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Design and Access Statement

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Detailed planning application for a single detached dwelling on garden to side of 76 Huntley Lane, Cheadle, ST10 1UA

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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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

The most relevant sections have been included in this document.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document deals with the scope and nature of the proposal, the planning history of the site, planning policies and the land use rationale.

1.2 The existing site is currently a piece of the private garden land of the existing dwelling. It has a road frontage and apart from the applicants dwelling it is surrounded by countryside.

1.3 This application proposes a single dwelling, a detached 2 storey house This application is in outline form without specific plans and details of the new house.

1.4 The site lies immediately adjacent to a close knit enclave of development consisting of dwellings of different ages and styles and some agricultural sites.

2.0 Site Location and Setting

2.1 The site is designated as Green Belt. However, the site lies within an obviously recognisable settlement. The area around the site lies has the visual character of a clearly built up area, with a definite developed character.

2.2 The site is a side garden to one residential property and has a road frontage. The site slopes downwards away from the road and towards the east to Mobberley Brook and its tributaries. On the opposite side of the road to the site the land sloes up noticeably.

2.3 There is no evidence on the site of significant biodiversity value. There are no recorded heritage assets within the vicinity of the site

2.4 There are no environmental restrictions prohibiting or severely restricting the potential for residential development of the site.

2.4 There are mains services nearby which are capable of serving the proposed additional dwelling.

2.5 The site is accessible to services and facilities by means other than a private car. Huntley Lane leads north to Cheadle and south east to join the A522.

3.0 Planning History and Constraints

3.1 The site has not been subject to previous applications to secure additional residential development.

3.2 The site lies within the designated Green Belt. It does not lie within or within the curtilage of a Listed Building, nor within a Conservation Area. None of the trees on the site are protected.

4.0 Proposed Use

4.1 The proposed use of the site is for a residential development.

4.2 The new dwelling would be served by a new vehicular access, at a position to be agreed with the highway Authority.

4.3 It is possible to create a vehicular access to the site which would have adequate visibility splays to make a safe point of access to a single new dwelling.

5.0 Design, layout and Scale

5.1 In accordance with policy DC1 all new development shall be designed to protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

5.2 The site is of sufficient size to allow for a single new home, which could be sited to provide a well positioned and aesthetically pleasing living environment that will incorporate areas of landscaped space and a parking area. There is sufficient space to provide a turning area on the site so that vehicles could enter and leave the site in a forward direction.

5.3 The surrounding area has a regular pattern of development with houses lying facing Huntley Lane with gardens to the rear The application site has the potential to accommodate a dwelling replicating that layout style.

5.4 The size and shape of the site are such that a new dwelling could be designed to benefit from a good-sized area of private amenity space . The site can accommodate a house which would offer a good level of separation between the existing house and the new dwelling. The proposal will therefore not result in a significant and demonstrable adverse impact to residential amenity and accords with the provisions of policy DC1 in this regard.

5.5 A new dwelling on the site will not be at odds with the general pattern of built form in the area. Neither will it appear cramped or over-developed.

7.0 Access and Transport

7.1 In accordance with policies DC1 and T1 all new development should provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirements arising from the development.

7.2 The proposed access and parking arrangements will provide sufficient off-street parking for the needs of a house of this size. Vehicles will be able to enter and leave the site in a forward direction.

7.3. The proposed development will therefore not result in a significant and demonstrable adverse impact to highway safety and accords with the provisions of policy T1 of the Core Strategy.

7.4 There is no conflict, therefore, with policy T1 of the Core Strategy which requires, among other things, that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by a proposed development. Access visibility requirements could mean some alterations to the boundary vegetation, which would be conditioned to ensure an appropriate level of highway safety when vehicles leave the site.

7.5 Huntley Lane is a through route leading to Cheadle to the north. It also links with the A522. However, it's function is mainly as a local route, serving the existing fields and houses in the area. It is relatively lightly trafficked and therefore traffic and highway concerns do not represent a bar to the development proposed.

8.0 Planning Policy Appraisal

8.1 The site is located within the designated North Staffordshire Green Belt. This however is not, in isolation, sufficient grounds to warrant refusing planning permission for the reasons detailed below.

Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that;

"Green Belt serves five purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land."

Elsewhere the NPPF states;

"88. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

89. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

1. ● buildings for agriculture and forestry;
2. ● provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
3. ● the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in

disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

4. ● the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
5. ● limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
6. ● limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. "

8.2 The development the subject of this application is considered to represent infilling within an otherwise built up frontage within an obviously built up frontage. It is therefore akin to clause 5 above.

8.3 The main issues relating to the proposed development of this site are:

- Whether the proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework and development plan policy;
- The effect of the development on the openness of the Green Belt and the character of the area;
- Whether the development would comply with development plan policies that seek to control development in rural areas; and
- If the development is inappropriate, whether the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

8.4 The original object of establishing the Green Belt was to discourage uncontrolled urban sprawl into the open countryside around our larger towns and cities and to prevent the coalescence of two or more large neighbouring towns. No-one would disagree with that broad objective; but it has resulted in unnecessary and inappropriate rigidity in the treatment of development proposals, which seeks to resist all development in the Green Belt unless either it is deemed to be 'appropriate' development or exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. This rigidity has been further compounded by the unfortunate wording of the relevant policy guidance in the NPPF, compared with the wording of the former PPG2. [See Europa Oil and Gas Limited v. SSCLG [2013] EWHC 2643 (Admin) and Fordent Holdings Ltd v SSCLG [2013] EWHC 2844 (Admin).

8.5 Rather than this increasingly inflexible approach, the approach should be that within Green Belts, development should not be permitted which would prejudice the objectives of the Green Belt and/or which would compromise its openness, but that in determining applications for development in the Green Belt local planning authorities should examine the contribution that the application site in question makes to the Green Belt (in other words, its 'Green Belt value'). It would thus be the impact of the development on the Green Belt as a whole that would be the determining factor, rather than the 'appropriateness' of the development in the Green Belt (in land use terms) or any question of exceptional circumstances being required to justify the

development. The essential point is that Green Belts are not and never have been intended to create wholly development-free zones in the countryside.

8.6 The National Planning Policy Framework made it clear that local planning authorities are to significantly boost the supply of housing and where, as in this case, a District does not have a five year supply of deliverable housing sites existing policies restricting housing such as development envelopes are to be considered out of date.

8.7 In the absence of a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, the test to be applied to planning applications is that in paragraph 14 of the NPPF. Planning permission is to be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole or specific policies in that document indicate development should be restricted.

8.8 Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2016) is a document which 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 1.87 years supply.

8.9 The Local Plan process which it is part way through has to allocate at least five years supply of deliverable housing sites. To be 'deliverable' sites should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and be viable. This site meets all those criteria.

8.10 The settlement boundaries and Green Belt boundaries within Staffordshire Moorlands were adopted in September 1998, over 19 years ago. The settlement boundaries and housing policies of the saved Local Plan were evolved in accordance with Staffordshire Structure Plan that specified a requirement of 5000 homes for the Staffordshire Moorlands District between 1981 and 2001, which translates to 250 homes per annum. The Structure Plan emphasised the need to restrict development in the more rural parts of North Staffordshire in order to facilitate the regeneration of the Potteries Conurbation.

8.11 In 2001 the Council began a review of the Local Plan, with a view to extending the plan period to 2011, but the review was suspended in 2003, and the revised Local Plan was never adopted.

8.12 The absence of an up-to-date allocation of housing sites has inevitably led to an acute housing shortfall in the District. Staffordshire Moorlands adopted its Core Strategy in March 2014. The Core Strategy identifies broad locations for both housing and employment development. It increases the housing requirement for the District, and identifies those development areas which are considered central to the achievement of the strategy, and the anticipated nature and scale of development in those areas but does not identify suitable housing sites to redress their acute housing shortfall.

8.13 This Application Site is located in close proximity to Cheadle, which provides a wide range of services and facilities. The site lies within 500m of the A522 which is an arterial route into Cheadle. Huntley Lane also leads north to the western edge of Cheadle. Accordingly, it is considered hat the development constitutes sustainable development as facilities and services can be accessed other than by the private car.

8.14 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should avoid isolated houses in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. Notwithstanding its open countryside and Green Belt location designation within the local plan the application building lies within a small hamlet of buildings approximately 1.5km from Cheadle Town Centre where there is a good range of services and employment opportunities. There is a regular bus service from the main road to the Town centre and other outlying destinations. Whilst it is accepted that part of the route from the site to the main road is rural in character with no footways or street lighting this would be for a small section only and whilst it may discourage people walking from the site to the neighbouring Town in the evenings it is considered that the route could easily be navigated in the day and by bicycle thereby providing an alternative to the private car. In conclusion therefore whilst the site is not considered to be highly sustainable it is also by comparison not considered to be unsustainable either. Consequently, it is considered that the site is not isolated in the context of paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

8.14 Given the absence of a fully up-to-date Local Plan, this Application will be need to be assessed against the policies contained within the Core Strategy, the housing evidence base, and the Council's housing supply requirements depending on its degree of consistency with the guidance contained within the NPPF

8.15 The Council needs to redress their current under supply, and cannot wait for the adoption of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to allocate sites if they are to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF's) clear message that LPA's need to ''boost significantly the supply of housing'' (paragraph 47) in order to make up for their persistent shortfall.

8.16 Furthermore, paragraph 49 of the NPPF identifies that relevant policies for the supply of housing (i.e. Policies should not be considered up to date if the LPA cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

9.0 Precedent

9.1 Staffordshire moorlands Council has granted planning permission for houses in The Green Belt in recent years under the same planning policy background as the application site. Specifically SMD/2016/0371 granted planning permission at Hurst Road, Biddulph. The Officers report states that

"The site is located within c.800 metres of the Biddulph Town Boundary and is within c.200 metres of The Talbot Public House on Grange Road. From the application site, a footway with street lighting is provided to the dwellings, which are located just off the Hurst Road / Grange Road junction. An intermittent footpath with street lighting is then provided from Grange Road to the Congleton Road, which leads to the town centre. The Biddulph Grange Country Park also lies within close proximity to the site. Clearly, the application site lies outside of the settlement boundary with no immediate access to public transport opportunities. Its peripheral settlement location will undoubtedly discourage walking to the town centre, which lies some 2km away - however, this is an acceptable cycling distance. On balance, therefore, in view of the closeness of the Public House and country park and acceptable cycling distance to Biddulph, the proposal is deemed to be a sustainable accessible location for the scale of the housing proposed to accord with CS Policy T1 and relevant parts of the NPPF."

The same comments apply equally well to the application site.

9.2 In respect of SMD/2016/0799 for a barn conversion at Huntley House Farm 51 Huntley Lane, the officers report refers specifically to the sustainable location of the site as follows.

" Notwithstanding its open countryside and green belt location designation within the local plan the application building lies within a small hamlet of buildings approximately 1.5km from Cheadle Town Centre where there is a good range of services and employment opportunities. There is a regular bus service from the main road to the Town centre and other outlying destinations. hilst it is accepted that part of the route from the site to the main road is rural in character with no footways or street lighting this would be for a small section only and whilst it may discourage people walking from the site to the neighbouring Town in the evenings it is considered that the route could easily be navigated in the day and by bicycle thereby providing an alternative to the private car. In conclusion therefore whilst the site is not considered to be highly sustainable it is also by comparison not considered to be unsustainable either. Consequently it is considered that the site is not isolated in the context of paragraph 55 of the NPPF. The proposal would therefore be acceptable in principle as it accords with Policy SS1a of the adopted Core Strategy document subject to consideration of the more detailed matters set out below. "

The same conclusions should apply to the application site.

10.0 Other Issues

10.1 Landscaping

The layout of the site and its size will allow new trees and shrubs to be planted. This includes on the street frontage and around the parking and maneuvering space. The specific plans can be the subject of a condition on a planning permission.

10.2 Drainage

The site is not shown to be susceptible from flooding on the Environmental Agency maps. The storage and controlled release of surface water during extreme storm events can be accommodated through collection systems such as permeable surfacing, soakaways, rainwater harvesting etc to slow down the peak-rate run-off.

The details of the drainage system for the site will be subject to a condition for a suitable drainage system to be agreed with the council and the utility company.

11 Conclusion

11.1 The proposed development would not result in any harm to any of the occupiers of surrounding residential dwellings or neighbouring land uses. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to highway safety or result in harm to any established ecological interests.

11.2 Although the site lies within the Green Belt, its development for a single dwelling would not result in harm to interests of acknowledged importance as the site does not serve a Green Belt purpose. The sites does not separate built up areas and does not prevent encroachment into the countryside.

11.3 The proposed dwelling would represent limited infilling in an obvious village cluster, and that it would not, therefore, be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

11.4 Planning permission should be granted as the local plan and the policies within are considered to be out of date.

11.5 There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF and in addition where an LPA cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, as in this case, then there is a double presumption in favour of development. The Council does not have a five year supply of housing land and that consequently its development plan housing policies should be regarded as being out of date. In these circumstances, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that the key test is whether adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

11.6 In principle therefore the development of the site for residential development is acceptable in principle. Matters of parking, access, and environmental issues are satisfactory. The outstanding issue is therefore whether or not the development proposed respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.