Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

7 CONWAY GROVE, CHEADLE

JUNE 2019

Site Address:
7 Conway Grove, Cheadle, Staffordshire, ST10 1QG

Applicant:
Mr. P. Ashton

Proposal:
Erection of Detached Dwelling

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 19th June 2019
Job Reference: RDP/2019/046

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. P. Ashton to seek full planning permission for the erection of a detached bungalow on land to the rear of 7 Conway Grove, Cheadle.

1.2 The proposed dwelling will occupy a gross internal floor area of 61.2 square metres, and stand to a maximum ridge height of 4.95 metres. The accommodation will comprise of a lounge, kitchen, two bedrooms and bathroom, all served off a central entrance hallway. Access to the site is to be taken via the existing un-made track (Plantation Lane) which forms the southern boundary to the site, with off-street parking for two vehicles provided to meet the needs of future occupants.

1.3 The application follows on from recent applications at the following neighbouring properties, of which all have entailed the erection of new dwellings to the rear of their respective plots.

- SMD/2013/0313 – 3 Conway Grove
- SMD/2016/0671 – 9 Conway Grove
- SMD/2018/0140 – 11 Conway Grove

1.4 Two of these neighbouring applications (Nos. 3 and 9 Conway Grove) were refused by the Local Authority on the grounds of over-development and harm to the character and appearance of the area, but both were subsequently allowed at appeal. Those appeal decisions are material considerations in the determination of this current application, as is the more recent approval at no.11 Conway Grove.

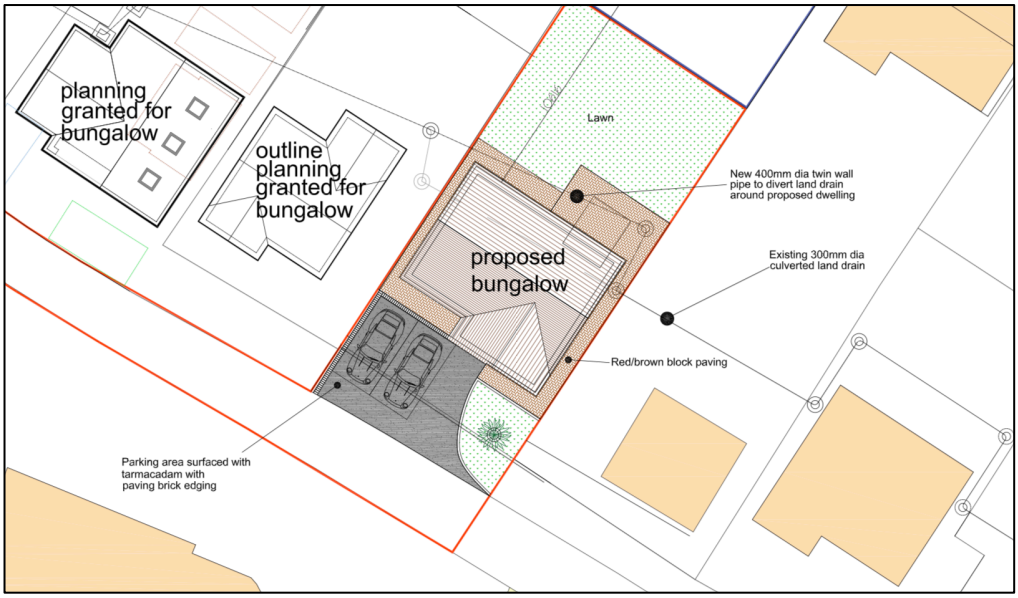
2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Cheadle and comprises a detached two storey dwelling set within a linear pattern of development that extends along Conway Grove. Conway Grove is a modest cul-de-sac of twenty properties that feeds off Manifold Drive.

2.2 The gardens of nos. 1-19 (odd) Conway Grove extend in a southerly direction and are bordered by an un-made track that connects with Eaves Lane to the west (Plantation Lane). To the immediate west of the site lies the rear curtilage of no.9 Conway Grove) where outline consent has been granted for the erection of a detached bungalow. To the east of the site lies the rear domestic curtilage of no.5 Conway Grove, which has a detached garage located at its southernmost end. Further to the east beyond no.5 Conway Grove is a detached dwelling constructed to the rear of no.3 Conway Grove.

2.3 These developments are shown on the proposed block plan, an extract of which is shown in Figure 1 overleaf. Dwellings on the southern side of Conway Grove are all two storey in nature, with the exception of the recently approved bungalows, as are the two dwellings located to the south of the site beyond Plantation Lane.

Figure 1 – Extract of Site Block Plan



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 22% of the total residential provision outlined in policy SS2 will be allocated within Cheadle (equivalent to 1,320 dwellings).

3.5 Policy SS5c of the Core Strategy states that the Council will expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and market town. The housing market will be expanded by increasing the range of available and affordable house types and higher market housing, especially for first time buyers and families. Sites within the urban area shall be in locations across the town which have good accessibility to services and facilities with encouragement given to previously developed sites.

3.6 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.

3.7 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, amongst others, 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.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting sustainable development and seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing nationally. It furthermore states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It 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 explored 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.

Appeal Decision APP/B3438/A/13/2203608

4.3 This appeal decision relates to the erection of a bungalow in the rear garden of no.3 Conway Grove to the south east of the application site. The content of this appeal and its relevance to the current proposal is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below and is considered to constitute a material consideration of significant weight. A copy of the appeal decision is enclosed as Appendix A.

Appeal Decision APP/B3438/W/17/3176024

4.4 This appeal decision relates to the erection of a bungalow in the rear garden of no.9 Conway Grove, immediately west of the application site. The content of this appeal and its relevance to the current proposal is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below and is considered to constitute a material consideration of significant weight. A copy of the appeal decision is enclosed as Appendix B.

Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

4.5 The new Local Plan which will eventually replace the adopted Core Strategy has recently been through its examination in public, and is due to be adopted towards the end of 2019. The following policies of the emerging plan are of relevance to the determination of this application, and can now be afforded weight in the determination process:

- Policy SS3 of the Local Plan confirms that provision will be made for at least 6080 additional dwellings during the period 2012 – 2031 – an annual average of 320 dwellings per annum;
- Policy SS4 of the Local Plan confirms that 25% of the required housing provision will be accommodated within Cheadle;
- Policy SS7 of the Local Plan confirms that the Council will seek to expand the housing market area of Cheadle by increasing the range of available and affordable house types including for first time buyers and families;
- Policy H1 of the Local Plan confirms that housing sites within the development boundaries of towns and larger villages will be permitted, subject to compliance with the spatial strategy and wider local plan policies. All new dwellings should aim to provide adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants, in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards, and must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers, whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 Policies SS2 and SS3 of the adopted Core Strategy set out the Council's preferences for the delivery of new housing and confirm that some 1,320 new dwellings will need to be built within Cheadle between 2006-2026. These provisions are expanded upon within policy SS5c of the Core Strategy, which confirms the intention to expand the role of Cheadle as a significant service centre and market town, achieved in part by expanding the housing market to increase the range of available and affordable house types. Policy SS5c goes on to state that sites within the urban area shall be in locations across the town which have good accessibility to services and facilities.

Policies SS3, SS4 and SS7 of the emerging Local Plan reflect these provisions, and also support the delivery of new housing on sites within Cheadle.

5.2 The application site lies within the defined settlement boundary of Cheadle, wherein development is to be targeted over the plan period, and furthermore lies within easy walking and cycling distance of local services and facilities. Regular public transport connections with the wider area are also available a short distance away on the Tean Road (approx. 300m). As a consequence the proposal fully accords with the provisions of policies SS2, SS3, and SS5c of the adopted Core Strategy, and policies SS3, SS4 and SS7 of the emerging Local Plan, and is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

5.3 The application site lies within an area that is characterised by residential development. Three applications have previously been lodged in the vicinity of this site proposing the erection of bungalows in the rear gardens of the existing properties in Conway Grove, with two refused by the Local Authority on the grounds of impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Both applications however were subsequently challenged at appeal, and both were successful.

5.4 In determining the appeal on the nearby site at 3 Conway Grove, the Planning Inspector noted the boundary treatments on the nearby properties and the presence of grass verges in front, which led him to conclude that:

> *"**These features give this part of the lane an unmistakable suburban character**, contrasting with the rural ambiance which comes into being as the lane continues beyond the site to cross open fields to the east". (my emphasis)*

5.5 Those conclusions were subsequently reinforced by the appeal decision at no.9 Conway Grove, where the Planning Inspector commented that:

> *"Whilst Plantation Drive is a narrow lane, the views along it close to the appeal site are dominated by the dwellings along Conway Grove that back onto it. Features including wooden panel boundary fencing, gardens, views of the dwellings themselves and garages all combine to* ***give the area a distinctly suburban appearance that has a strong relationship with the surrounding residential area of Cheadle****". (my emphasis)*

5.6 The Planning Inspector went on to state that:

> *"I accept that as one passes beyond the dwellings of Conway Grove, the character of the lane becomes more rural as the views open out across fields where there are horses grazing.* ***However, the edge of Conway Grove forms a distinct visual separation between the different rural and suburban characters of the lane. The appeal site is well within the suburban part****". (my emphasis)*

5.7 Subsequent to those appeals the Local Authority has granted consent for a dwelling at no.11 Conway Grove, with the delegated report acknowledging the conclusions of the two appeal decisions, commenting that

> *"The proposal comprises a form of development which is similar to the dwellings approved at nos. 3 and 9 Conway Grove in terms of scale and design. The site layout achieves similar distance to the site boundaries as that which was approved on the schemes at 3 and 9. The south east side elevation of the*

> *proposal would be sited some 1.6m from the side of the approved bungalow at the rear of no. 9. It would be set slightly forward of the approved neighbouring bungalow. Although the proposal would be sited within close proximity of the adjacent approved bungalow, taking into account the previous appeal decisions, on balance it is considered that* ***the proposal would not appear cramped nor be harmful to the character and appearance of the area"****. (my emphasis)*

5.8 The submitted proposal takes its cues from these recently approved developments, and encompasses a single storey bungalow of not dissimilar scale, massing and design to those approved at nos. 3, 9 and 11 Conway Grove. The introduction of a bungalow on this site would not represent an incongruous feature, rather it will assimilate with its surroundings and the other developments approved.

5.9 The proposed site layout is also considered to be appropriate for the site, with the bungalow achieving similar distances to respective side site boundaries as that achieved on the schemes at nos. 3, 9 and 11 Conway Grove. The resultant plot size is also of a similar size to those on the nearby developments, with adequate private amenity space provided to for both the new dwelling and the retained property. The internal floor area of the property, at 61.2 square metres, furthermore complies the DCLG Technical Housing Standards for a two bedroomed, three-person bungalow (61 square metres), and consequently accords with the requirements of policy H1 of the emerging Local Plan.

5.10 The proposed development will also ensure that there is a 21m interface distance between the principal windows of no.7 Conway Grove and the rear principal windows of the proposed bungalow. This represents a similar inter-

relationship to that achieved at nos. 3, 9 and 11 Conway grove to their respective host properties, and consequently will provide a satisfactory level of amenity for both future and existing residential occupiers.

5.11 The conclusions of the two independent Planning Inspectors in the determination of the appeals at nos. 3 and 9 Conway Grove are considered to carry substantial weight, and are of particular relevance to the assessment of this current application, given their close proximity to the site and similar planning issues that they raise. The Local Authority had previously sought to disagree with the original appeal decision for no.3 Conway Grove, with a view to justifying their refusal of the scheme for 9 Conway Grove. However, in allowing the appeal for 9 Conway Grove, the Planning Inspector raised an important conclusion:

> *"The Council officer's report seeks to draw a distinction between the sites at No. 3 and No. 9. This is based on a few metres difference here and there in terms of the size of the two sites, a difference in setback of the constructed house and the proposal of between 2.5 to 3 metres and a 2m distance from the sites to the edge of the grass verge. However,* ***given the proximity of the two sites to one another, the fact that they form part of the same streetscene and*** *that information submitted with the appeal indicates that* ***a similar dwelling is proposed to that which has been constructed at No. 3; these are not sufficiently robust reasons to disregard the previous appeal scheme from consideration".*** *(my emphasis)*

5.12 Having regard to the scale, massing, design and layout of the proposed dwelling, its similarities to the approved schemes at nos. 3, 9 and 11 Conway Grove, and the conclusions of the two appeal decisions, it is concluded that

the proposed development will not derive any significant or demonstrable adverse impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy and paragraphs 56 and 58 of the NPPF.

Highway Safety

5.13 The application proposes the creation of a new vehicular access onto Plantation Lane, which is an unmade track which connects with Eaves Lane to the west of the site. This track benefits from good forward visibility and for 15m rear of the Eaves Lane carriageway it is of sufficient width to enable two vehicles to pass one another. Plantation Lane also benefits from good visibility in both directions on egress onto Eaves Lane. The proposed development incorporates the provision of 2 parking spaces to meet the needs of future occupants, which is more than sufficient for a property of this nature. The proposal will therefore not give rise to harm to highway safety in the locality and accords with the requirements of policy T1 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 32 of the NPPF.

Drainage

5.14 As with the plots at nos. 3, 9 and 11 Conway Grove, a culvert runs under the application site, and in order to accommodate the proposed development this will need to be diverted. The submitted plans show how this is to be achieved, and this is considered to be an appropriate solution having regard to the solution that was found to be acceptable for the three nearby schemes. A suitably worded planning condition can be imposed to ensure the delivery of these works.

Other Material Considerations

5.15 In addition to the matters discussed above, there are also other material considerations which weigh in favour of the proposed development, most

notably the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires Local Authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years worth of housing land against their housing targets, along with a 20% buffer. Where they are unable to do so the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged.

5.16 The latest housing land supply figures for Staffordshire Moorlands, as set out in the Local Authority's Housing Land Supply Statement (March 2018), confirm that the Local Planning Authority is only able to demonstrate a 1.8 year supply of deliverable housing. This falls significantly short of the 5-year supply required by paragraph 73 of the NPPF, and as a consequence the Council's policies for the supply of housing have to be considered out of date. The so-called titled balance in favour of approval, as set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF, is therefore engaged.

5.17 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that where planning policies are out-of-date, as is the case here, 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)*

5.18 The proposed development will derive a number of material benefits, including economic benefits to local tradesmen during the construction phase, and though the expenditure associated with one additional household. The proposal will also secure the delivery of a new dwelling that will contribute to the supply of housing within the District and in turn help to address the Local Authority's chronic shortfall in housing delivery. Such

benefits are considered to be worthy of significant weight and numerous appeal decisions support this assertion.

5.19 The single storey nature of the proposed dwelling is also considered to be beneficial in terms of the social component of sustainable development. The Local Authority's Strategic Housing Market Assessment acknowledges a significant growth in the number of persons aged 65+ and forecasts a requirement for a 19% increase in the number of 1 and 2 bedroomed bungalows. These conclusions are reinforced by paragraph 21 of the Planning Practice Guidance (updated 1st April 2016) which confirms that the need to provide housing for older people is critical given the projected increase in the number of households aged 65 and over accounts for over half of the new households (Department for Communities and Local Government Household Projections 2013). It goes on to state that plan makers will need to consider the size, location and quality of dwellings needed in the future for older people in order to allow them to live independently and safely in their own home for as long as possible, or to move to more suitable accommodation if they so wish.

5.20 Paragraph 21 of the Planning Practice Guidance further adds that supporting independent living can help to reduce the costs to health and social services, and providing more options for older people to move could also free up houses that are under occupied, adding that many older people may not want or need specialist accommodation or care and may wish to stay or move to general housing that is already suitable, such as bungalows, or homes which can be adapted to meet a change in their needs. The proposed bungalow will help to fulfil these objectives, and will secure the delivery of new accommodation, in a sustainable location, to meet the needs of the identified changing demographic. Accordingly I submit that this amounts to a

further social benefit of the development which should be afforded significant weight in the determination of this application.

5.21 In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the proposal will deliver a high quality design that responds positively to the constraints of the site and the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and will furthermore secure the erection of a dwelling in a sustainable location where future occupiers would have a choice of means of transport to access local services and facilities. Such benefits also weigh in favour of he proposed development.

5.22 I submit that the aforementioned benefits, taken as a whole, lend significant weight in favour of the proposed development and I consider that there are no adverse impacts identified that would serve to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development – that being the test to be applied having regard to the provisions of paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Conclusion

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

- *The application site lies within the settlement boundary of Cheadle;*

- *Cheadle is a target for significant housing growth up to 2031;*

- *The provisions of the NPPF mean that the proposal should be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development – the so-called titled balance;*

- *The site lies within easy walking and cycling distance of local services and facilities and benefits from regular public transport connections nearby;*

- *The proposed development will not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, nor will it result in a cramped form of development;*

- *The proposed development is of a modest form that will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers;*

- *Consent has been granted twice on appeal nearby with the Inspectors concluding that the area is suburban in character and that the erection of a dwelling very similar to that proposed would not be harmful to the characteristics of the area;*

- *The proposal will not derive any adverse highway safety impacts;*

- *The proposal will not give rise to any adverse drainage issues.*

6.2 For these reasons the proposed development accords with the provisions of policies SS2, SS3, SS5c, DC1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal is also in accordance with the provisions of policies SS3, SS4, SS7 and H1 of the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

6.3 It is furthermore submitted that there are no adverse impacts that would significant and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development, and as a consequence planning permission should be granted for the proposed development in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in policy SS1a of the Core Strategy.