DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2019/0186 **Valid 22/03/2019**	**FIR GROVE FIR BOB HOLLINGTON**	**PROPOSED EXTENSION TO ENLARGE BEDROOM AND PROVIDE EN-SUITE FACILITIES. ALSO REPLACE EXISTING FLAT ROOF DORMERS WITH PITCHED ROOFS** **(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Design & Landscape Character
- Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises a parcel of land approximately 50m to the west of Fir Bob Lane, Hollington. Fir Bob Lane runs northwards from Main Road, which serves Hollington village and is also a public right of way. The site is situated outside of the development boundary in the open countryside.

The site itself is accessed via a narrow private single track and contains 'Fir Grove', a three bedroom two storey semi-detached property with its associated residential curtilage. The curtilage is made up of an area of ground to the east, utilised for vehicle parking and turning, and a garden area to the south. The rear (southern) elevation is characterised by an unsympathetic flat roof single storey extension which was added following the granting of planning permission in 1983 and dormer windows in the main house at first floor eaves level. The extension is constructed in stone work with the rear elevation being finished in a light brown render.

The dwelling has a relatively square form. The main part of the house comprises a ground floor Sitting Room and Kitchen, with the rear extension accommodating a Dining Area and separate Utility Room. The first floor comprises a large bedroom to the front, two equally sized smaller bedrooms to the rear, and a shared bathroom.

The existing dwelling is odd in the sense that it has no obvious principal elevation. The side (eastern) gable contains the main entrance to the house with a small roof canopy. The northern elevation contains a number of ground and first floor windows with no notable architectural features. As such, the eastern side elevation visible from the public right of way, is considered to comprise the principal elevation. This is

important with regards to how a proposal impacts on the character and appearance of the dwelling.

The existing dwelling is constructed from a lightly coloured stone. Although the rear extension is also constructed from stone with an element of peddledash render to the rear, there is a clear contrast to the main house.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for extensions and alterations to the existing dwelling. As shown on the submitted plans, there are two main aspects to the proposal; a two storey rear extension serving the Utility Room at ground floor level and an extension to an existing bedroom at first floor level; and secondly a two storey side extension which runs perpendicular to the rear extension which serves a ground floor Lobby and WC together with a first floor en-suite bathroom. A further minor element of the proposal is the replacement of existing flat roof dormers with pitched dormers on both the front and rear elevations.

Following comments made by the Case Officer, revised plans have been submitted (Ref: 19-571-02 Rev A) in an attempt to overcome the issues raised.

The two storey rear extension is shown on the submitted plans to have a pitched roof made up of Stafs Blue tiles, having a depth which is consistent with the existing rear extension, and spanning half of its width. This aspect of development would have a height to eaves level of 4m – consistent with the main dwelling – and an overall height of 5.7m, sitting some 700mm below the ridgeline of the main house. The rear extension would be served by a ground floor entrance door set slightly off centre, below a first floor bedroom window. The two storey rear extension is shown on the latest revised plans to have a rear elevation finished in a peddledash render with the side (western) elevation finished in stone.

The second element of development is the two storey side extension, which protrudes some 2.7m outwards from the proposed rear extension, and 2.6m beyond the existing side elevation, considered to read as the principal elevation. The side extension is shown on the latest revised plans to have a rear elevation finished in a peddledash render, with the eastern and northern elevations finished in a stone to match the existing house.

The side extension has a ridge line set down some 500mm below that of the rear extension, containing a ground floor window in the rear elevation and a small first floor window in the side elevation serving the en-suite bathroom. The northern elevation is shown to include a small window serving the WC and an entrance door to the Lobby.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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 local development plan for this site comprises the Saved Policies of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (1998); Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (adopted 26th March 2014) and any relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

The Staffordshire Moorlands Emerging Local Plan (Submission Version February 2018) has now been through an Examination by an Independent Planning Inspector and as such planning policies within it can be given appropriate weight, in line with paragraph 48 of the NPPF.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2019 sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. As stated in paragraph 2 of the NPPF, the document is a material consideration which must be taken into account in planning decisions.

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2014)

SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6 Rural Areas Strategy
SS6c Other Rural Areas Strategy
SD1 Sustainable Use of Materials
DC1 Design Considerations
R2 Rural Housing
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Emerging Staffs Moorlands Local Plan Submission Version (2018)

SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
SD1 Sustainable Use of Materials
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Achieving Sustainable Development	Chapter 2
Achieving Well Designed Places	Chapter 12

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1981/0521	Erection of detached dwelling (Permitted Development)
SMD/1983/0329	Replacement of existing extension with dining room and utility room (Approved)

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 2nd May 2019
Neighbour consultation period ends: 26th April 2019
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

No comments received

Town / Parish Comments

Checkley Parish Council – No comments received at time of writing

Severn Trent Water

No objections

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application seeks permission for extensions and alterations to an existing residential property which is located outside of the development boundary in the open countryside. As such, the application is subject to strategic policies SS6 and SS6c which specifically refer to development in the rural areas, and policy R2, which refers to rural housing development. The site is not constrained by any sensitive statutory designation.

In light of the above, the general principle of development (extensions and alterations to the dwellinghouse) is considered to be acceptable subject to all relevant material considerations.

Design & Landscape Character

Core Strategy (CS) Policy SS1 sets out a number of development principles which new development should adhere to in order to contribute positively to the social, economic, and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

CS Policy R2 refers specifically to rural housing and makes provision for extension to existing dwellings in the rural areas 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.

CS Policy DC1 sets out a list of design considerations that new development should incorporate into any new scheme. In particular new development 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.

The Staffs Moorlands 'Design Principles' SPD provides further useful guidance in relation to extending rural dwellings. In particular, the guidance states that extensions should be subordinate to the existing building so that the original building dominates.

The guidance also states that that it will not usually be acceptable to extend in front of, or along the building line, unless design benefits accrue and neighbours are not disadvantaged.

Paragraph 127 states that decisions should ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, and are sympathetic to local character and history.

The existing dwelling lies outside of the development boundary in the open countryside with views of the eastern elevation from the nearby public right of way on Fir Bob some 50m to the east.

It is undeniable that the existing dwelling has an unsympathetic character and appearance, due partly to the design and finish of the fenestration, and competing materials. The application therefore presents an opportunity to enhance the character and appearance of the building and the wider rural landscape.

As the eastern elevation is considered to represent the principal elevation to the dwelling, by virtue of its canopy entrance, it is considered that this represents 'the front building line' for the purposes of supplementary guidance. Development that competes with or worse still consumes a principal elevation has the potential to significantly harm the character and appearance of the dwelling and the wider area, to the extent where the original dwelling cannot be read in conjunction with the new additions.

The original plans submitted with this application raised a number of considerable design concerns. Firstly the side extension would dominate and consume what is considered to be the principal elevation, failing to read as a subordinate addition, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the building and wider rural landscape.

Secondly, the proposals show a conflicting roof scape and design which complicate and dilutes the strong character of the single prominent ridgeline of the main house.

Lastly, whilst it was acknowledged that there is an existing element of render at ground floor level in the existing rear extension, the use of peddledash render across the entirety of the southern elevation of both rear and side extensions were considered to impact negatively on the appearance of the existing dwelling.

The above was relayed to the applicant's agent. In line with the duty set out within paragraph 38 of the NPPF to proactively engage with applicants to find solutions and overcome outstanding planning issues, the applicant was advised that support could

be given to the two storey rear elevation, subject to minor changes to the choice of materials, but that the side extension would have to be removed for the reasons outlined in this report.

Revised plans have been submitted which show subtle changes to the design which include the inclusion of stone quoins and headers to windows. However, the fundamental design issues set out above have not been addressed.

After further consideration, the applicant was advised that a potential solution to address the above issues could be to re-design the scheme so that the side aspect be attached the existing side elevation. This would allow the extension to read as a side extension whilst maintaining the existing form of the dwelling, and would also break up the bulk and massing as shown on the current plans. However, an email received from the agent has confirmed that the applicant does not wish to pursue this option, and wishes for the application to be determined in its latest form.

As such, it is concluded that the proposal by virtue of its scale, layout, massing, and visual appearance, would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, and the wider rural landscape – given its prominence from the nearby public right of way to the east, contrary to Core Strategy Policies SS1, SS6, SS6c, R2 and DC1, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

Amenity

CS Policy DC1 states that new development should protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, and privacy. Paragraph 127 states that planning should create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of land and buildings.

The neighbouring properties that have any potential to be adversely affected by the proposed development are ‘Spring Cottage’, the other part of the pair of semi-detached dwellings to the west, and ‘The Firs’, the detached dwelling that sits to the east.

The proposed rear extension would not protrude any further outwards beyond the existing single storey extension and would not breach the 45 degree angle of either the neighbouring conservatory or the first floor window on the rear of ‘Spring Cottage’. Given its distance from the curtilage boundary, it is not considered that the rear (or indeed) side extension would result in any adverse impacts to the residential amenity of Spring Bank by way of overbearing or overshadowing impacts, any loss of sunlight, or loss of privacy.

The neighbouring property to the east ‘The Firs’ stands some 15m from the side elevation of Fir Grove. The sole window in the front elevation in the proposed side extension that faces this property is a first floor bathroom window, which could be obscure glazed by condition. Due to the distance between the properties, together with existing boundary treatment, it is not considered that any adverse impacts upon the residential amenity of The Firs would occur as a result of the proposed development.

Highway Safety

Policy T1 of the Core Strategy requires all new developments to be satisfactorily located where they can be absorbed within the existing highway network. Emerging Local Plan Policy T1 refers to emerging parking standards contained at Appendix 8.

Paragraph 108 of the NPPF requires all new developments to have safe and suitable access.

The proposal involves extensions which do not create any further bedrooms and therefore there is no requirement to provide any further parking provision. As such, there will not be any material impacts to the highway network or any impacts on highway safety as a result of this proposal, in line with Policy T1 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 108 of the NPPF.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Policy SS1a of the adopted core strategy reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or, where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless:

- the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

- 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.

The application seeks permission for extensions to an existing dwelling ‘Fir Grove’ which is situated outside the development boundary in the open countryside, some 50m west of Fir Bob, an access track which is also a public right of way.

An assessment of the original plans were considered to constitute an inappropriate, unacceptable and poor form of design that would compete with and consume what is considered to be the principal elevation of the property, thereby resulting in significant harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling, and wider rural landscape – given its prominence from the public right of way,

Revised plans were submitted which show subtle changes to the design, but have failed to address the fundamental issues raised by the Case Officer. In line with the requirements of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority did offer solution to the applicant which could overcome these concerns, However the applicant has on this occasion declined to take this advice.

As such, the application is considered, by virtue of its scale, layout, massing and visual appearance to comprise a poor form of design which fails to preserve the character of the rural landscape, contrary to Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, SS6c, R2 and DC1, and paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

Whilst there have not been found to be any adverse impacts regarding residential amenity or highway safety, this does not mitigate nor override the significant adverse impacts set out above. It is therefore concluded that the application constitutes an unsustainable form of development, and in line with Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy and paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the application is recommended for refusal for the reasons set out within this report.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

Case Officer: James Stannard
Recommendation Date: 12th June 2019

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council