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Design and Access Statement

Detailed planning application for a side extension to Hillswood Lodge Nursing Home, The Close, Endon, Staffordshire. ST9 9JH

The Purpose of a Design & Access Statement

In August 2006, the Government introduced changes to the planning application process. One of these was the need to provide a Design and Access Statement (DAS) for all planning applications other than those for householder developments.

Site Location

The application site is within the development boundary of Endon and lies on the north-west side of the main road, A53 (Leek Road). It comprises a large detached two-storey nursing home with grounds and parking, at the end of a small private cul-de-sac ("The Close") off Leek Road. The cul-de-sac provides two accesses into the property, with the main one being half-way down the road. There are detached dwellings to the other side of The Close and to the south-east side (The Old Vicarage and The Estate Office). The north-west and north-east boundaries of the site adjoin the rear boundaries of residential properties on Hillside Avenue.

The nursing home building has cream-colour rendered walls and dark grey tiles. It has an early 20th-Centurey style and characterised by hipped roofs, dormer and gable ends although there is also a recently built front-side two-storey extension with large front gable end. There is also a smaller detached annex-type building ("The Cottage") close to the north-east boundary with similar materials and a front gable end. There are car parking spaces to the front and rear of the building. The site is on land which slopes downwards towards the main road to the south-east.

Large boundary trees are a feature of the site and lie mainly close to the south-west side, north-east side and rear (north-west) boundaries of the site. There is also one large tree protected by a Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) close to the north-east side boundary of the site, which has its trunk within the rear garden of a dwelling in Hillside Avenue.

The home is in a rural village location with easy access to local facilities and services including.

- Bus stop 250 m;
- shop 250 m;
- GP 250 m;
- social centre 250m.

The site consists of two separate buildings, the extended nursing home and a detached two storey building. The latter would be demolished, and that part of the site redeveloped to provide a two storey extension for 8 additional care beds.

The application site is located within the Endon Village Development Boundary where there is a presumption in favour of development subject to all other material planning considerations being satisfied.

Site History

Hillswood Lodge has been extended previously and 3 planning permissions exist, granted in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

In 2017 a planning application for an extension was withdrawn. A further application was submitted under SMD/2018/0082, which was refused planning permission at committee on 30th August 2018. That application was refused consent for the following reason.

" 1. The proposed care home extension, by virtue of a combination of its height, two storey form, excessive width and siting close to the rear boundaries of properties on Hillside Avenue, would lead to a visually intrusive and overbearing form of development when viewed from the rear windows and rear garden of No.3 Hillside Avenue, significantly harming the residential amenities of the occupants thereof. The benefits of the scheme in providing additional care home accommodation in a sustainable location are outweighed by the adverse impact on the existing residential amenities of the area identified. The proposal is contrary to policies H1 and DC1 of both the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2014) and the emerging Local Plan (Submission Version - February 2018) and is also therefore not in line with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 'Achieving Well Designed Places'."

The planning application the subject of this Statement addresses the concerns raised in connection with that application and responds to neighbours' concerns.

Description of Development

The extension proposed will provide additional care beds for those in need of full time residential care. 10 new bedrooms, 2 assisted bathrooms and a pair of resident's lounges are proposed within a two storey extension. The extension would result in a loss of one bedroom within the existing building, which has to be removed to allow a link into the extension.

The extension would join the eastern elevation of the existing care home and then project at an angle to the south east. Part of this area is presently occupied by a two storey outbuilding which would be demolished.

The extension would be at a much lower level than the existing care home which is a deliberate design to reduce the potential impact on the neighbours adjoining the site. The flat roof of the extension would be lower than the eaves level of the existing care home.

The extension would have a section of pitched roof incorporating eaves level dormer features in the west elevation. These will create both a pleasing appearance and break up the bulk of the front elevation. The rear (eastern) elevation will lie 3 metres from the site boundary which forms the rear garden boundaries of houses to the north east. There are no first-floor windows proposed in the east elevation in order to prevent loss of privacy. The corridor in the rear elevation of the upper floor will receive daylight through rooflights.

The southern end of the building will have a hipped roof in order to reduce the bulk of the building and increase separation and the apparent mass in views from The Estate Office.

Comparison with previously refused plans

The plans refused under SMD/2018/0082 have been substantially revised in order top overcome the reason for refusal. The previous refusal relates solely to the impact on the residential amenities of No.3 Hillside Avenue in terms of their garden and rear

windows. The reason for refusal refers specifically to the height, two storey form, excessive width and siting of the extension close to the rear boundaries of properties on Hillside Avenue.

The difference between the refused plans and the current application are detailed below.

- Addition of flat roof over a substantial proportion of the extension to reduce its height to 5.05m above the site level.
- Revised siting of the rear wall of the extension to position it 3 metres from the boundary with Hillside Avenue properties.
- Planting of a beech hedge within the site to the boundary with Hillside Avenue properties.
- Reduction in the depth of the extension.

Protected trees

There is a tree subject to Tree Preservation Order close to the proposed extension. These lie within the rear garden of a house on Hillside Avenue and overhangs the site. The extension would lie more than 3 metres from the trunks of the trees, but no works to these are proposed or necessitated by the extension.

The extension would be constructed using established specialist building techniques and procedures as shown on the submitted plans. These will ensure that the protected tree will not be significantly affected by the construction of the proposed extension, and the tree's long term health and longevity will be protected.

The previous planning application under SMD/2018/0082 investigated this matter at length and no issues have changed in this regard since that time. There was extensive assessment of the tree and it's roots system by the applicant's specialists and the Council's Arboricultural officer in order to assess whether the health or longevity of the protected trees would be harmed by the proposed construction works or by the extension. This matter was also subject to intense interest by residents in Hillside Avenue.

It was determined that there is NO evidence of the roots of the protected tree (in the garden of No.3 Hillside Avenue) in the area where the proposed foundations of the extension are to be built and therefore the proposal would not cause significant harm to the tree. The previous investigations conclude that the root protection area (RPA) of the tree is a rectangle, rather than a circle which is normally the case.

Tree protection measures to protect the trees during the construction period, can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition.

Access and Parking

The site already has an established access onto The Close that will remain unaltered and utilised as part of this proposal. There is a large open car parking area which will be partly occupied by the extension. Nevertheless, there will remain ample parking available on the site for the needs of the extending care home.

The Council currently does not have any adopted parking standards. Although the number of parking spaces would not increase as part of this scheme (there are fourteen), it is not anticipated that the slight rise in staff numbers and the increase in care home bedrooms would lead to significant parking problems as if all the parking spaces were taken at any one time, there is sufficient space to park on The Close (wide enough for two vehicles to park)

No objections were raised by the Highways Officer in respect of the refused planning application 2018/0082, and the same considerations apply equally well to the current plans.

Conclusion

The extension will complement the form and appearance of the existing property and consequently it is considered that the extension will visually complement the existing building and its surroundings. The flat roof of the bulk of the extension will be disguised by the section of pitched roof on the front elevation.

Whilst the proposed extension is larger in terms of footprint than the existing outbuilding that is to be demolished, it is still proportionate to the main building. This has been achieved through design features in the front elevation and significantly reducing the floor level compared to the existing care home.

The proposal will not have a harmful impact on the character and appearance on Hillswood Lodge. The tree protection measures detailed will ensure the retention of protected trees near the extension.