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Planning Statement

Erection of a Workshop & Storage Building

Leys House, Whiston

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Project	Leys House, Whiston
Client	Mr M Wareham
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Project Team	Jon Imber
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1 Introduction

1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.

1.2 The author of this appraisal, Jon Imber, has worked as both a development control and forward planning officer in local government, and more recently as a senior planning consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and experience of the appeals process. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

1.3 This statement forms part of a detailed planning application.

2 Site and Planning History

2.1 The application site consists of a yard to the rear of Leys House, a detached dwelling on the edge of the rural settlement of Whiston.

2.2 Neighbouring land uses include a residential property which is owned and occupied by the applicant to the south, a former petrol filling station and workshop to the east and south east, and agricultural land to the north and west.

2.3 The application site sits within a steep sided bowl. The fields to the west and north are significantly higher than ground level on the site.

2.4 The site is accessed via a gated entrance off the A52.

2.5 The yard was last used in connection with a plant hire business which operated from the site. Planning permission was granted for a workshop building on the yard in 2000. The permission was implemented and the building partially erected, but it has since been removed from the site.

2.6 The site and its surroundings are shown on the following photograph.



Figure 1 - Aerial photograph of site

3 The Proposed Development

3.1 The applicant runs a successful landscaping business. He has recently purchased Leys House, and intends to relocate the base of his operation to the yard at the rear of the

property.

3.2 The applicant's business involves the use of valuable plant, vehicles and machinery. To reduce opportunities for theft, which is becoming increasingly prevalent in rural areas, it is proposed to erect a storage shed/workshop on the yard.

3.3 Currently any repairs and maintenance required to plant, vehicles and machinery are undertaken outdoors in the yard. The building incorporates a workshop to allow this work to be carried out under cover when necessary.

3.4 The proposed building measures approximately 15 metres wide by 6.5 metres deep. It has a height to eaves of 3 metres and a ridge height of approximately 5.8 metres.

3.4 The building is to be finished in red facing brickwork and plain tiles.

3.4 Access arrangements are to remain as existing.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Paragraph 14 advises that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan; and also in circumstances where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly

and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

4.2 One of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the business and industrial units that the country needs.

4.3 Paragraph 19 of the NPPF states "*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*".

4.4 Chapter 7 of the Framework relates to design. Paragraph 58 advises that decision makers should aim to ensure that developments respond to local character and history, reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Paragraph 61 of makes it clear that good design goes beyond purely aesthetic considerations and also relates to how development is integrated into the natural and built environment. Paragraph 63 encourages design which raises the quality of the built environment in its setting.

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014)

4.5 ***"R1 – Rural Diversification***

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.

Priority will be given to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses, where the location is sustainable and the proposed use does not harm the building's character and/or the character of its surroundings."

5 Planning Considerations

5.1 Although the site lies on the edge of the village, it is outside of the settlement boundary. Policy R1 of the Core Strategy is therefore relevant.

5.2 Policy R1 is broadly supportive of new economic development in the countryside, subject to it having no adverse effect upon the character and environmental quality of its surroundings or the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring land users.

5.3 Furthermore, Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework supports business and enterprise in rural areas, and establishes the principle of well-designed new buildings to bolster the rural economy. It is clear, therefore, that the Government accepts this type of development can be appropriate in the countryside.

5.4 The application site was last used as a plant hire yard and as such constitutes previously developed land with a recent history of storage use. The proposals therefore involve development on a brownfield site which would bolster the rural economy. The broad principle of the proposed development is therefore established by Policy R1 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 28 of the NPPF.

5.5 Paragraph 19 of the NPPF prescribes significant weight to the economic benefits of the proposed development in the overall planning balance. The proposals would also be sustainable in environmental terms insofar as they would enable the applicant's place of work to be located immediately adjacent to his dwelling, reducing the need to commute.

5.6 Policy R1 of the Core Strategy expresses a preference for the re-use of existing buildings, but does not rule out the provision of new buildings as an alternative. There are no suitable existing buildings on the site that could be converted, and as such there is no alternative but to provide a new building in this instance.

5.7 The proposed building is sited in a bowl. It is screened by topography to the north and west, and is screened by frontage development to the south and east. The proposed building would not therefore be prominent from public vantage points.

5.8 The proposed building is located on the edge of an existing settlement and as such would be viewed in the context of existing built development. It would not therefore appear as an isolated intrusion into the countryside.

5.9 The building has been designed to integrate sensitively within its context. It incorporates red facing brickwork to help it blend in with its rural surroundings. The scale and height of the building have been kept to a minimum whilst allowing it to perform its intended function.

5.10 The proposed building would therefore have minimal impact upon the character or appearance of its rural surroundings.

5.11 The proposals would have minimal impact upon the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring land users. The building is to be used for the storage of plant and equipment and to provide indoor space for any repairs and maintenance that would otherwise be undertaken in the yard. There is to be no other working on the premises. The site has an established use as a plant hire business and the proposals are therefore unlikely to result in any increased noise or disturbance.

5.12 The site access is well sighted with good visibility in both directions, and emerges onto the A52 which is subject to a 40mph speed limit. The site therefore has direct access to the strategic highway network. The proposals are likely to result in significantly less trips to and from the site than the plant hire business which previously operated from the premises. The proposals would not therefore prejudice the safe or efficient use of the highway network.

5.13 The proposals therefore satisfy all of the relevant criteria set out within Policy R1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, as well as Sections 1 and 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The application proposes the erection of a storage shed on a brownfield site last used for the open storage of plant for hire.

6.2 Policy R1 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 28 of the NPPF establish the principle of well-designed buildings in rural areas to support the rural economy. It is therefore clear that the Council and the Government accept that such development can be appropriate in the countryside.

6.3 The proposed building would bolster the rural economy. It is well designed and very well screened, such that it would not be prominent from public vantage points beyond the application site. The proposed building would not therefore harm the character or appearance of the countryside.

6.4 The proposals would not harm the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings and would not prejudice the safe or efficient use of the highway network.

6.5 The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development which accords with Policy R1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and Sections 1 and 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In accordance with the presumption in favour of such development established by Paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the significant weight attached to economic development prescribed by Paragraph 19, it is therefore respectfully requested that the application be approved.