Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND AT 90 QUEEN STREET, CHEADLE

DECEMBER 2017

Site Address:
90 Queen Street, Cheadle, Staffordshire, ST10 1BJ

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. E. Vernon

Proposal:
Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 6no. dwellings

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 6th September 2017
Job Reference: RDP/2017/160

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Vernon to seek full planning permission for the erection of 6no. dwellings on land at no.90 Queen Street, Cheadle.

1.2 The development comprises of three pairs of semi-detached dwellings, each occupying a footprint of 40.7 square metres and standing to a ridge height of 8.3 metres. Each dwelling will benefit from a lounge, kitchen/diner, w.c. and hallway at ground floor, with three bedrooms (one ensuite) at first floor. The dwellings are to be aligned in a linear pattern in order to reflect the plan form established by dwellings to the south of the site in Robina Drive. Access to the site is to be taken via the existing vehicular access onto Queen Street.

1.3 Pre-application discussions have previously been held with the Local Highway Authority in respect of the use of the existing vehicular access for the quantum of development proposed, where it was advised that there were no objections in respect of visibility to the east on egress, but that an existing side wall to no.88 Queen Street was blocking visibility to the west on egress, and without agreement for this to be reduced there would be objections on highway safety grounds. The applicant has subsequently secured the agreement of the adjacent landowner to reduce the height of this wall and this is denoted on the proposed plans.

1.4 The application is accompanied by the Tree Survey prepared by Tree Heritage, and a Bat Survey prepared by Absolute Ecology, and these reports should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Cheadle and comprises a detached two storey dwelling that sits within a substantial and abnormally large plot compared to those within the surrounding area. The site is bordered on all four sides by residential development of varying scales and architectural styles, and benefits from considerable tree coverage, particular along its eastern, southern and western boundaries. Vehicular access to the site is taken off Queen Street at the northern end of the site, opposite the junction of Queen Street with Churchill Road. The centre of Cheadle is located a short walk to the west of the site along Queen Street.

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 Stafford Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (2014) of which the following policies are 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 SS2 of the Core Strategy states that provision will be made for 6000 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed in Staffordshire Moorlands (excluding the Peak District National Park) during the period 2006 to 2026.

3.4 Policy SS3 of the Core Strategy states that development will be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and rural areas. It identifies that some 22% of the total residential provision outlined in policy SS2 will be allocated within Cheadle (equivalent to 1,320 dwellings).

3.5 Policy SS5c of the Core Strategy states that the Council will expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and market town. The housing market will be expanded by increasing the range of available and affordable house types and higher market housing, especially for first time buyers and families. Sites within the urban area shall be in locations across the town which have good accessibility to services and facilities with encouragement given to previously developed sites.

3.6 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that new development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Proposals should 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. Development should also protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

3.7 Policy NE1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states that development should ensure that it produces a net gain in biodiversity, and ensure that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for. Proposals should also protect and enhance habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

3.8 Policy T1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and helps deliver the priorities of the Staffordshire Local Transport Plans, where this is consistent with other policies. This will be achieved by, amongst others, ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

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 nationally. It furthermore states that housing applications should

be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The content of the National Planning Policy Framework is explored in more detail, where relevant, in the Planning Assessment below.

Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2017)

4.2 This document sets out the Local Authority's performance in respect of housing land supply and housing delivery. It confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing land equivalent to 1.99 years supply.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 Policies SS2 and SS3 of the adopted Core Strategy set out the Council's preferences for the delivery of new housing and confirm that some 1,320 new dwellings will need to be built within Cheadle between 2006-2026. These provisions are expanded upon within policy SS5c of the Core Strategy, which confirms the intention to expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and market town, achieved in part by expanding the housing market to increase the range of available and affordable house types. Policy SS5c goes on to state that sites within the urban area shall be in locations across the town which have good accessibility to services and facilities.

5.2 The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Cheadle, where a significant proportion of development is to be targeted over the plan period, and furthermore lies within comfortable walking distance of the numerous services, facilities and employment opportunities available within the town. As a consequence the proposal fully accords with the development strategy for the District (policies SS2, SS3 and SS5c refer), and thus is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Design & Layout

5.3 The area surrounding the application site is residential in character, with two storey terraced development predominating along Queen Street to the north, terraced bungalow developments to the east and west in Keeling Road and the top of end of Robina Drive respectively, with two storey semi-detached properties extending southwards along the remainder of Robina Drive. There is no strong prevailing vernacular to respond to.

5.4 The submitted proposal responds positively to its surrounding context by proposing the erection of three pairs of semi-detached properties, orientated east/west, and arranged in a linear pattern that in plan form terms will reinforce the existing linear development pattern exhibited along Robina Drive to the south. The two storey scale of the proposed dwellings is also in keeping with the adjacent properties to the south, and those which front onto Queen Street at the northernmost end of the site.

5.5 The detailed design of the properties take their cues from the character of the surrounding area, incorporating gabled roofs, front projecting gables, brick soldier headers and cills, and traditionally proportioned window sizes. The site is also well enclosed from surrounding viewpoints by existing mature vegetation, and this will serve to soften the visual impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Such considerations lead me to conclude that the proposed development will relate positively to its surrounding context, and will accord with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Residential Amenity

5.6 The proposed site layout encompasses dwellings whose rear elevations are set some 10 metres from the rear (western) boundary of the site. As a consequence, the proposed dwellings will not give rise to any overlooking or

loss of privacy to the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers to the west of the site. A greater distance exists between the front elevations of the dwellings and the neighbouring properties to the east. As consequence there will be no conflict with the Local Authority's minimum interface distances as set out in the Space about Dwellings SPG. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the relevant provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Highway Safety

5.7 The application proposes to take vehicular access direct off Queen Street via the existing vehicular access serving no.90. The existing access has somewhat restricted visibility on egress from the site, particularly to the west. Pre-application discussions with the Local Highway Authority have duly been entered into, and this identified the presence of an existing side boundary wall to no.88 Queen Street as being harmful to visibility. It was confirmed that this wall would need to be reduced in height to no higher than 600mm in order to achieve an acceptable level of visibility on egress.

5.8 The applicant has subsequently entered into an agreement with the owner of no.88 Queen Street to enable the frontage walls of that property to be lowered in height, and as a consequence, an acceptable level of visibility on egress will be available. No concerns were raised by the Local Highway Authority in respect of visibility to the east on egress.

5.9 Subject to the boundary wall to no.88 being lowered in height, which can be secured via a Grampian style condition, the proposed development will not give rise to any severe impacts to highway safety, that being the test to be applied under paragraph 32 of the NPPF. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policy T1 of the Core Strategy.

Ecology Impacts

5.10 The application is accompanied by a Bat Survey undertaken by Absolute Ecology who have undertaken an inspection and appraisal of the existing buildings on the site which are proposed for demolition. This has identified the presence of Pipistrelle bats emerging from the tiles of the roof of the detached dwelling. However, this is just a small summer roost and in mitigation it is recommended that three brick built bat boxes are incorporated into the elevations of the proposed dwellings in order to ensure no adverse impact on protected species. No evidence was found of bats using the existing outbuildings at the front of the site. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Core Strategy.

5.11 The application is also accompanied by a Tree Survey prepared by Tree Heritage which has assessed the quality of the existing trees on the site, and identified their associated Root Protection Areas. The development has been designed to avoid any adverse impact on important trees within the site, and tree protection measures can be secured via condition to ensure that retained trees are safeguarded during the construction phase. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Other Material Considerations

5.12 In addition to the matters discussed above, there are also other material considerations which weigh in favour of the proposed development, most notably the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that:

> *"Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development".*

5.13 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF goes on to state 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"*

5.14 The latest housing land supply figures for Staffordshire Moorlands, as set out in the Local Authority's Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2017), confirm that the Local Planning Authority is only able to demonstrate a 1.99 year supply of deliverable housing. This falls significantly short of the 5-year supply required by paragraph 49 of the NPPF, and as a consequence the titled balance in favour of approval as set out within paragraph 14 of the NPPF is engaged. This stipulates that 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 this Framework taken as a whole;*

(my emphasis)

5.15 The benefits of this development have been assessed against the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as set out in paragraph 7 of the NPPF. The proposed development will derive significant benefits in terms of the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development by delivering six new dwellings in a sustainable location which will contribute positively to the overall housing land supply within the District. The development will also derive further economic benefits during the construction phase and from the associated expenditure of six additional households within the town. The site also occupies a sustainable location within comfortable walking distance of the town centre, and as a consequence will promote sustainable modes of transportation. Such environmental

benefits are considered to weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development.

5.16 The commentary above demonstrates the numerous benefits that will be derived from this development when assessed against the NPPF taken as a whole, and it is considered that the proposed development will not give rise to any adverse impacts to significant and demonstrably outweigh these benefits.

6 Conclusion

6.1 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.

6.2 This proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development that is acceptable in planning terms having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Cheadle;*
- *Cheadle is a target for significant housing growth up to 2026;*
- *The provisions of the NPPF mean that the proposal should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development;*
- *The site lies within easy walking and cycling distance of local services and facilities;*

- *The proposed development will not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area;*

- *The proposed development will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers;*

- *With appropriate mitigation, the proposal will not derive any severe highway safety impacts;*

- *The proposal will not have an adverse impact on protected species, and important trees within the site will be safeguarded.*

6.3 For these reasons the proposed development accords with the provisions of policies SS2, SS3, SS5c, DC1, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. It is furthermore submitted that there are no adverse impacts that would significant and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development, and as a consequence planning permission should be granted in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in policy SS1a of the Core Strategy.