DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL : Installation of external fire escape and enlargement of existing window to form doorway

ADDRESS : Elizabeth House Retirement Home, Sandyhill, Werrington

APPLICANT : Elizabeth House Retirement Home

DATE : August 2018 JOB No. : 2018-2347

DESIGN

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Area

The application proposes the installation of an external fire escape and the enlargement of an existing window to form a doorway within the gable elevation of the existing building which is currently used as a retirement home. The existing internal staircase is constrained and does not comply with modern day Building Regulations.

The site could be described as a 'backland site' surrounded by the rear gardens of adjacent residential properties. For this reason, the proposal is likely to be influenced by the character of the existing building and open spaces on the site rather than by the architecture of surrounding development.

Physical

The application site comprises the original two storey former Sandyhill Farmhouse and outbuildings and a series of modern single storey additions. The open spaces around the building are landscaped as gardens to provide a pleasant environment for residents. Materials consist of white painted rendered walls and tiled roofs. Access to the site is off Sandyhill. The access leads onto a car park at the front of the building.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Given this obligation, this chapter therefore considers national guidance relevant to the

application as well as the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014). The following is considered relevant:

Core Strategy,

S01 Spatial Objectives

SS1 Development Principles

SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DC1 Design Considerations

In terms of design and amenity, Policy DC1 expects all new development to be well designed to respect the site and it's surrounding; having regard to matters of scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance. New development should protect the amenity of the area, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission.

National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

Chapter 2 Achieving sustainable development
Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport
Chapter 12 Achieving well designed places

Within the NPPF it is also worth noting the following relevant paragraphs:

- Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para 11).

- Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas, (para 9)
- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, (para 11).
- At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LPA's should approve proposals which accord with the development plan without delay (para 11).
- Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (para 80).
- To provide the social, recreation and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments (para 92).
- Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community (para 92).
- The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people (para 124).
- Chapter 12 of the Framework relates to design. Paragraphs 125 and 126 state that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Plans or SPD's should use visual tools such as design guides and codes to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage.

Planning History

SM89-0283: Outline planning permission granted for residential development on the former farmland (now Sandyhill) subject to conditions and a Section 52 Agreement requiring the remaining open space to be left open.

1992: Change of use to thirteen bed retirement home approved

98/0444/OLD: Extension to provide additional five bedrooms approved

99/0264/OLD: Alterations to car park

02/0260/FUL: Conversion of office to provide additional bedroom approved

02/1078/FUL: Extension to provide additional four bedrooms approved

05/1284/FUL: Extension to provide additional five bedrooms approved

SMD/2009/0885: Extension to residential home and four additional parking spaces approved.

ASSESSMENT

The application site lies within the village development boundary where there is a general presumption in favour of development. The proposal involves the erection of an external fire escape and the enlargement of an existing window into a doorway to provide access at first floor level. The external fire escape would be positioned on the on the north western gable of the existing building. It would be constructed from metal and painted black. The existing first floor window would be enlarged into a door way. The new door at first floor level would match the existing doors within the building.

Whilst the building is surrounded by residential dwellings it is not considered that the proposed development would adversely affect their amenity through loss of privacy or outlook given the location of the fire escape, its intended use and the fact that the proposed doorway would replace an existing window. In addition the building sits centrally within a large plot and there would be adequate distance between the rear of the dwellings on Moorland Avenue to the north and the dwellings on Oak Mount Road to the west and south west. Furthermore, the application site is relatively well enclosed with substantial landscaping on the shared boundaries. The proposed development would only be readily visible from within the site itself. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and its overall size, scale, form and design would be appropriate and not harmful to the character and appearance of the building.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development would be in accordance with the development plan and there are no other material considerations which would indicate that planning permission should not be granted.

DESIGN

Use

The proposal concerns a residential institution use as defined by the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order.

Amount

The application proposes the installation of an external fire escape which result in a floor space increase of 4.9 sq metres.

Layout

The proposed fire escape would be located on the north western gable of the existing building.

Scale

The proposed development would provide emergency first floor access to the building in the event of a fire.

Landscaping

The application site is well landscaped on its boundaries. No additional landscaping is considered necessary.

Appearance

The application proposes the erection of an external fire escape whose form and materials are reflective of the nature of its intended use.

ACCESS

VEHICULAR AND TRANSPORT LINKS

The site is located within the settlement boundary of Werrington. The Local Plan notes that Werrington is the transition between the City and the countryside beyond Cellarhead. It recognises that the village includes many facilities including schools, shops, library and health services.

INCLUSIVE ACCESS

The proposed development makes provision for access by less abled people.