Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND AT 197 HIGH LANE
BROWN EDGE

MARCH 2019

Site Address:
Land at 197 High Lane, Brown Edge, ST6 8QA

Applicant:
AMACOR Capital Limited

Proposal:
Erection of 9no. Dwellings (Outline)

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 1st March 2019
Job Reference: RDP/2019/022

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by AMACOR Capital Limited to prepare a planning application for the erection of 9no. dwellings on land at 197 High Lane, Brown Edge.

1.2 The application is submitted in outline and seeks approval of matters of layout and means of access at this outline stage. Matters of scale, appearance and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval.

1.3 The submitted layout plan shows the demolition of the existing former newsagents at the site frontage (no.197) and the creation of an access drive leading down the western side of the adjacent supermarket to an existing area of hardstanding that has previously been used as parking associated with the supermarket. The land however is now in separate ownership.

1.4 It is proposed to erect nine dwellings on the site, arranged as a terrace of three dwellings and pair of semi-detached dwellings running north/south, and a row of three terraced properties running east/west. A detached dwelling is also proposed towards the southern end of the site, set back from the frontage with High Lane. Each dwelling will be provided with a minimum of two off-road parking spaces, and all will be accessed via the proposed vehicular access off High Lane.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Brown Edge, and comprises a parcel of previously developed land that is currently laid to hardstanding and which has been used as car parking associated with the nearby supermarket. The parcel of land however is now in separate ownership to the supermarket and its availability to be used for parking associated with the supermarket could be removed at any time. The site is enclosed along its western boundary by semi-mature vegetation, with public open space located beyond that. The northern boundary is also enclosed by semi-mature vegetation and has residential development located beyond. Residential development also encloses the eastern part of the site, with Keith's Supermarket enclosing the southern boundary. At the site frontage with High Lane lies a former newsagents which has recently closed. Its facilities have since been transferred into the supermarket, leaving a redundant building. The site as a whole occupiers a sustainable location, centrally located within the village close to existing services, facilities and public transport connections. The site is not within a Conservation Area, nor does it have any formal policy designation.

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 Stafford Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (2014) of which the following policies are of relevance:

3.2 **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.*

3.3 **Policy SS2** of the Core Strategy states that provision will be made for 6000 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed in Staffordshire Moorlands (excluding the Peak District National Park) during the period 2006 to 2026.

3.4 **Policy SS3** of the Core Strategy states that development will be located in accordance with the Spatial Strategy and will be distributed between the towns and rural areas. It identifies that some 28% of the total residential provision (equivalent to 1,680 dwellings) to be accommodated within the rural areas.

3.5 **Policy SS6A** of the Core Strategy confirms that the larger villages (of which Brown Edge is one) shall retain and enhance their role as rural service centres, providing for the bulk of the local housing needs of the rural areas. The policy goes on to state that their role as rural service centres will be enhanced by protecting services and facilities which are essential to sustain rural living, and that local housing needs will be met by increasing the range of available and affordable housing types and allocating a range of deliverable housing types primarily within the urban area in location across the village with good accessibility to local services and facilities.

3.6 **Policy H1** of the Core Strategy states that housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in policy H2, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies in SS5 and SS6. All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified local housing market needs and the strategy for the area having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the

economics of provision. All housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area. This will generally be within the range of 40 dwellings per hectare or more in or on the edge of town centres , 30 – 40 dwellings per hectare in other urban areas and villages and 20 – 30 dwellings per hectare in remoter rural areas. All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing occupiers.

3.7 **Policy C1** of the Core Strategy states that the District Council will resist proposals involving the loss of community facilities unless:

i. *an alternative facility of the same type is available or can be provided in an accessible location in the same locality; or*

ii. *a viability appraisal including a marketing exercise by a qualified professional demonstrates that there are no options for continued use Staffordshire Moorlands as a community facility which are financially viable and it can be demonstrated that loss of the facility would not disadvantage local residents.*

3.8 **Policy SD1** of the Core Strategy states that the Council will give encouragement to development on previously developed land in sustainable locations in allocating land for development and determining planning applications, except where:

- *a previously developed site performs poorly in sustainability terms and could not be made otherwise acceptable;*

- *development upon a previously developed site would cause harm to some asset of acknowledged importance or if it would create an unacceptable flood risk*

3.9 **Policy DC1** of the Core Strategy 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. Development should also protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

3.10 **Policy NE1** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states that development should ensure that it produces a net gain in biodiversity, and ensure that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for. Proposals should also protect and enhance habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

3.11 **Policy T1** of the Core Strategy states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and helps deliver the priorities of the Staffordshire Local Transport Plans, where this is consistent with other policies. This will be achieved by:

- *Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.*

- *Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.*

- *Referring to appropriate parking standards as laid out in national guidance, or any parking standards that may be produced locally.*

- *Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes.*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, the so-called 'tilted balance', and also sets out guidance, *inter alia*, in respect of securing high quality design and assessing transport impacts. The content of the National Planning Policy Framework has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application, and is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

Staffordshire Moorlands Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2018)

4.2 This document sets out the Local Authority's performance in respect of housing land supply and housing delivery. It confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing land equivalent to 1.8 years supply. The content of this document is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

SMDC Local Plan Submission Version

4.3 The emerging Local Plan is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Policy SS8 of the emerging Plan reflects the provisions of policy SS6a of the adopted Core Strategy confirming Brown Edge as a larger village, and stating that they shall provide for the bulk of the housing requirement for the rural areas. The policy also states that development of housing on windfall sites within such settlements will be supported subject to wider Local Plan policies. Policy H1 of the emerging Plan furthermore confirms that windfall housing development on sites not allocated for development will be supported within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Brown Edge which is defined as a 'larger village' within the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan Submission Version. Both the Core Strategy an the emerging Local Plan confirm that within the larger villages new windfall housing development will be supported, and given the sustainable location of the site in close proximity to existing services, facilities and public transport connections, it is submitted that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and fully accords with the adopted development strategy for the District.

Layout

5.2 The pattern of development observable within the surrounding area, generally encompasses linear development fronting towards the respective highways, with infill development set behind; the existing dwellings on Poolfields Court to the southeast, Sandy Cove and Sandleigh to the east, and Brookside to the north being some immediate examples of development undertaken to the rear of frontage development. There is a wide variety of development types, including a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties observable; the latter being more prevalent along High Lane and Breach Road.

5.3 The submitted proposal responds positively to the surrounding context by proposing a linear pattern of development in the form of a terrace of three dwellings and pair of semi-detached dwellings aligned in a north/south direction within the site, and a further terrace running east/west as the side widens out to the rear of the supermarket. A separate detached dwelling is also proposed on Plot 1, which will provide some visual interest on turning

into the site, with the vehicular access then dropping down to the new properties towards the rear.

5.4 The dwellings will each benefit from an area of private amenity space that exceeds the minimum required standard of 65m^2, and the proposed layout will not derive any conflicts with the Local Authority's informal interface distances. As a consequence future occupiers will be afforded an acceptable level of residential amenity that meets the Local Authority's standards. Each dwelling will also be provided with a minimum of two off-road parking spaces for use by future occupants, and consequently will not give rise to any demand for on-street parking from the new development.

5.5 Ample opportunity also exists within the site to accommodate tree and shrub planting to help assimilate the development into its surroundings, and to boost local biodiversity. The proposed layout of the development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policies DC1 and H1 of the Core Strategy.

Means of Access

5.6 Vehicular access to the site is to be taken via a newly constructed access which will run alongside the existing supermarket building. The existing newsagents building will be demolished to facilitate this. The site entrance is located as close to the eastern boundary as possible in order to ensure that any cars exiting the site are able to do so without compromising the use of the adjacent pedestrian crossing. The existing safety railings located in front of the newsagents will also require removal, but given the proposed demolition of the newsagents this is not considered to be a detrimental impact.

5.7 Visibility on egress from the site will be good in both directions, and will also afford views of any oncoming traffic from Cross Edge. As a consequence, users of the access will have good visibility all round, and thus will be able to execute safe manoeuvres on egress from the site. The proposed access road will also be 4.5 metres in width, thereby enabling two vehicles to pass one another.

5.8 In terms of parking provision, each of the proposed dwellings will benefit from a minimum of two off-street parking spaces to meet the needs of future occupiers, and this is considered to constitute an appropriate level of provision having regard to the likely nature of the dwellings and the sustainable location of the site. Manouvering space is also accommodated within the layout in order to ensure that occupiers are able to exit the site in a forward gear. In doing so, the proposed means of access will avoid any adverse impacts to highway safety, and will therefore accord with the provisions of policy T1 of the Core Strategy and paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF in this regard.

5.9 It is acknowledged that the proposed development may derive some concerns from local residents about a loss of parking provision that has previously been available to serve the existing supermarket. It is important to note however that this parcel of land is now under separate ownership and is no longer under the control of the supermarket. It is due to be segregated off from the car park in the near future. Consequently, its availability for parking is soon to be removed. The supermarket will, in any event, retain a large area of car parking to meet its requirements, particularly having regard to modern operator requirements and the sustainable location of the of the supermarket within the centre of the village.

Loss of Community Facility

5.10 The submitted proposal will involve the demolition of the former newsagents building located at the frontage of the site with High Lane. Policy C1 of the Core Strategy states that the District Council will resist proposals involving the loss of community facilities unless an alternative facility of the same type is available or can be provided in an accessible location in the same locality.

5.11 In this particular case the facilities provided by the newsagents have recently been transferred into the adjacent supermarket, and consequently an alternative facility is already available. The loss of the existing newsagents building will therefore not disadvantage local residents, and the proposal is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policy C1 of the Core Strategy.

Ecology

5.12 Owing to the proposed demolition of the existing newsagents building, the applicant has commissioned a bat and bird survey to accompany the application. The survey concludes that there is no evidence of bat using the building as a place of shelter, nor any evidence of birds nesting in the building. No roosting opportunities were identified either, and consequently the survey concludes that the demolition of the existing building will have no impact on bats.

5.13 The survey nevertheless recommends that a brick built bat box be incorporated into the new build in the interests of enhancing roosting opportunities within the locality. The applicant is agreeable to these enhancement measures, which can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition, and in doing so the development will secure a net gain in biodiversity, in accordance with the objections of policy NE1 of the Core Strategy, and paragraph 175 of the NPPF.

Planning Balance

5.14 The titled balance in favour of approval, as set out in paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework is engaged by this proposal, owing to the Local Authority's inability to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing. The Local Authority's Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2018) confirms that only a 1.8 year deliverable supply of housing exists, and this represents a chronic shortfall in housing land against the requirements set out within the NPPF. In such circumstances paragraph 11 of the NPPF (and policy SS1a of the Core Strategy) dictates that planning permission should be granted unless:

> *"any adverse impacts of doing so would **significantly and demonstrably** outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole" (my emphasis)*

5.15 The submitted proposal will derive a number of benefits, including significant social and economic benefits associated with the creation of nine dwellings to help meet the chronic shortfall in housing land. Further economic benefits will also ensue as a consequent of generating work for local tradespeople during the construction phase, and through the expenditure associated with the creation of nine additional households.

5.16 Social benefits will also accrue as a consequence of the type of dwellings being proposed. The Brown Edge Village Survey published in October 2014 identified a strong demand for starter homes within the village, as well as for family homes and bungalows. Those findings are reflected within the more recently commissioned Housing Needs Analysis for Brown Edge (February 2018) prepared on behalf of the Parish Council by AECOM as a background document to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, which identifies an imbalance in favour of larger homes within the village.

5.17 Whilst matters of appearance are reserved for subsequent approval, the layout of the site shows that the proposed dwellings are, in the majority, small in nature, with modest floor areas, and thus will assist in delivering smaller units to help address the imbalance towards larger homes that has been identified. Such social benefits are considered to carry moderate weight in favour of the proposed development.

5.18 Significant environmental benefits will also arise as a consequence of delivering nine new dwellings on a previously developed site, in accordance with the objectives of policy SD1 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 118 of the NPPF. The site is also occupies a sustainable location, so future occupants of the dwellings will have a viable and realistic choice in their means of transportation, in accordance with the objectives of policy T1 of the Core Strategy, and paragraph 103 of the NPPF.

5.19 These collective benefits are not considered to be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by any adverse impacts of the development, and consequently it is submitted that planning permission should be granted in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development that is acceptable in planning terms having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The site lies within the defined settlement boundary of a larger village, and accords with the adopted (and emerging) development strategy for the District;*

- *The site occupies a sustainable location, central to the village, and is within easy walking distance of local services, facilities and public transport connections;*

- *The development involves the reuse of a previously-developed site, which is explicitly encouraged by the adopted Core Strategy and the NPPF;*

- *The proposed layout is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and will not derive any adverse impacts in respect of residential amenity;*

- *The proposed means of access will afford good visibility on egress and will enable vehicles to safely pass one another;*

- *The application proposes an appropriate level of parking provision for each dwelling along with associated manouvering space;*

- *The loss of the former newsagents buildings will not disadvantage local residents, as alternative facilities are accommodated within the adjacent supermarket;*

- *The proposed development will not give rise to any harm to protected species;*

- *The so-called 'tilted balance' is engaged as a consequence of the Local Authority's inability to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing;*

- *The development will deliver a number of material benefits which are not considered to be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by any adverse impacts;*

6.2 For these reasons the proposed development accords with the provisions of policies SS2, SS3, SS6A, SD1, C1, DC1, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the adopted Design Guide SPD.

6.3 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant outline planning permission for the proposed development.