SAMMONS Architectural LIMITED

Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists

10 Cawdry Buildings
Fountain Street
Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6JP
Tel / fax 01538 386002
e-mail info@sammonsltd.co.uk

PLANNING, HERITAGE STATEMENT INCORPORATING DESIGN & ACCESS MATTERS



PROPOSAL : **ERECTION OF A SINGLE DWELLING AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING ACCESS.**

ADDRESS : **THE STONE HOUSE, MALTHOUSE ROAD, ALTON, ST10 4AG**

APPLICANT : **DR & MRS WEBSTER**

Registered in England No 3775545 V.A.T. Reg. No. 646 9246 05

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Dr & Mrs Webster to prepare and submit a planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the erection of a single dwelling and a new vehicular access. The development site forms part of the extended garden of the property. The site is partially located within the Alton Development Boundary and partially within the open countryside. The proposed building is entirely within the development boundary. Its rear garden is outside the development boundary, but importantly that part of the application site is already a garden to The Stone House.

2.0 USE

The application proposes the erection of a single one and half storey dwelling on garden land to the side of the main dwelling. The proposal aims to use the existing access on to Malthouse Road with improvements.

3.0 AMOUNT

The proposal is for one dwelling.

4.0 LAYOUT

The proposed dwelling will be set back from the front of the site, facing Malthouse Road in character with other neighbouring dwellings.

5.0 SCALE

The proposed dwelling will be of one and a half storeys with a footprint of 240sq.m.

6.0 LANDSCAPING

There is a good level of landscaping around the site. Where necessary this will be augmented. Then proposal clearly includes gardens which will be landscaped.

7.0 APPEARANCE

The proposed development will be in a traditional form and style that will compliment the host property and surrounding area.

8.0 ACCESS

The proposal will use the existing access that is already situated on Malthouse Road, although this will be need to be improved in order to make it acceptable to serve a dwelling.

9.0 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
SS6a Larger Villages Area Strategy
SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 Rural Diversification
R2 Rural Housing
H1 New Housing Development

National Planning Policy Framework

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. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Core Strategy. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

Paragraphs 1 – 14.
Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places
Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

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 47).
- 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 10).
- The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future (para 80)
- The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (para 8)
- Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be

considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites (para 18).

- To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities (para 78)
- To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities (para 59)
- The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (para 124)
- In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation (para 189)
- Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (para 192)

10.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

The application is supported by a Heritage Statement carried out by Melanie Morris Dip. Arch. Cons, IHBC, MRTPI. The main points made and its conclusions are: -

1. Historically, the application site was not part of the curtilage of The Stone House, nor was it a garden. It was a separate plot of land used as an allotment and orchard and contained ponds, and was purchased by the applicant's father in the 1940s.
2. The character of Malthouse Road is one of continuous infill development. The early 17th Century buildings are located at the front of their plots. The 20th Century infill developments are set back, leaving the early buildings to retain their prominence in the street scene. They also close off views of the landscape behind.
3. The alignment of Malthouse Road gives a long view of Alton Castle.
4. Stone House is a Grade II Listed Building. Its origins are mid-17th Century, remodelled in the 1820s when it was also doubled in size.
5. Historically, Stone House was never intended to have an outlook towards the application site.
6. The application site makes no specific contribution to the significance of The Stone House- it remains detached both visually and functionally, with a separate access from Malthouse Road.
7. The house is appreciated from the north-east end of Malthouse Road, where it is a focal point of the view. However, the application site makes no specific contribution to this view.
8. The site makes no contribution to understanding the significance of The Stone House as a domestic building- it merely provides a gap across which we can see the rear wing of the listed building. Provided that this gap is maintained and that we can still see and appreciate the listed building from Malthouse Road, then it is considered that the proposed development will not affect our ability to appreciate the listed building, will preserve its setting and will not cause any harm.

11.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

This revised application proposes a single dwelling on land to the side of The Stone House. The previous application was refused for reasons including harm to the character of the area and the

setting of the Listed Building, concerns about newts on the land and concerns about highway visibility at the proposed access.

The proposal has been driven by the Heritage Report that supports the application. In addition, the application is supported by a Newt Report, an Arboricultural Report and changes to the proposed access.

Alton Village is recognised in the Local Plan as a Larger Village. As such, it is stated that the village will be the rural centre for services, facilities and jobs acting to sustain the rural areas. It contains most of the services and facilities to bring sustainability to the area. Consequently, the Local Plan encourages appropriate growth in the village to support the vitality of the village services. The proposed dwelling is located in the Development Boundary of Alton Village. The rear garden to the proposal is outside the Development Boundary, but is already a garden to The Stone House. In this respect the proposal does not involve a change of use of the land nor does it involve a change of character.

Local Plan policy and the Planning Framework support sustainable development. The proposal represents a new dwelling in the development boundary of a village that has been identified as a sustainable settlement. The village contains educational and medical services, it has shops and banks and it has a wealth of job opportunities, especially when the Alton towers site is taken into account. The application site is 127m away from the junction of Malthouse Road and Alton High Street. The principle of the development is supported by planning policy.

In terms of the heritage assets that are The Stone House and the Alton Conservation Area, whilst the application site is currently part of the garden of The Stone House, it has only been so since the 1940s. Prior to that it had been a separate piece of land that had neither a garden use nor an agricultural use. Whilst the application site might form part of the context of the listed building, it had a separate function and use and benefitted from its own separate access. It is separated from the Listed Building by a low stone wall, lining the dwelling's access drive, and enclosing the brick gig-house. The Heritage Statement concludes that it makes "no specific contribution to the significance of the listed building; it makes no contribution to understanding its significance as a domestic building; it makes no contribution to understanding its design, plan form, architectural or historic interest as a 17thcentury house, or to understanding its evolution and growth during the 1820s or its later Victorian development; it has no designed relationship with the listed building, in the way that the building was arranged or its outlook; the garden design, the courtyard arrangement, the terraces retaining walls, and herbaceous borders, mature trees and hedges are all unaffected by the proposed development". For all of these reasons, this Statement considers that the site does not make a specific, positive contribution to the significance of the listed building.

From Malthouse Road the site provides "a gap across which we can see the rear wing of the listed building, and we can appreciate it in the round. Provided that this gap is maintained and that we can still see and appreciate the listed building from Malthouse Road". The Statement considers that "the proposed development will not affect our ability to appreciate the listed building, will preserve its setting and will not cause any harm". Furthermore, it states that "as proposed, the new dwelling is set back from Malthouse Road and will not be read in conjunction with The Stone House in views from along Malthouse Road. The identity of The Stone House as a 17th century stone-built dwelling, roughly contemporary with the other stone-built 17th century houses on Malthouse Road, will be preserved".

In terms of impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, the Statement concludes that an "assessment of the character of Malthouse Road concludes that the views along Malthouse Road are contained by developments along the edge of the street and by boundary walls

and there are no outward views across the landscape, with one notable exception to Alton Castle. The proposed development does not affect these views".

There are a number of individual stone buildings which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. Along Malthouse Road, these are "distinguished by their unusual orientation or large blocky masonry, by being located along the edge of the road and by the evidence of quarried-out outcrops. The interlacing of the pattern of new and old development, with spaces and gaps interwoven with the early buildings and enclosure are what characterises this part of the conservation area". Whilst it is considered that this character has been diluted by a large variety of building materials and forms and a high proportion of post 1900 houses, this does not mean that this sets a precedent for further inappropriate development. However, "provided that the interwoven spaces and the identity of the individual stone buildings and enclosed frontages are preserved then there is no reason why the proposed development will not preserve the character of the Conservation Area". Given that the proposed dwelling is setback a considerable distance behind the existing front stone boundary wall, with a large front garden and open space to Malthouse Road, the proposed development preserves the staggered building lines and will preserve the character of Malthouse Road. The Statement, therefore, concludes that the proposed development has no impact on the significance, character or appearance of Malthouse Road and the Alton Conservation Area.

The proposed design is considered to respect the character of the Alton Conservation Area. It proposes a one and a half storey building. It will have stone walls with a tiled roof enclosed by strong parapets. It is modest in scale and represents a contemporary approach to an historic format. The proposed dwelling sits alongside the neighbouring dwelling, avoiding any overshadowing or loss of view.

There is a single ornamental pond on the application site. The Newt Report states that pre-survey data shows no records of greater crested newts within a 1-2km radius of the proposed development site. It states that the site itself provides suitable habitat for Great Crested Newts. However, the results from the DNA test provide a negative result and confirms that Great Crested Newts are absent from the pond. There would therefore be a low possibility that they are present, and no impact is envisaged.

The proposed access is of a different nature to the refused application. The access is no longer a road serving a number of dwellings- it is a drive serving one dwelling. It again uses the existing vehicular access with minor improvements. This change is sufficient to overcome the highway objection.

12.0 CONCLUSION

The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

The application accords with policies in the Development Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. At the heart of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Alton village is a sustainable village providing a good level of facilities and services for the village and the rural area beyond. The application site is little more than 100m from the centre of the village. The proposal therefore represents sustainable development. As such,

it is supported by planning policy and this Statement requests the Council to support this planning application for a high quality residential development and grant planning permission accordingly.