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Design and access statement

Planning application for proposed demolition of redundant stable, Erection of a timber frame one bedroom dwelling at

The Stables, Mollatts Wood Road, Leek. ST13 7AL.



Photo courtesy of google earth

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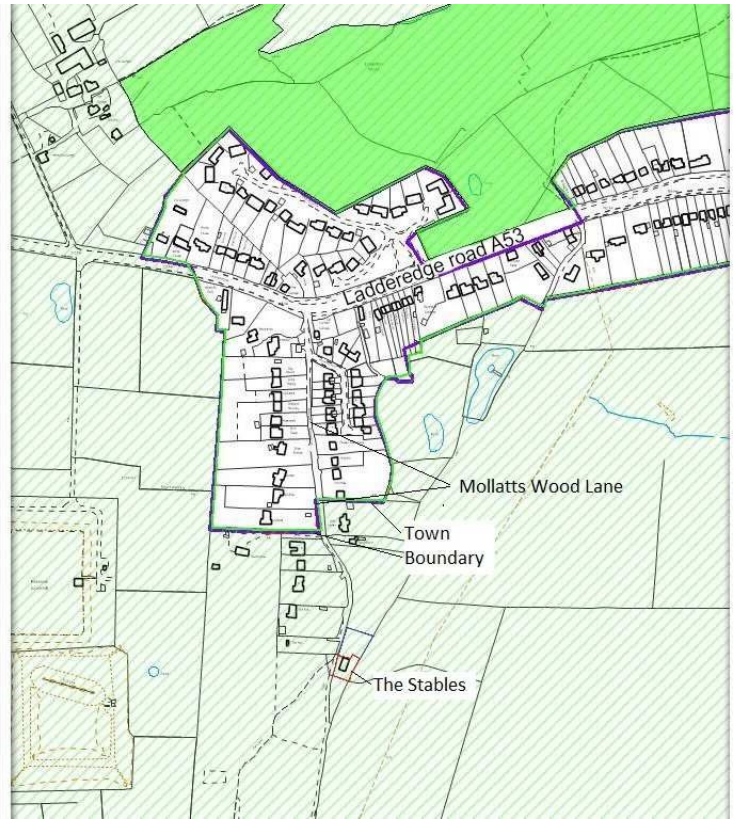
Introduction/Context

This statement is produced to support a planning application to demolish a timber frame stable block and to erect a new build timber frame dwelling.

Mollatts Wood Road forms part of the Staffordshire Way, some 86 miles long starting in Mow Cop, through Mollatts Wood, down to the Caldon Canal through the Churnet Valley and finishes in South Staffordshire at Kniver edge.

The application site is located at the end of Mollatts Wood road, which a predominantly a private residential road with public right of way access and is on the edge of the town boundary. The stables along with around 8 other dwellings are located outside the draft town boundary according to the July 2017 local plan, see extract below.



The stable was subject to a planning approval in 2005, 05/01459/FUL for private stabling of horses and not for commercial purpose whatsoever to safeguard the amenities of the area and to minimise the possibility of inconvenience to nearby residents by the establishment of a commercial concern.

A planning application was submitted in October 201, (SMD/2017/0705) to convert the stable into a one bedroom dwelling, which was refused on the basis that it was not of a permanent construction, and the building was not of a suitable architectural merit for conversion and may harm the open character of the rural countryside.

An appeal on this decision on 22nd June (APP/B3438/W/18/3195264) was dismissed by The Planning Inspectorate. However the inspector has negated any potential conflicting Greenbelt policies advising that a residential dwelling would sit well on the site, and removing of part of the fencing will enhance the openness, and would contribute to the rural community. Furthermore, a dwelling on this site would not constitute urban sprawl, not encroach into the green belt, the site is not isolated.

He gave significant weight to Mrs Walkers health problems and concluded that it would be beneficial to live at the site with the animals, he identified that living on site would have no increase in the current journeys (traffic) required in caring for the animals, plus having the benefits of the Staffordshire Way on the doorstep. Subsequent conversation with the applicants and Mr Ben Heywood, Head of SMDC and High Peak planning department, have concluded that the *equestrian stable buildings and their curtilage are previously developed land. The NPPF permits within Green Belt 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. and that for the purposes of determining whether or not planning permission would be required for such a stable we would be likely to conclude that it was on the basis that it is immobile and intended for retention for the foreseeable future and therefore was a "permanent" not "temporary" building.*

The redevelopment of the site on Mollatts Wood road, would not been as setting a precedent as there are no other previously developed sites on this road. There are horses kept in adjacent adjoining fields to the south of the site, however the horses utilise field shelters and are classed as temporary movable buildings, and therefore do not require planning permission as a permanent structure. These cannot be categorised as previous development land for building.

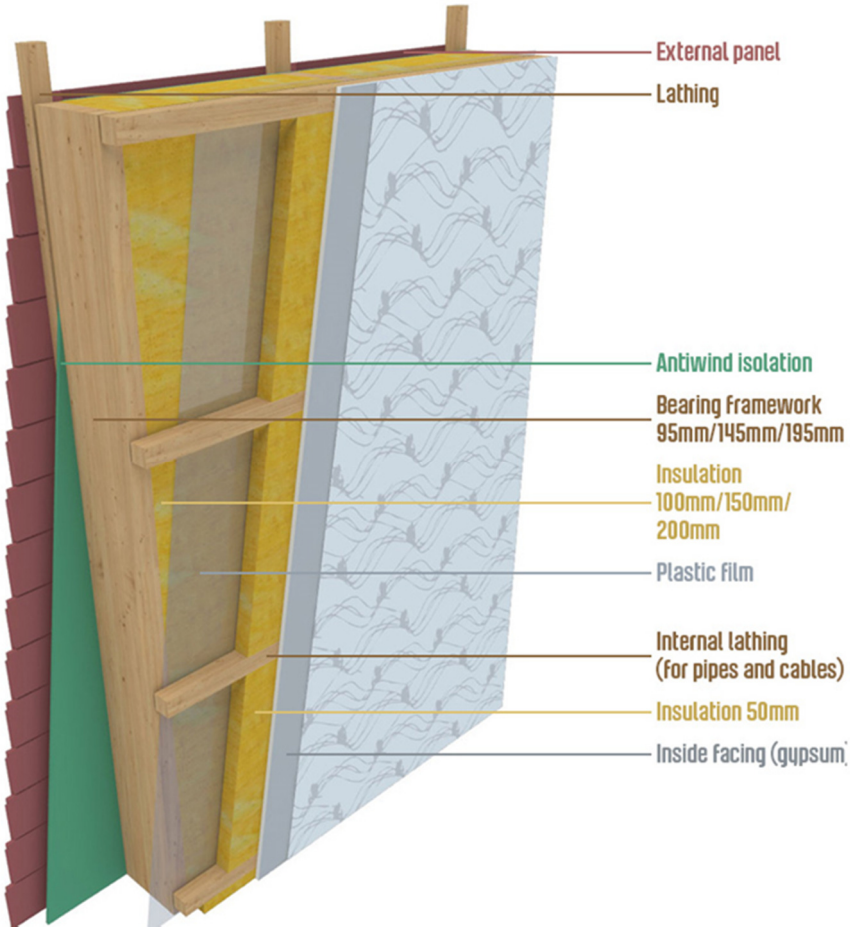




Proposal

The application is to replace the existing structure with a new timber frame dwelling to provide a 1 bedroom self contained dwelling with disabled accessible ensuite bathroom, open plan lounge and kitchen with a separate wc.

Timber frame dwelling construction is a common form of building full time residential homes, both follow the same construction method, which is similar for dormer window construction. An example below is an extract from a website detailing how the wall construction would be carried out to meet building regulation requirements.



The applicants are keen to live as far as reasonably practical to live off grid. They have a plentiful supply of water which provides them and their animals with all their water requirements. It is understood that all of the dwellings on Mollatts Wood Road use a septic tank arrangement for the drainage because mains sewer is not available, although there is an indication from Severn Trent that a sewer may be installed. The applicants however prefer to install a packed treatment tank on site to aerobically treat the waste water using a bio-disc or similar. The Stables has mains electricity on the site, therefore unsightly solar panels, wind turbine or the like would not be opted for with the new dwelling. Heating and cooking will be carried out with an LPG tank buried in the ground the providing fuel for a boiler and gas cooker.

The site is previously developed land, (brownfield) they have 4 alpaca and 1 Llama which have been ‘adopted’ from a rescue centre, after being abused and neglected by previous owners. The livestock are a native species of South America and are very hardy.

The design principles for development in the Staffordshire Moorlands have been followed in the guide produced by the Planning and Estates department, which is aimed at property owners and their agents who are encouraged to take these principles into account when preparing development proposals. The emphasis is on encouraging good practice rather than trying to control the detailed design of buildings or stifling experiment, originality or initiative. It is based on the premise that new development should always have regard to its surrounding so it is appropriate and blends with the scale, proportions and character of the buildings in the area.

A modest external patio shall be provided outside which shall be provide seating area, etc and the existing track entrance shall be retained to provide parking for 2 vehicles and access to the paddocks maintenance, veterinary visits, and shearing Access.

All new dwellings should aim to be built to "Lifetime Homes" standard in accordance with the current national advice and targets.

Use/Amount

The proposed dwelling shall occupy the same slab as the existing stable block, and will have the same 'L' shape footprint on plan, resembling the existing stables from the public right of way.

The applicants are a retired couple requiring only a single bedroom, therefore the dwelling will take the form of a one bedroom bungalow. The applicant has health issues affecting her feet which results in the periodic use of a wheelchair. The rooms are designed to allow for space to manoeuvre around furniture and bathroom/kitchen fittings, etc with a wheelchair or other mobility aids.

The proposed new dwelling shall meet the relevant requirements of lifetime homes standard as published 5 July 2010. There is no actual minimum floor area requirement to meet with the lifetime home standard. The design guide describes corridor widths, room dimensions for circulation. Such as providing turning space for wheelchairs in living rooms, and minimum corridor widths of 900mm, also doorways to be a minimum of 750mm clear opening.

Living rooms/areas and dining rooms/areas should be capable of having either a clear turning circle of 1500mm diameter, or a turning ellipse of 1700mm x 1400mm. Where dwelling layout plans include furniture layouts, occasional items of furniture (typically coffee tables & side tables) can be within or overlap these turning zones.

Kitchens should have a clear width of 1200mm between kitchen unit fronts / appliance fronts and any fixed obstruction opposite (such as other kitchen fittings or walls). This clear 1200mm should be maintained for the entire run of the unit, worktop and/or appliance.

Good practice recommendation that exceed, or are in addition to, the above requirements

Kitchen layouts, whenever possible, should be planned so that they can include (following adaptation) a continuous run of units, unbroken by doorways, including: a built in oven at an accessible height beside a minimum 600mm of work surface, a hob beside a further minimum 600mm of work surface, and a sink/drainer. This continuous run, uninterrupted by doorways, (c. 3600mm in length measured along the front face) could be straight, L shaped, or U shaped. In addition, window positions should not impede on the oven or hob positions. Space for other typical 'white goods' and fittings should be available elsewhere in the kitchen (so that only the oven and hob are contained within this particular length of run). • Provide a clear 1500mm diameter circular, or 1400mm x 1700mm elliptical, manoeuvring space from floor for a minimum height of 900mm

The main bedroom in a dwelling should be capable of having a clear space, 750mm wide to both sides and the foot of a standard sized double bed

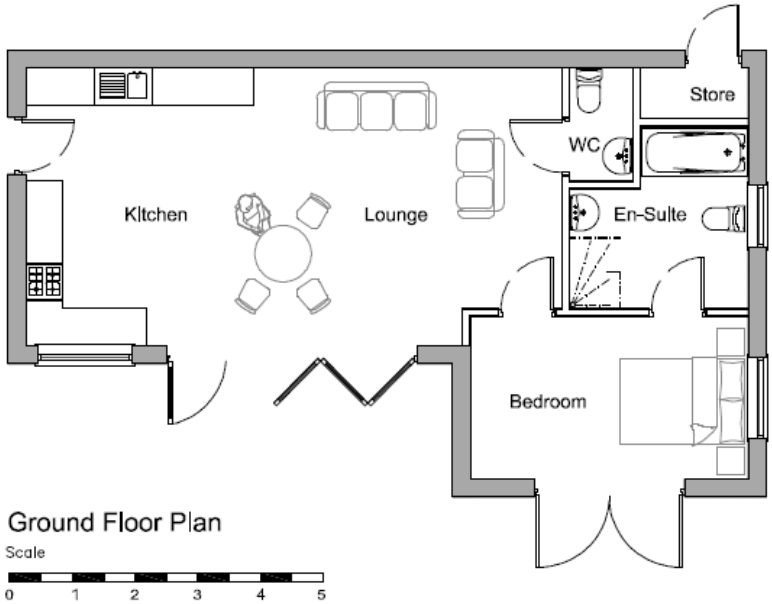
An accessible WC compartment should contain:
1. A WC with:
i)A centre line between 400mm – 500mm from an adjacent wall.
ii)A flush control located between the centre-line of the WC and the side of the cistern furthest away from the adjacent wall.
iii)An approach zone extending at least 350mm from the WC's centre-line towards the adjacent wall, and at least 1000mm from the WC's centre-line on the other side.
This zone should extend forward from the front rim of the WC by at least 1100mm.
The zone should also extend back at least 500mm from the front rim of the WC for a width of 1000mm from the WC's centre-line.
A basin which may be located either on the adjacent wall, or adjacent to the cistern, should not project into this approach zone by more than 200mm A basin with:
A clear frontal approach zone extending back for a distance of 1100mm from any obstruction under the basin – whether that be a pedestal, trap, duct or housing. This zone will normally overlap with the WC's approach zone as detailed in item 1iii) above.

Unless provided elsewhere on the entrance level floor drainage for an accessible floor level shower with: A floor construction that provides either shallow falls to the floor drainage, or (where the drainage is initially capped for use later following installation of a shower) that allows simple and easy installation of a laid-to-fall floor surface in the future.
Whether provided from the outset, or by subsequent adaptation, fall gradients in the floor should be the minimum required for efficient drainage of the floor area. Crossfalls should be minimised.
The floor drain should be located as far away from the doorway as practicable.
Where possible, the bathroom should also provide for a direct connection with a main bedroom. This will normally take the form of a full height knockout panel, capable of being fitted with a doorset, which achieves a clear opening in accordance with Criterion 6. (750mm clear width).

The proposed dwelling shall meet all of the design criteria as required by lifetime Homes Standard.

Layout

The proposed dwelling shall resemble the external 'L' shape of the original stable block, having an open plan kitchen lounge area, having the bathroom as an ensuite to the bedroom with a separate WC for visitors, etc. The bathroom is designed to suit the needs of the applicant to provide a separate wetroom area and also a separate bath which helps with her medical condition



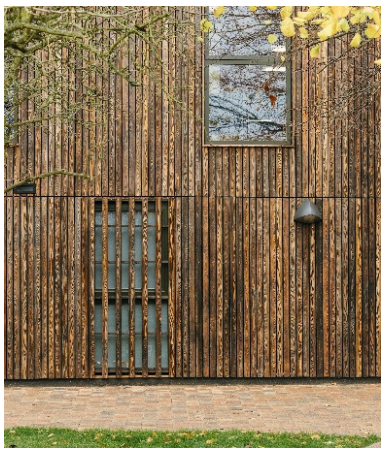
Appearance

The building and surrounding landscape are to be aesthetically attractive, the trees and hedges generally on the site shall be retained. Additional screening shall be provided using a mixed native species informal hedge planted on the boundary with a cluster of trees planted to the field adjacent to provide further screening.

The Staffordshire Way abuts the west elevation to the rear, users of the walk shall not see a significant change to the building. The rear and northern walls shall generally remain the same as existing, there is a proposed stand of native species trees to be planted in the field to north west corner of the dwelling to provide screening from walkers passing north to south towards the Churnet Valley. The rear field fenceline shall also be planted with a mixed native species informal hedge to provide screening. The space immediately behind the proposed dwelling shall be reverted to pasture land for the Alpaca to graze and part of the existing fence forming separation to the field area shall be removed ti increase and enhance the openness of the paddocks and site.

The new build will be vertically clad in red cedar using the Shou Sugi Ban method, an ancient Japanese wood finishing technique which involves charring and oiling wood cladding off site, and typically lasts many decades without the need for maintenance, typically 80-100 years, longer if the wood is oiled every 15 years. Shou Sugi Ban is a proven method of enhancing cladding and is architecturally pleasing. See examples below:





Walkers approaching from the South, from the Churnet Valley shall see a continuation of the mixed species hedge on the West boundary, which shall also return down the side of the proposed parking area to again provide screening to the corner of the patio area.

The image below is an extract from Google maps indicating a distance of 816,m. The canal path serving Caldon canal runs from Sunnyfields industrial estate on the south side of Leek town centre and meanders towards the south to Endon and places beyond. The measurement point on the image to the right of the picture is a place roughly demonstrating the highest point on the canalside path where the canal runs through a tunnel and the path is separated in part as walkers will go over the hill. There is another track which links Ladderedge road with Leek brook. This we believe is the closest public access viewpoint to the proposed dwelling frontage, approximately 800m away.



The local plan and National Planning Policy Framework requires development abutting or clearly visible from the Green Belt to pay special regard to its Green Belt setting in terms of form, scale and design and to provide a high standard of landscaping, especially where this will provide a better definition of the Green Belt/urban boundary. The edge of the town boundary as noted previously cuts across Mollatts Wood Lane, outside of which there appears to be a further 8 dwellings between the application site and the town development boundary, indicating that there is already a blurring of the Green belt/urban boundary.
Proposals for the site take full account of the character and interest of the buildings and the applicants seek to enhance their setting.

Landscaping

The land around the proposed dwelling will remain as existing with grass and boundary hedges to include the existing trees and the adjacent field. Additional native trees shall be planted to provide some natural screening to the new dwelling.

The driveway / site access shall remain as a stone finish track to provide off road parking for two vehicles, having a cellular grid overlaid and filled with grass and or gravel to provide a bound surface suitable for vehicular parking, pedestrian and wheelchair use, without an urbanised appearance, similar to the images below.





Natural sandstone flags shall be laid to the front of the proposed dwelling on the existing concrete slab to provide a garden terrace area for seating.

The area around the existing building to include part of the driveway to the side of the building 3.0m wide for two vehicles, leaving approx. 300mm margin to the north and west side of the building for maintenance to the French (gravel filled drain) and a gravel path following from the parking area 1.0m wide in front of the existing concrete slab. Similar to the indicative images below. This fenced area forms the domestic curtilage of the dwelling, which we define as being the area of land attached to the dwelling house and forming one enclosure with it, but excluding the open fields which are also owned by the applicant and shall be retained for grazing land.





The enclosure defining the domestic curtilage of the dwelling shall be maintained in perpetuity and the area external to the curtilage shall remain grazing land and otherwise free from domestic paraphernalia. The curtilage shall occupy a footprint of approximately 139m2. The footprint of the building is approximately 71m2, therefore the 'private garden area' shall be 68m2.

For clarity the red edge boundary defines the development area where work is to be carried out. This differs from the proposed residential curtilage. The red edge on location plans follows the line of the exactly fences forming the enclosure around the building in the existing condition. Development is being carried out within the red edge in the form of water treatment tank and drainage, alterations to the existing fence to allow the grazing to the full grassed area outside the residential curtilage, also planting of the hedges.

This approach of the red edge to define the development area where work is undertaken, and a separate garden curtilage with conversions in rural areas has been used and accepted on a number of other application both inside Staffs Moorlands and neighbouring authorities, particularly where the red line is extended to cover shared access to the highway etc.

The minimal 'domestic curtilage' will enhance the openness of the site.

Access

Access to the site is using Mollatts Wood Road off the Ladderedge road A53. The road is a residential serving in excess of 30 dwellings with a small side cul de sac serving additional dwellings.

The road is tarmac finished for the most part but because it is a private road, it is understood the residents recently has the road resurfaced and the tarmac ends at the field boundary. The road reverts to a hardcore track with central grassed strip which is suitable for vehicle and pedestrian access.

Planning Statement

The applicants have approached SMDC planning department for pre-application guidance and subsequently they have considered the proposal, it has been identified and agreed that the site is previously developed land, (brownfield) and that it is eligible under paragraphs 117,118, and 145 indent g, of the current NPPF (July 2018) to be redeveloped.

The recent Appeal Inspector has negated any potential conflicting Greenbelt policies advising that a residential dwelling would sit well on the site, and removing of part of the fencing will enhance the openness, and would contribute to the rural community. Furthermore, a dwelling on this site would not constitute urban sprawl, not encroach into the green belt, the site is not isolated.

He gave significant weight to Mrs Walkers health problems and concluded that it would be beneficial to live at the site with the animals, he identified that living on site would have no increase in the current journeys (traffic) required in caring for the animals, plus having the benefits of the Staffordshire Way on the doorstep.

The proposed new dwelling meets the criteria set in NPPF (2018) for protecting greenbelt, paragraph 145 indent g: limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings),which would:
– not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
– not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority

There is currently a housing shortage within the Staffordshire Moorlands with very few new build housing developments, resulting in only around 2% of the councils 5 year plan being realized, therefore this proposed dwelling shall provide a modest but positive increase in housing, and free up the applicants current place of residence.

The redevelopment of the site on Mollatts Wood road, would not been as setting a prescience as there are no other previously developed sites on this road. There are horses kept in adjacent adjoining fields to the south of the site, however the horses utilise field shelters and are classed as temporary movable buildings, and therefore do not require planning permission as a permanent structure. Thus cannot be categorised as previous development land for building.