9m	6.9m	1m

5.5 Such considerations lead me to conclude that the proposed replacement dwelling would not be materially larger than the building it is replacing, and that it would not have a materially greater impact on the character of the area than the existing dwelling. Indeed, for reasons set out in the 'Design & Layout' section below, the submitted proposal would represent an enhancement to the area. The proposal is therefore considered to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt that accords with the provisions of policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy, along with the provisions of paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

Design & Layout

5.6 The surrounding area exhibits a variety of architectural styles and designs, but it is noticeable that two storey dwellings predominate. The existing bungalow is somewhat discordant in this context. The proposed replacement dwelling is to adopt a cottage style of design, encompassing twin projecting two storey gables on its northern and southern elevations, with catslide roof in between. The proposal also encompasses traditionally proportioned windows, steeply pitching roofs, stone cills, and brick arched headers;

features which are all commonplace within the surrounding area and the wider District. The proposed palette of materials, as detailed on the proposed plans, is also in keeping with the character of the wider area, and will result in a dwelling of a more appropriate appearance for this rural area.

5.7 The proposed dwelling will be visible from Gratton Lane to the west, but will not appear discordant or intrusive, and in my view will serve to enhance the appearance of the countryside, by virtue of replacing the existing average quality bungalow with a high quality dwelling that more closely reflects local vernacular. The existing landscaping surrounding the dwelling will furthermore anchor the development into the landscape. The removal of the poor quality concrete sectional garage is a further benefit to the character of the area to be derived from the proposal.

5.8 Such considerations lead me to conclude that the proposed replacement dwelling will be of an appropriate, high quality design that will contribute positively to the character of the area, and as a consequence the proposal accords with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Impact on Protected Species

5.9 Owing to the proposed demolition of the existing bungalow and detached garages, the application has been accompanied by a bat and bird survey to demonstrate that protected species will not be adversely affected by the proposed development. The bat survey concludes that the dwelling constitutes a day roost for both Brown Long Eared bats and Common Pipistrelle bats. As a consequence a bat licence will be required to demolish the property in due course.

5.10 The survey goes on to recommend that new bat roosting opportunities be created on site by installing two brick built bat boxes into the new

development, along with a further bat box on a tree to provide a temporary roosting opportunity for bats that may be found in the building during demolition. The applicant is agreeable to these recommendations, which can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition. In doing so the proposal will accord with the provisions of paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

Other Issues

5.11 Owing to the relatively isolated position of the site compared to neighbouring occupiers, the proposed replacement dwelling will not give rise to any conflict with the Local Authority's residential amenity standards, and thus will not give rise to harm to neighbouring residential amenity. The proposal will furthermore retain a substantial area of domestic curtilage for future occupiers of the dwelling, and as a consequence the proposal accords with the relevant provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

5.12 In terms of highway safety matters, the site benefits from an existing gated vehicular access. The proposal does not propose, nor require any alterations to the existing site access, and parking for well in excess of 2 vehicles will be retained, along with manouvering space to enable vehicles to leave the site in a forward gear. The proposed development will therefore not give rise to highway safety concerns, and therefore accords with the relevant provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is submitted that the proposal represents a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The proposed replacement dwelling will not have a significantly greater impact on the character of the rural area than the existing dwelling, or be materially larger than the buildings being replaced;*

- *The proposal does not involve the loss of a dwelling which is intrinsic to the character of the surrounding area;*

- *The proposal encompasses a high quality design that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the wider District;*

- *The proposal will derive an enhancement to the character and appearance of the area compared to the existing dwelling which currently detracts from it;*

- *Subject to appropriate mitigation, the proposed development will not give rise to harm to protected species;*

- *The proposal raises no other material planning issues;*

6.2 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS6c, R2 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.3 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully request to grant planning permission for the proposed development in accordance in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within policy SS1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.