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DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED SINGLE DWELLING AT WATT PLACE, CHEADLE

The Purpose of a Design & Access Statement

In May 2006, the Government introduced changes to the planning application process. One of these was the need to provide a Design and Access Statement (DAS) for all planning applications other than those for householder developments. This legislation came into effect on 10th August 2006.

The Government's formal requirements for DAS's are set out in Circular 01/2006 entitled 'Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System'. To complement this, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) has produced a document entitled "Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them". This document (referred to hereafter as "the CABE Guidance") lists the matters which must be included within a Design and Access Statement.

These are:

- The Design Process
  i. Assessment
  ii. Involvement
  iii. Evaluation
- Use
- Amount
- Layout
- Scale
- Landscaping
- Appearance
- Vehicular & Transport Links
- Access

Physical Appraisal

The application site consists of generally level land within a residential curtilage. The site has a road frontage to Watt Place to the west, from which it is separated by a brick wall with a dense hedge immediately behind it.

The site is an irregular triangle in shape and adjoins other residential curtilages. The site includes some domestic style plants and trees, including a tree located on the road frontage close to the southern extremity of the site

To the north of the site are a pair of two storey semi detached houses. Beyond these are 3 storey listed buildings, also in domestic use. Opposite the site to the west is the Manor Guesthouse. To the east are further dwellings.

The road past the site, Watt Place, is narrow and is restricted to one way traffic only, travelling from South to North. There are double yellow lines along both sides of Watt Place in the vicinity of the site.

The majority of buildings around the site are brick faced, but the taller listed buildings close by are rendered white.

This application proposes developing the site for a single two storey dwelling, constructed in brick. The dwelling would have a vehicular access and off street parking.

Pre Application discussions

The agent and applicant have been in discussion with Local Planning Authority Planning Officers to discuss the potential for developing the site. The Officers have no objections in principle to the erection of a single private dwelling. Following the Planning Officers recommendations the proposed vehicular access will be formed by widening the existing access from Watt Place, so that it would serve the proposed new house and the existing house to the north.

Design Principles And Concepts.

The site lies within Cheadle Conservation area and lies close to listed buildings, although it does not lie within the curtilage of listed building. It is considered that the principle consideration in developing the site is to ensure that it retains or enhances the character of the heritage assets.

In order to achieve that aim matters of design, mass and location are of paramount consideration. In addition normal town planning considerations of context and proximity, as well as access and highways, are important.

Reflecting those considerations the plans propose a single dwelling, sited on the southern part of the site, in order to separate the new building form the existing surrounding properties. This has been conceived in order that the new building will not appear incongruous by reason of proximity to historic buildings.

Although 3 storey buildings are seen in the immediate area, the new building would be 2 storeys in order that it does not visually compete with historic assets. This height of building will also minimise the effects on neighbour's residential amenity.

The boundary wall to Watt Place is an important feature in the Conservation Area, and as such the plans propose minimal disruption to that historic feature. In order to provide vehicular access to off street parking the existing access to the adjoining dwelling to the north of the site will be widened, in order to serve the existing and proposed dwelling, to allow the bulk of the length of the brick boundary wall to be retained without alteration.

The design of the new dwelling, including its mass, proportions and design have been conceived to complement the surrounding historic buildings.

The Access Component

The dwelling will have a vehicular access from Watt Place, lying alongside the driveway of the house to the north. This will turn within the site in order to provide 2 off street parking spaces, together with a turning area to allow

vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward direction. The surfacing of the parking, access and turning areas will be subject to the approval of the Local planning Authority but materials complementary to the historic fabric area intended.

Planning Policy Appraisal
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development and encourages Local Planning Authorities to:

"approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustain able development"

It goes on to state that it expects Local Planning Authorities to:
"look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-
takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable devel opment where possible".

In paragraph 14, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is iden tified as being at the heart of the NPPF and should be seen as a golden thread running through decision taking. This means that development proposals which accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Alternatively, where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, 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 when taken as a whole;

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

In order that proposals contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, paragraph 7 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles, which are identified below:

- Economic role-
  contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

- Social role-
  supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future

generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well□being; and

- Environmental role-
  contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to): replacing poor design with better design, improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and widening the choice of high quality homes.

In order to achieve this, the NPPF also identifies in paragraph 17 the core planning principles which should underpin decision taking. These include;

- Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places. Every effort should be made to objectively identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth;

- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

- Encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas; and

- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

<u>Requiring Good Design</u>
The advice is set out in paras 56 to 68 and is based on the principle that:

> "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people".

Decision Taking
In relation to decision taking, Paragraphs 186□187 state:

"Local planning authorities should approach decision□taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. The relationship between decision□taking and plan□making should be seamless, translating plans into high quality development on the ground. Local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision□takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area."

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – Policy Guidance

The Development Plan for the area comprises:

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 1998) and

The Core Strategy (Adopted March 2014)

Policy DC1 (Design Considerations): States 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.

Policy B11 states
"In a Conservation Area the local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that development preserves or enhances the appearance and character of the Conservation Area, and is in sympathy with it in terms of scale, siting, alignment, mass, design, colour and materials."

Policy B13 states
"Within the Conservation Area development proposals will be expected to:

a) demonstrate a good quality of design which takes account of scale, character, siting, alignment, mass, design, colour and materials of their surroundings.

b) provide design and landscaping of the spaces between and around buildings through the whole site which takes into account and enhances the scale and character of their surroundings. Existing features such as trees and walls should be maintained where they contribute to the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings. Where hard landscaping is appropriate, natural materials should be used where possible."

Appearance
The overall design will be subservient to the historic buildings nearby, and reflect the hierarchy of the listed building and create a complementary phased appearance.

Nature Conservation and Ecology

The limited size of the site, its urban location and proximity to other buildings means that the site has a low ecological value and is unlikely to provide habitats to protected species.

There should be no adverse impacts on potential Wildlife Sites either in the vicinity or in the wider area.

Water, Drainage and Hydrology

The site does not lie within a flood zone.

Its urban location and proximity to the public highway means that foul sewage disposal is readily available. Surface water disposal is unlikely to be problematical.

CONCLUSION

The scale and design of the proposed building will integrate well with the character and setting of the heritage assets and the character of the surrounding area. The site has no overriding environmental designations or physical constraints and provides the opportunity to establish a sustainable development which is both physically and visually well contained.

The following design principles are a direct result of the evaluation of the site's context, constraints and opportunities:

- To promote the highest quality sustainable design;
- To create an enduring high quality built form, public realm and landscape that sensitively responds to its setting by using best practice contemporary design that is rooted in local character whilst avoiding a clumsy pastiche of architectural styles;
- To provide an appropriate transition with the adjacent countryside with particular reference to existing landscape character;
- Respond to the existing topography and key views into and out of the site

The proposal has emerged with close reference to SMDC's design guidance, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the NPPF.

Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development.

It is considered that the scale, massing and style of the proposed building and the siting would not detract from the setting and introduce additional character within the existing street scene and would represent congruent and harmonious development.