Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

FRESHWATER HOUSE, RUDYARD

SEPTEMBER 2018

Site Address:
Freshwater House, Macclesfield Road, Rudyard, Staffordshire, ST13 8PW

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. Daniels

Proposal:
Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 24th September 2018
Job Reference: RDP/2018/092

Report Prepared By:
Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
70 Ferndale Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7DL
Email: rob@robduncanplanning.co.uk
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Daniels to prepare a planning application for the demolition of the existing dwelling at Freshwater House, Macclesfield Road, Rudyard, and the erection of a replacement dwelling.

1.2 The application follows on from a previously refused scheme to extend and alter the existing dwelling on site by way of transforming it from a dormer bungalow to a two-storey dwelling (SMD/2017/0724). That application was refused on the grounds that the proposed extensions would subsume and obliterate the simple appearance of the existing dwelling, and would not be subordinate to the original building. Concerns were also raised about the contemporary design of a proposed front projecting gable.

1.3 Following receipt of that decision the applicants have given consideration to their options, and have decided to pursue an application for a replacement dwelling on the site. The proposed dwelling will occupy a footprint of 140.7m^2 with a total volume of 899m^3. The accommodation will comprise of a lounge, hallway, utility, bathroom, and open plan kitchen / diner at ground floor, with four bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor. The dwelling adopts a broadly symmetrical, twin gable style of design, with centrally positioned front entrance. The application also seeks to re-site the dwelling to the immediate northeast of the existing dwelling so that the front elevation faces directly towards the existing vehicular access.

1.4 Pre-application discussions have been entered into in respect of this proposal, where it was confirmed that the principle of erecting a replacement dwelling was acceptable. It was also confirmed that there wouldn't be any

issue with re-positioning the dwelling, and it was recommended that the dwelling should not be sited any closer to the road.

2 Site Location

2.1 The application site comprises an existing detached dormer bungalow style dwelling that is constructed from red facing brickwork with a tiled roof. It sits within a substantial area of domestic curtilage, with vehicular access taken from the southernmost corner of the site off the Macclesfield Road. A large outbuilding is located in the eastern corner of the site, with hardstanding in front of it. Open fields surround the site to its north, south and east, with residential development located to the southwest (Packsaddle) beyond the Macclesfield Road. The site as a whole lies within the rural area.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 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. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.1 Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that

accord with the policies in the Core Strategy will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole;*

- *or specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

3.2 Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. It goes on to state that essential local needs will be met by (amongst others)

- *Allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2*

3.3 Policy R2 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Housing' and states that other than sites allocated for housing development in the Site Allocations DPD, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the towns and villages:

- *Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H2.*

- *A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.*

- *Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.*

- *Extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.*

- *The conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use where*
    - *the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; and*
    - *it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable. In such cases there will be a requirement for a marketing exercise to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional or other evidence that the building would be unsuitable for a commercial use; or*
    - *conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded.*

3.2 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Design Considerations and states that new development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the

character of the area. Proposals should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

3.3 Policy DC3 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by (amongst others):

- *Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The recently revised National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting sustainable development and sets out policies in respect of various issues including securing high quality design and improving the conditions in which people live. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Staffordshire Moorlands Design SPD

4.2 This document sets out guidance aimed at securing good quality design, and confirms that the architectural style of new development should be guided through an assessment and understanding of the character and context of the area, going on to confirm that sites may be capable of accommodating both contemporary and traditional forms of development that are high quality and functional. The content of the SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling on the site and the erection of a replacement dwelling. The site lies within the rural area wherein policy SS6c of the Core Strategy allows for the erection of replacement buildings in accordance with the provisions of policy R2. Policy R2 identifies a number of types of residential development that will be permitted within the rural areas, and this list includes:

- *Proposals for replacement dwellings provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.*

5.2 The existing dormer bungalow is not a character property, and relates poorly to developments within the surrounding area. It has a very top-heavy appearance owing to its substantial roofslope and dominant dormer windows. Its design is typical of the 1970s and bears little resemblance to the traditional vernacular of the District, or the character of existing dwellings within the surrounding area. The demolition of this dwelling will therefore

not result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.

5.3 The majority of dwellings in the surrounding area are two-storey in nature, with less dominant roof slopes than that of the existing dwelling. Projecting gables are observable within the locality, with stone, red brick and grey tiles constituting the prevailing palette of materials. The existing dormer bungalow is very much at odds with this prevailing character and its removal to facilitate the proposed development will help to improve the character of the rural area.

5.4 The size of the proposed replacement dwelling is also considered to be acceptable. The existing dwelling occupies a footprint of 146.2m^2 and has a volume of 766m^3. It stands to a ridge height of 8.07 metres. The proposed replacement dwelling by comparison will occupy a footprint of 140.7m^2 and have a volume of 899m^3. This represents a reduction in footprint of some 4%, and an increase in volume of 16%. The ridge height of the replacement dwelling will be 8.14 metres and thus be broadly commensurate with the scale and height of the existing dormer bungalow (8.07 metres).

5.5 Taking these considerations into account it is submitted that the proposed replacement dwelling will not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling – indeed the removal of the existing non-conforming design and its replacement with an improved design will derive an enhancement to the area. The proposal will furthermore not result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area, and as a consequence the proposal is in accordance with the provisions of policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy.

Design & Layout

5.6 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy, along with paragraph 127 of the revised NPPF seek to secure high quality design that will add to the overall quality of an area, and which are visually attractive and are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The Local Authority's Design SPD assists in this respect, setting out guidelines for new development.

5.7 The existing dwelling on the site is considered to constitute a style of design that is out-of-keeping with the general area and wider Moorlands vernacular. Its top-heavy design, large dormer windows, and dominant roof are not consistent with the characteristics of the area, nor is the visually conspicuous front projecting conservatory. The Design SPD states that a new building should respect the scale of those surrounding it. In this case the proposed ridge height of 8.14 metres is not dissimilar to the ridge height of the existing dwelling (8.07 metres), but with resultant dwelling adopting a much more traditional, two-storey form, with two third elevation/one third roof ratio.

5.8 The twin gabled style of design takes its cues from developments in the surrounding area, including the farmhouse on the opposite side of the Macclesfield Road (Packsaddle), and the elevations encompass a reasonably high solid to void ratio, with a symmetrical pattern of fenestration, and provision of stone headers and quoins. The twin projecting gables are also subservient to the main ridgeline of the dwelling. The proposed dwelling will also be constructed from red facing brickwork with a grey tiled roof, thereby reflecting the palette of materials that currently exists on site. The proposed re-siting of the dwelling is not considered to raise any material issues, as it will achieve a better visual relationship with the highway compared to the existing dwelling, which presents its bland side elevation to the public view.

It will furthermore serve to maximise solar gain owing to its resultant south facing aspect – something which the Design SPD seeks to encourage.

5.9 The resultant dwelling will be much more in keeping with the character of the area and wider Moorlands vernacular than that of the existing dwelling, and in doing will derive an enhancement to the appearance of the area. The consequential removal of the poor quality front conservatory associated with the existing dwelling is a further beneficial enhancement. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, taking into account any local design standards or supplementary planning documents. In this case however the proposal will deliver a new dwelling on the site that is much more in keeping with the character of Moorlands vernacular, and is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy, and the provisions of the Design SPD and NPPF.

Impact on the Landscape

5.10 The site lies in an area of landscape designated as being a 'Small Scale Landscape' within the Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). Its key characteristics include a transitional landscape of rolling hills dissected by wooded small scale valleys, small to medium scale hedged field pattern, with hedgerow trees, and some drystone walls, and dispersed isolated settlements with red brick and stone buildings (amongst others). The suburbanisation of isolated dwellings is noted as a weakness of this landscape character area, with the LCA identifying a series of guidelines to help safeguard the landscape. These include a recommendation that:

> *"The grouping and form of new buildings should reflect the juxtaposition, scale, form, enclosure and materials of traditional*

brick and sandstone old farm buildings and Victorian villas characteristic of this area".

5.11 The submitted proposal responds positively to this guidance, incorporating a two storey design that is more in keeping with the character and appearance of the landscape compared to the somewhat uninspiring 1970s dormer bungalow with projecting front conservatory extension that currently exists. The site furthermore benefits from a good degree of enclosure by existing vegetation, and is set in a part of the landscape which rises up to the east, providing a sloping backdrop to the existing building when viewed from the Macclesfield Road.

5.12 On approach along the Macclesfield Road from the south, the existing vegetation along the eastern verge of the highway, coupled with the vegetation along the southern boundary of the site, provides a good screen to the site such that it precludes longer distance views of the dwelling. A similar effect arises on approach from the northwest along the Macclesfield Road where existing roadside vegetation, and trees to the rear of the property along the northern boundary, provide a similarly effective filtering and screening effect. As a consequence, the dwelling only becomes noticeable once close to the site.

5.13 The re-siting of the proposed dwelling will nevertheless serve to improve the inter-relationship between the built development and public views from the adjacent highway, with the new dwelling presenting its principal elevation to the road. By contrast the existing dwelling presents its side gable to public views and has a poor visual relationship with it. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policy DC3 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

Other Considerations

5.14 The proposed development does not raise any issues in respect of harm to neighbouring amenity as the nearest neighbour (Packsaddle) lies some 59m to the southwest of the site, and there is considerable intervening vegetation between the two. The proposed development therefore accords with the relevant provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is considered that the proposed development constitutes a sustainable form of development that accords with the Development Plan having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The proposed development will derive beneficial enhancements to the character of the area by demolishing the existing poor quality dwelling and replacing it with a dwelling of more traditional form and appearance;*

- *The proposed dwelling is of a scale, massing and design which is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area;*

- *The proposed development will not result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area;*

- *The proposed development will not give rise to adverse impacts to the landscape character of the area;*

- *The proposed development will not give rise to any harm to neighbouring residential amenity.*

6.2 It is therefore considered that the proposed development accords with the provisions of policies SS6c, R2, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Design SPD.

6.3 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in policy SS1a of the Core Strategy.