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PLANNING / DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



PROPOSAL : **CONVERSION OF EXISTING DETACHED GARAGE TO FORM TOURIST / GUEST ACCOMMODATION, INCORPORATING A FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION.**

ADDRESS : **SMITHY POOL, CONSALL LANE, CONSALL, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST9 0AF**

APPLICANT : **JCM GROUP HOLDINGS (UK) LTD**

DATE : **NOVEMBER 2017** **JOB No. : 2016-2206**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by JCM Group Holdings (UK) Ltd to prepare and submit a planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the conversion of existing detached garage to form tourist / guest accommodation, incorporating a first floor extension.

2.0 USE

The use of the site already has an established use for shooting and is known as Consall Valley Shoot, as a consequence no change of use occurs. The site itself is located outside any defined settlement boundary and therefore considered to be located in the open countryside, which is also defined as Green Belt in the Development Plan. The site is also located in the Churnet Valley.

3.0 AMOUNT

The site measures approximately 32.4ha in area. The building has an existing floorspace of 138m^2 and an existing height of 4.25m. The floorspace through the proposal will be doubled to 276m^2 and the height will increase to maximum height of 7.5m with an eaves height of 4.5m.

4.0 LAYOUT

The site will generally remain unaltered, as the only change will occur with the proposed first floor extension.

5.0 SCALE

The scale of the proposal will still be relatively low. The development will occupy the same footprint, but the building as proposed will now be two storeys in appearance.

6.0 LANDSCAPING

No additional or new landscaping is proposed by this application.

7.0 APPEARANCE

The appearance of the proposal will ensure that the first-floor extension will complement the existing building and the adjacent property.

8.0 ACCESS

The proposal will use the existing access to the site and the parking spaces. .

9.0 PLANNING POLICY

As you will be aware Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Given this obligation, this chapter therefore considers national guidance relevant to the application as well as the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014) and The Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document. The following is considered relevant:

Core Strategy,

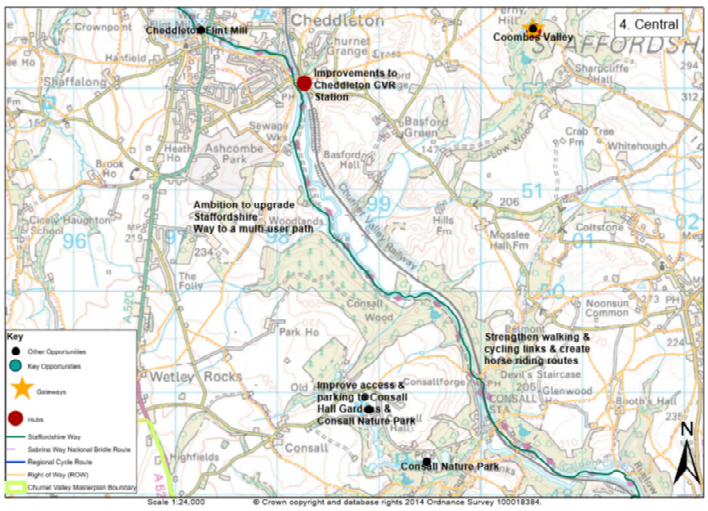
SS1 – Development Principles

SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c - Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
SS7 – Churnet Valley Area Strategy
E3 – Tourism and Cultural Development
DC1 – Design Considerations
DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 – Rural Diversification
SO7 – To support and enhance the tourism, cultural, recreation and leisure opportunities for the District's residents and visitors.

Supplementary Planning Document

The Churnet Valley Masterplan – references potential opportunities at Consall Hall Gardens, which is in the immediate vicinity of Smithy Pool, which can be applied to this proposal. The application site is located within the Central Character Area as shown below:

Map 7.5 Central Character Area



The Central Character Area is described as follows:

This is an area of high landscape value with more limited access and less intensive recreational use. It is more suited to countryside activities and minimal change. It has a low-key role of linking other activities and destinations. Within this area Cheddleton CVR Station and Deep Hayes Country Park are identified as hubs. A Concept Statement has been prepared for Consall Hall Gardens which will include a set of development principles.

At 7.48 under General Development Principles of the Masterplan it states:

Deliver high quality and environmentally sensitive viable development that contributes to increasing overnight stays within the area.

National Planning Policy Framework

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application

proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Core Strategy. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

1. Building a strong, competitive economy
3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy
9. Protecting Green Belt land

Within the NPPF it is also worth noting the following relevant paragraphs:

- Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para 2).
- Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas, (para 10)
- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, (para 11).
- At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LPA's should approve proposals which accord with the development plan without delay (para 14).
- The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future (para 18)
- The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (para 19)
- Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting (para 21)
- Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. Support rural tourism that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors that respect the character of the countryside (para 28)
- As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (para 87)
- A local planning authority should regard construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt, unless it is listed as one of the exceptions (para 89)

10.0 SUMMARY

Policy SS7 of the Core Strategy relates to The Churnet Valley Area Strategy, which states:

The Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. Within this area particular support will be given to the following forms of development and measures:

- *short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;*
- *the expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities and the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities;*
- *measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character and heritage assets of the Churnet Valley;*

- *measures to remediate and restore derelict land, buildings and features including the appropriate redevelopment of sites;*
- *actions to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the valley, including the maintenance, buffering and connection of designated sites and actions to mitigate climate change.*
- *measures that support and integrate the heritage transport infrastructure of the valley, sympathetically with enhancing and developing links to strategic footpaths, cycle and horse riding routes.*
- *measures to improve connectivity and accessibility to and within the Churnet Valley by sustainable transport means.*

Any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and demonstrate strong sustainable development and environmental management principles. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximize opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features. Complementary and sensitive highway improvements to access routes and/or measures to support other alternative means of access will be required to serve any developments which generate significant additional demand for travel.

Policy E3 of the Core Strategy relates to Tourism and Cultural Development, which states:

New tourism and cultural development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports the local economy and promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District and enhances the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5, SS6 and SS7.

In addition:

New tourist and visitor accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering, good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. They should normally be located in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available

or in areas specifically allocated for tourism development. Outside of these locations, including within the Green Belt, new accommodation, attractions and facilities should:

- *be of a scale and design which can be easily assimilated into the local area in a sustainable manner;*
- *normally be limited to the conversion of existing buildings; or*
- *exceptionally, may be new build where it is required to support or complement existing accommodation, facilities or attractions and there is an identified need which cannot be met in other ways. Preference will be given to buildings which are non-permanent in nature.*

All development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance.

Policy R1 of the Core Strategy relates to Rural Diversification, which states:

All development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and

biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment.

Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise and pollution.

Wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.

Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development which is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy, will still need to be justified by very special circumstances.

The above policies positively support the key role that tourism and culture plays in the economy of the Staffordshire Moorlands and the contribution it makes to increasing physical activity and improving health and well-being. The application site has an established tourist activity that is nationally known for the quality of experience that it provides. People travel from all over the country to take part in the organised shoots. It is considered that the site is sustainably located, as it is sited within the Churnet Valley, which is identified as a sustainable tourist and recreation resource.

The Core Strategy recognises that existing tourist accommodation in the Staffordshire Moorlands is generally provided on a small scale. Within the District there is a high proportion of self-catering types of accommodation and very few hotels and serviced accommodation. It is also recognised in the Core Strategy that the number of visitors to the Moorlands do not stay overnight in the Moorlands. This is a point in case with this tourist attraction. The business often has events that span more than one day and with very limited and suitable accommodation in the locality, visitors are transported to accommodation outside of Consall and in most cases outside of the District. This is obviously a negative aspect for the business and certainly in terms of sustainability, due to the vehicle movements.

Within the Churnet Valley there is in principle policy support for the provision of further short and long stay visitor accommodation is particularly It is recognised that particular attention should be paid to the quality of new tourist accommodation. In the Core Strategy reference is made to a tourism study that was undertaken in 2011, which has identified a number of projects that would enhance the tourism industry in the District. Whilst this site was not identified as part of this study, it is not known if the Council was aware of this facility. Certainly, as Consall Hall Gardens was identified for developing and improving attractions and attractors, the application site as it in such close proximity would further enhance the industry in the location and should form a symbiotic relationship that will benefit both parties.

Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that there should be support to the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. It goes on further to say that support should be given towards sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.

As the site is in the Greenbelt, it needs to be established whether the proposal amounts to inappropriate development, which is harmful by definition and should not be approved unless ‘very special circumstances’ have been demonstrated. It is considered that there is provision to convert and extend the existing garages in to tourist / guest accommodation under paragraph 89 of the

NPPF. However, if the Council consider that the extension amounts to a disproportionate addition then, we put forward that there are very special circumstances surrounding the proposal. The very special circumstances would amount to supporting an existing rural business by providing essential on-site accommodation for guests that are not met anywhere in the locality, thus improving the facility and making it more sustainable as it meets customer's needs. The onsite accommodation would also reduce the amount of vehicle movements that occur between the site and customers accommodation that is usually outside of the District.

11.0 CONCLUSION

The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. 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 goes on to state in paragraph 187 that 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.

It is put forward that this proposal represents a form of sustainable form of development that will help improve the functionality and operation of an existing business. It is considered that this proposal is modest and will have a limited impact on the openness due to its location. Although the proposal is relatively modest it will provide the tourist attraction with much needed onsite accommodation

The application is considered to accord with the Development Plan Policies and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. It is considered that if the Local authority considers the proposal to constitute inappropriate development that there are 'very special circumstances' attached to this proposal to outweigh the harm created as discussed above. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to endorse this application for this essential tourist facility and therefore grant planning permission accordingly.