SAMMONS Architectural LIMITED

Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists

10 Cawdry Buildings
Fountain Street
Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6JP
Tel / fax 01538 386002
e-mail info@sammonsltd.co.uk

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



PROPOSAL : OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A SINGLE DWELLING AND GARAGE

ADDRESS : LAND ADJCAENT TO PROSPECT HOUSE FARM, SUTHERLAND ROAD, LONGSDON, STOKE ON TRENT, ST9 9QD

APPLICANT : MR & MRS CARTER

DATE : APRIL 2018 JOB No. : 2018-2306

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr & Mrs Carter to prepare and submit an outline planning application for the erection of a single dwelling and garage on land adjacent to Prospect House Farm, Sutherland Road, Longsdon. The application is in outline with means of access and layout sought. Matters of scale, appearance and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval. The application is accompanied by a location plan, site layout plan and ecological survey.

1.2 This statement analyses the site, the proposal and the policy context within which it is made. Thereafter it provides justification for approval of the proposed development primarily on the basis that the scheme would constitute infill development and the shortage of a five year supply of deliverable housing land in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

1.3 This statement concludes that the proposed development would be in accordance with adopted Development Plan policies as it represents an appropriate form of infill development within a sustainable edge of village location without harm or detriment to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed development would be prejudicial to residential amenity, detrimental to highway safety or harm any established ecological interests.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site comprises of a broadly rectangular plot of land which extends to approximately 1.09ha. It lies within a loose ribbon of residential development on the western side of Sutherland Road Longson. A detached bungalow (Portree) lies to the north with Prospect House Farm to the south. Residential development lies on the opposite side of Sutherland Road to the east with open countryside to the west. The land which forms part of a larger paddock is open and falls away gradually from the highway in an east to west direction. The roadside boundary is formed by a low drystone wall with a timber post and rail fence supplemented with shrubs and landscaping to the northern, southern and western boundaries.

2.2 For the purposes of the Development Plan the site lies within the Green Belt but in a location that is considered sustainable in terms of its proximity to services and public transport.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 This is an outline application which seeks consent for the erection of a detached dwelling. Means of access and layout are sought as part of the application with all other matters reserved for subsequent approval. The submitted layout plan shows the erection of a single dwelling which would have a rectangular plan form with its axis running in a north to south direction. A detached garage would be located to the south of the dwelling. The proposed dwelling would be set back from the adjacent highway and follow the building line of the dwelling to the north. It would be served by a new access which would be located close to the south eastern corner of the site. The site would be separated from the remaining paddock with a timber post and rail fence. All other boundary treatments would be retained.

4.0 HISTORY

4.1 There is no history relating to the application site.

5.0 POLICY

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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.

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan, which in this area comprises of the adopted Core Strategy (2014).

5.3 Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications (para 12). The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.4 The most relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles); SS2 (Future provision of Development); SS3 (Distribution of Development); SS4 (Managing the Release of Housing Land); SS6 (Development in Rural Areas); SS6b (Smaller Villages Area Strategy); H1 (New Housing); R2 (Rural Housing); DC1 (Design Considerations) and DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

5.5 Also of particular relevance to this application is the Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2017) which sets out the Local Authority's performance in respect of housing land supply and housing delivery.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

6.1 As set out above this is an application for the erection of a single detached dwelling. The key issues are considered to be:

- The Principle of development in particular whether the proposed development constitutes an appropriate form of infill development;
- The effect on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it;
- Sustainability of Development;
- Means of Access;
- Layout;
- Biodiversity; and

- Any other material considerations.

Principle of development

6.2 For the purposes of development the site is within the Green Belt as indicated on the Proposals Map of the former Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. As such there are tighter controls on what form of development can be permitted and new build residential development is considered to represent inappropriate development unless very special circumstances apply or it is one of a number of exceptions. The Local Plan has now been replaced by the Moorlands Core Strategy which does not contain a specific Green Belt policy and the national Green Belt policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework apply. These policies state that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is "inappropriate" and that inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt unless it is one of the exceptions listed in the NPPF or unless very special circumstances apply.

6.3 One of the exceptions listed in the NPPF (para 89) is "limited infilling in villages. The presumption for limited infilling in identified settlements is reiterated in Policy SS6b of the adopted Core Strategy the preamble to which states that some limited infilling and redevelopment is considered acceptable subject to Green Belt or countryside policies. Paragraph 8.1.66 of the adopted Core Strategy states that "in order to guide development an Infill Development Boundary will be defined around these settlements within which appropriate development will be allowed. These boundaries will be more tightly drawn than Development Boundaries to accommodate infilling or redevelopment but to restrict peripheral expansion". At the time of this application the draft proposed site allocations plan has been out to consultation and therefore in its early stages. Notwithstanding this the majority of the site falls within the proposed infill boundary for the village.

6.4 Longsdon is identified as a smaller village under policy SS6b of the adopted Core Strategy Document. Whilst it is accepted that the smaller villages have a more limited role as service centres they are recognised as being vital to the rural areas particularly in terms of providing for local housing and rural employment needs. The loss of local population through lack of housing opportunities is recognised and the strategy for the smaller villages therefore seeks to allow an appropriate level of sensitive development which amongst other things meets a local social or economic need of the settlement and its hinterland.

6.5 The key question is whether the proposed development constitutes limited infilling and therefore appropriate development in the Green Belt. It is contended that the lack of an infill Development Boundary should not prevent development which is in accordance with the National Policy Planning Framework. The application site lies within the fabric of the village with residential dwellings surrounding it on three sides. The application site is comparable in size to the adjacent plots and is clearly capable of providing small scale in fill development. In this respect the proposed development would clearly represent infill development in the village and as such is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not result in an isolated home in the countryside. The principle of residential development on the site is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

The effect on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt

6.6 The NPPF confirms that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, and confirms that their essential characteristics is their

openness and permanence. Sutherland Road in this location is characterised by a mix of housing types and sizes. The application site makes a very limited contribution to the openness of the Green Belt at this point due to its topography and screening.

6.7 Whilst the provision of a single dwelling would result in some loss of openness to what is effectively a green and undeveloped site it is considered that any loss of openness would be minimal as it would be mitigated to a large degree by the presence of houses and field boundaries in the wider area. Although appearance and landscaping, are details reserved for later consideration it is considered that the nature of the site is such that a sensitive detailed design and appropriate landscaping of the proposed dwelling could overcome any possible unacceptable affect on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt.

6.8 The indicative plan shows that the application site is clearly capable of supporting a modest detached dwelling which would sit centrally within the plot. In addition to the dwelling itself the site would also be capable of providing off road parking and turning provision and adequate amenity space. These features are considered to reflect the general pattern of development on Sutherland Road at this point. The erection of a single dwelling on the site would ensure that the proposed development would be in keeping with the scale and density of the locality and would continue the ribbon of development along Sutherland Road. There would be no material harm to the visual amenity of the Green Belt and the proposed development would therefore be compliant with adopted Development Plan policies.

Sustainability

6.9 The National Planning Policy Framework incorporates a presumption in favour of sustainable development and is considered to be a material consideration of the highest weight in the determination of this application particularly as the . As a whole the NPPF seeks to expedite the achievement of housing targets and paragraph 14 is clear that harm would have to "*significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits"* of a housing application to justify refusal. Furthermore, in order to significantly boost the supply of housing para 47 of the NPPF asks LPA's to have a 5 year continuous supply (including an additional 5% buffer) of deliverable land at all times. It also goes on to state that housing applications should be considered in the context of presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 49). It further advises that where a LPA cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, the relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date.

6.10 The Council are currently reviewing the future housing and employment land requirement for the District for the period 2006 to 2026. The Council calculates its 5 year land supply on a district basis. As at March 2017 it was 1.99 years (with a 20% buffer). The Local Planning Authority cannot therefore demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing site and as a consequence the authority's policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date. The NPPF guidance in paragraph 89 that limited infilling is appropriate development therefore takes precedence. The proposed development qualifies as limited infill given the number of units possible and the site's sustainable location in an established area of ribbon development. This application should therefore be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as confirmed by paragraphs 14 and 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a significant material consideration that weighs heavily in favour of the proposed development.

6.11 Longsdon is acknowledged within the adopted Core Strategy as a smaller village where new housing development is acceptable. It has its own Memorial Hall which is actively used by the local community and a public house. It is located on the main A53 Stoke on Trent Road 2 miles west of Leek where a wide range of services can be found. The village is also fortunate to have a regular bus service operating with routes to the neighbouring towns including Leek, Endon and Stoke on Trent. The development would therefore be located on the edge of a sustainable settlement and there is more than a reasonable prospect that any future occupiers of the site will not be solely reliant on the car as their sole means of transportation to access services and facilities as they will be able to access them on foot, by cycle and public transport.

Layout

6.12 CS Policy H1 "New Housing Development" states "all development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing ...and the strategy for the area having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site...All housing should be the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, with the character of the surrounding area." The specific design policies of the CS also seek to promote local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area as is similarly reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It furthermore states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; is indivisible from good planning; and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Developments should function well and establish a strong sense of place creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Proposals should also optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and respond to local character and history including local materials and the use of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Developments should also create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

6.13 The submitted plans show that the proposed dwelling would be located centrally within the plot with its axis running in a north to south direction and positioned within the building line of Portree to the north. A detached garage building is shown to the south of the dwelling with means of access located in the south eastern corner of the site. Parking and turning would be provided to the front of the garage building and the dwelling would be served with a modest front garden and larger private amenity space at the rear. These features are considered to generally reflect the pattern of development on Leek Road at this point. This area of Sutherland Road is characterised by a mix of building forms and styles from single storey bungalows to Victorian semis, detached farmhouses and more modern two storey development. There is also a degree of variation in terms of how these present themselves to the street scene with some sitting hard up against the carriageway and others set further back. Some have their axis running in a north to south direction and others such as Prospect House have theirs running in an east to west direction. There is also a varied mix of building materials with stone, brick and render all evident within the immediate locality.

6.14 Whilst the detailed design of the scheme is not for consideration at this stage it is considered that the plot is more than capable of accommodating a dwelling which would have an acceptable relationship with the neighbouring dwellings. The proposed dwelling would sit gable end on to the rear elevation of Prospect House Farm and the existing mature tree and shrub planting will provide adequate screening and a separation distance of some 30 metres will be

achieved between the two interfaces. Portree to the north sits at a slightly higher ground level than the application. Whilst there is a window in the side facing gable of this building it is a secondary window only and therefore afforded no protection under the Council's adopted Space About Dwellings standards. Whilst a projecting bay on the rear elevation of the building is angled towards the application site this would only provide views of the rear most part of the site and the proposed building has been set sufficiently forward to avoid any direct relationship. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not result in any overlooking or loss of amenity. Overall the proposed site plan adequately demonstrates that the application site can accommodate the density of development sought and that it can be assimilated into the area without any visual harm to the site or the wider surrounding area. In this respect the proposal accords with CS policies H1 and DC1 and the guidance contained in the NPPF more generally.

Highways

6.15 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states: Plans and decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe is reflected in CS Policy T1 Development and Sustainable Transport.

6.16 This application seeks approval for matters of access at this stage. The application proposes to construct a new access arrangement to severe the dwelling in the south eastern corner of the site. Adequate off road parking and turning facilities can be provided within the site and the access would be capable of providing sufficient visibility to drivers entering or existing the site. There would therefore be no significant conflict with CS Policy T1 or guidance contained in the NPPF.

Biodiversity

6.17 The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a core principal of the NPPF where planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats and ecological networks. In determining planning applications permission should be refused if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or as a last resort compensated for. The ethos of this is provided for in CS Policy NE1.

6.18 The application has been accompanied by an ecological assessment. This identifies that the application site forms part of a field of species poor semi-improved grassland which has been heavily grazed by horses. The habitats on site were found to be of limited potential for nesting birds, amphibians and reptiles, foraging bats and badgers. Subject to compliance with the recommended mitigation measures, which can be secured via a way of an appropriately worded condition, the proposed development is not considered to have any adverse impacts on biodiversity and therefore accords with Policy NE1 of the adopted Core Strategy and guidance contained within the NPPF (paragraph 109).

Other Material Considerations

6.20 It is important to note when considering this application that planning permission for a residential dwelling has recently (November 2017) been granted on land adjacent to High View, Sutherland Road, Longsdon (SMD/2017/0126). This application site lies no more than a few metres away from the current application site within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. Approval for the dwelling was granted on the basis that it was accepted as a infill site. The same parameters which were considered to define that site as an infill plot are clearly exhibited on the application site. The extant permission on a neighbouring site represents a significant and material consideration in terms of precedent and in the interests of fairness and consistency it is respectfully requested that the application site is also judged on the same criteria and accepted as an infill plot.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 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.

7.2 For the reasons given above it is considered that residential development on the application site would provide clear social and economic benefits in relation to housing within an accessible and sustainable location in a housing supply context of significant under provision. The concept of village boundaries was extinguished with the loss of the Local Plan and whilst the Core Strategy makes reference to limited infill boundaries these have not yet been confirmed and cannot therefore be considered effective. The LPA is therefore currently in a hiatus between the relinquished policies of the previous Local Plan and the recently adopted but currently undefined policies of the Core Strategy. This application should therefore be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as confirmed by paragraphs 14 and 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed development represents appropriate infill development and no significant demonstrable harm would arise in respect of the proposal in relation to the character and appearance of the area, highway safety or residential amenity. The LPA is therefore respectfully requested to approve planning permission for the erection of a single detached dwelling on land adjacent to Prospect House Farm, Sutherland Road, Longsdon, subject to any planning conditions it may feel are necessary.

8.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes the use of the application site for residential purposes. The application is in outline within means of access and layout considered. All other matters are reserved for subsequent consideration. This form of development is considered to reflect the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

AMOUNT

The application proposes the erection of a single dwelling and garage. This amount of development is considered to comply with Green Belt policy and is in keeping with the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

LAYOUT

The layout of the development will be as shown on the submitted site layout plan. The proposed dwelling which would have a simple rectangular footprint would be positioned centrally within the site with the detached garage building to the south. The new vehicular access would be positioned in the south eastern corner of the site with off road parking and turning provided within the site in front of the proposed garage.

SCALE

Whilst scale is a matter which is reserved for later consideration the application proposes a single dwelling with detached garage building.

LANDSCAPING

The site is located within a rural setting and benefits from substantial existing mature landscaping and it is not considered that any additional landscaping will be required. Whilst landscaping is a matter which is reserved for later consideration the indicative site plan demonstrates that a single dwelling can be accommodated on the site without harm to the existing trees or their root protection areas.

APPEARANCE

Appearance is a reserved matter that would be appropriately dealt with in a detailed application.

ACCESS

The proposed development would be served by a new vehicular access directly off Sutherland Road. The site is located within the village of Longsdon and public transport links are easily accessible to Leek and other parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands as well as the neighbouring city of Stoke on Trent.