ARCHITECTURE
DESIGN
DEVELOPMENT

1714 – HERITAGE EVALUATION STATEMENT

for:-

Proposed construction of 4no. 3 bed semi-detached houses with associated parking and landscaping.

Land adjacent to 'Threeways',

Farley Road,

Oakamoor,

Staffordshire.

On behalf of:-

ASD Contracts.

October 2017

1. Introduction

This document has been prepared on behalf of ASD Contracts to accompany their Planning Application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the proposed construction of 4 no. 3 bed semi-detached houses with associated parking on land adjacent to Threeways, Farley Road, Oakamoor, and sets out an assessment of the potential impact upon the adjacent Oakamoor Conservation Area of the development proposals.

The site is at the northern end of Farley Road, on the east side, opposite Myrle View and Limekiln cottages to the West and sharing boundaries with The Laurels Bed and Breakfast to the east and Threeways to the north. The site is currently vacant with planning approval for the erection of 2 no. detached dwellings (application no. SMD/2015/0124). An application for the construction of a reinforced earth bund on the site was determined on March 16, 2015 (application no. SMD/2014/0834) and these stabilisation works were completed December 2016.

2. Site Context

The village of Oakamoor lies within the Churnet Valley, which follows a route running roughly north-west / south-east, from Cheddleton to Denstone Although only properly settled from the early 19th century, the settlement, located at a major east-west crossing point of the river, was a heartland of industrial activity from the 13th century onwards. Key characteristics of the adjacent conservation area include a scenic wooded environment, dominated by a dense tree canopy of mixed planting, sheltered and deep-cut within a broad valley bottom; dramatic, memorable views; large areas of recreational public open space and a good public footpath network providing a high quality environment with generous access for walkers, cyclists and horse riding.

A large portion of the village is encompassed by the Conservation Area, containing a number of significant historic buildings, some of which are listed. A Conservation Area Appraisal has been carried out, by Mel Morris Conservation in July 2016, which comprehensively documents the character of, and buildings within, the village.
The proposal site lies outside this Conservation Area

3. Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework requires applicants for development proposals to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected by proposed development. It indicates that in any such description:

“The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.”

A heritage asset is defined within the Framework as:

"A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meeting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)"

Significance, for heritage policy, is defined within the Framework as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting"

The aim of any heritage assessment is to demonstrate understanding of the nature and significance and the particular interest which contributes to that significance, the extent of the building fabric that holds this interest and its comparative level of importance. The framework defines the nature of the particular archaeological interest a heritage asset may hold.

"There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point."

4. Impact on setting of heritage assets

The site itself is outside of the Oakamoor Conservation area and is bounded by plots with no particular historic or aesthetic significance. The nearest buildings within the Conservation Area are Myrle View and Limekiln cottages. Neither of these buildings is identified within the Conservation Area as being particularly noteworthy and both the Laurels and Threeways are twentieth century constructions of no special architectural interest.

Historic maps do little to suggest that the development site has any archaeological significance and the extensive remediation works did not uncover any archaeologically significant material.

The Farley Road frontage and impact on views is most relevant to the Conservation Area. The proposed development occupies the same footprint as the approved application for 2no. detached dwellings and is obscured to the south and east by the large earth bund retaining structure that exists on site, and by landscaping between the building and highway. Comments from the Conservation Officer on the rejected application for 8no. flats on the site (application ref. SMD/2017/0212) state that "the scheme should be based on two individual buildings to break up the overall massing". By adopting the footprint and massing of the approved application no. SMD/2015/0124, and by slightly reducing the ridge height of plots 3 and 4, we believe that the impact on the conservation area is negligible.

5. Conclusion

The assessment has considered the potential impacts upon the historic environment of the proposed development and the comments of the Conservation Officer on the rejected application ref. SMD/2017/0212. The currently vacant site has a detrimental effect upon the street scene within this area of Oakamoor. The proposals share the footprint and massing of the approved application ref. SMD/2015/0124, the southernmost plots 3 + 4 are lower than those already approved and the completion of landscaping proposals associated with the scheme will reduce the impact of the proposed development to the application site.