Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND ADJACENT TO SANDFIELDS
CELLARHEAD

JULY 2019

Site Address:
Land adjacent to Sandfields, Kingsley Road, Cellarhead, ST9 0DJ

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. Berrisford

Proposal:
Erection of 2no. Detached Dormer Bungalows

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 19th July 2019
Job Reference: RDP/2019/052

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Berrisford to seek full planning permission for the erection of two dormer bungalows on land to the east of Sandfields, Kingsley Road, Cellarhead.

1.2 The site comprises a parcel of pastoral land that slopes gradually upwards in a southerly direction. The application proposes to erect two dormer bungalows on the site; each orientated so that their front elevations face towards the Kingsley Road. The dwellings will have a gross internal floor area of 196.8 square metres and will each encompass a kitchen / diner, living room, ensuite bedroom, w.c., hallway, and utility at ground floor, with three further bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor.

1.3 Vehicular access to the site is to be taken via a new access point that will involve the removal of part of the existing dry stone wall frontage to the site, and its replacement with a new dry stone wall, set back behind new visibility splays. The access will provide appropriate manouvering space to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear, with each property benefitting from an integral double garage and external parking provision. The application also proposes to maintain an agricultural vehicular access to the fields beyond, and seeks consent to re-align the existing public footpath (Caverswall 27) that crosses the site.

1.4 The application has been subject to pre-application discussions with the Local Authority where it was noted that the site is within the Green Belt, and that the erection of two dwellings would amount to limited infilling within a village. Concerns were nevertheless raised that the development would result in the joining up of existing sporadic forms of development along the road, setting an undesirable precedent for the infilling of other gaps along

the road. Concerns were also raised that the development would not meet the policy tests set out within the emerging Local Plan.

1.5 Pre-application discussions have also been entered into with the Local Highway Authority (Mr. D. Plant) who considered that the provision of a new access point towards the eastern end of the site would likely be acceptable from a visibility perspective, but recommended that a speed survey be carried out to demonstrate this. A speed survey has duly been commissioned and has been submitted to accompany the application.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the village of Cellarhead, a short distance from the junction of Kingsley Road with the A520 and Cellarhead Road. The site comprises a broadly square parcel of land that extends to approximately 0.23 hectares in area. It is agricultural in nature (Grade 4 – Poor Quality) and slopes gently upwards from the highway in a southerly direction. Residential development extends westwards from the site along the Kingsley Road towards the crossroads, with a cluster of six houses located to its east. The developments to the west sit forward towards the highway, with those to the east occupying more set back positions behind frontage parking and landscaping. On the opposite side of the Kingsley Road to the north lies a detached dwelling and its associated curtilage and outbuilding, which extends for the entirety of the width of the application site. A low dry stone wall encloses the northern boundary of the application site, with hedgerows towards its westernmost end until it meets the existing access serving Sandfields. The southern and eastern boundaries comprise of indigenous hedgerows. A public footpath, Caverswall 27 crosses the site from its northeast corner, to the middle of the southern boundary o the application site. The site as a whole lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

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 Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be 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 relates to the 'Future Provision of Development' and 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 relates to the 'Distribution of Development' and states that housing 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 new housing over the plan period will be delivered within the rural areas.

3.5 Policy SS6A of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Larger Villages Area Strategy' and states that these settlements (of which Werrington & Cellarhead 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 SS6c of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Area Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that the Council will meet essential local needs by (amongst others):

- *restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which is essential to local needs.*

3.7 Policy SS6c goes on to state that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.8 Policy R2 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Housing' and states that other than sites allocated for housing development in the Site Allocations DPD, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the towns and villages:

- *Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H2.*

- *A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.*

- *Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.*

- *Extensions to existing dwellings 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.*

- *The conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use where:*

  - *the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; and*
  - *it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable. In such cases there will be a requirement for a marketing exercise to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional or other evidence that the building would be unsuitable for a commercial use; or*
  - *conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded.*

3.9 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design SPD. It goes on to state that new development should (amongst others):

- *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*

- *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;*

- *protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;*

- *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use; ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available.*

3.10 Policy DC3 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

- *Resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the character of the local and wider landscape or the setting of a settlement and important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment;*

- *Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's approach to development within the Green Belt, and identifies out a number of categories of appropriate development. It furthermore confirms that inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should only be approved where very special circumstances can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. The NPPF also sets out requirements, *inter-alia*, in respect of housing delivery, securing high quality design and safeguarding highway safety.

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 up to March 2018. It confirms that the Local Authority has a deliverable supply of housing land equivalent to 1.8 years supply. This represents a reduction in the overall supply compared to March 2017 when the housing land supply stood at 1.99 years.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Submission Version)

4.3 Policy H1 of the emerging Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and sets out a criterion based approach to the assessment of new housing on the edges of the larger and smaller villages. It confirms that outside the development boundaries, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the Spatial Strategy will be supported, provided that:

- *The development will adjoin the boundary of a larger village and be well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses; and*

- *The development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have an adverse impact of significance to the character of the countryside.*

SCC Planning for Landscape Change SPG

4.4 The Planning for Landscape Change SPG is a County wide assessment of landscape character and confirms the site to be located within the Settlement Plateau Farmlands character area. The content of the SPG is a material consideration in the determination of this application, and is referred to in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

Staffordshire Moorlands Design SPD

4.5 This document sets out guidance aimed at securing good quality design, and confirms that the architectural style of new development should be guided through an assessment and understanding of the character and context of the area, going on to confirm that sites may be capable of accommodating both contemporary and traditional forms of development that are high quality and functional. The content of the SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is referred to in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

Staffordshire Moorlands New Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings SPG

4.6 This document sets out guidance in respect of the design of new residential development, including matters of siting, roof design, elevations, and materials. The content of the SPG has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is referred to in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

5 Planning Assessment

Impact on the Green Belt

5.1 The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt, wherein the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms there is a presumption against the erection of new buildings. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF nevertheless goes on to list a number of exceptions, which includes:

"limited infilling in villages"

5.2 The application site is located within the village of Cellarhead, a short distance from its historic core, and is enclosed by residential development to its west and east. Further residential development is located to the north of the site, on the opposite side of the Kingsley Road, which extends across the whole width of the application site. Consequently the parcel of land is enclosed on three sides by built development. The proposed development is therefore evidently infill.

5.3 The proposal furthermore entails the erection of just two dwellings, and as a consequence the proposed quantum of development is considered to be limited. The site is also evidently located within the village of Cellarhead, a view which was shared by the Local Authority during pre-application discussions. Consequently, the proposed development is considered to involve limited infilling in a village, and is therefore an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt in the context of paragraph 145 of the NPPF.

Rural Housing

5.4 Policy SS6A of the Core Strategy makes provision for the erection of new residential development both within and adjacent to the urban area of the

larger villages, of which Werrington and Cellarhead are one. The site is nevertheless located beyond the village boundary of Cellarhead as defined by the emerging Local Plan (Submission Version) and thus is technically located within the rural area. Policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy seek to restrict new residential development within the rural areas to a limited number of categories. The proposed development does not fall within any of the categories listed, and is therefore acknowledged to be in conflict with the provisions of policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy. The Local Authority also cited concerns during pre-application discussions that the proposed development would conflict with the provisions of policy H1 of the emerging Local Plan (Submission Version) as it would result in the joining up of existing sporadic forms of development along the road and set an undesirable precedent for the infilling of other gaps along the road.

5.5 Whist the conflict with policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy, and the perceived conflict with policy H1 of the emerging Local Plan (Submission Version) are noted, it is considered that substantial material considerations exist to clearly outweigh this conflict.

5.6 Under the provisions of paragraph 73 of the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities are required to maintain and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years worth of housing against their housing requirement, plus, in the case of the Staffordshire Moorlands, a buffer of 20%. The Local Authority's Housing Land Supply Statement 2018 confirms that the Council is only able to demonstrate a housing land supply equivalent to 1.8 years. This represents a chronic shortfall against its housing requirements. As a result of this shortfall, the so-called titled balance in favour of approval is engaged (Paragraph 11 of the NPPF refers).

5.7 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date (as is the case here), planning permission should be granted unless:

i) 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

ii) 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.

5.8 For the reasons set out in paragraphs 5.1 – 5.3 above, the proposal is compliant with Green Belt policy, and consequently there are no policies that protect assets of particular important that provide a clear reason for refusing consent. The proposal thus accords with criterion i) above.

5.9 The proposal will also derive a number of benefits when assessed against the NPPF taken as a whole. There will be benefits to the local economy, derived from the generation of additional household expenditure within the District. This is estimated at £9,388 per dwelling per annum (based on figures published by the Local Authority's Regeneration Service). Short-term economic benefits would also ensue as a consequence of generating work for local tradespeople during the construction phase of the development.

5.10 Significant social benefits would also ensue as a consequence of delivering two new dwellings to help address the Local Authority's chronic shortfall in housing land supply. There will also be environmental benefits as a consequence of delivering two new dwellings that are located within easy

walking and cycling distance of local services, facilities and employment opportunities, and which also benefit from close proximity to existing public transport connections.

5.11 For the reasons set out below it is furthermore considered that no adverse impacts will arise as a consequence of the development to significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits, and that consequently the proposal accords with criterion ii) above. Planning permission should therefore be granted in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Design & Layout

5.12 The application proposes the erection of two dormer bungalows of matching design. The character of the surrounding area is somewhat mixed in terms of the architectural styles and scales of development that it exhibits, with a mixture of single storey and two storey developments all observable. The 1½ storey form proposed within the application is a direct response to the character of the surrounding area, and provides a degree of transition between the single storey development to the west of the site (Sandfields), and the more imposing two storey developments to the east. The proposed scale of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

5.13 The design of the dwellings is also considered appropriate, having regard to the guidance set out within the adopted Design SPD and New Dwellings & Extensions SPG. The buildings adopt a ground hugging form, with strong eaves and ridgelines, and are of a scale that respects that of surrounding buildings. Windows are arranged harmoniously in a symmetrical manner with traditional detailing to the headers and cills. The windows are furthermore to be recessed into the openings by 50mm in line with the

objectives of the Design SPD. The window patterns are also arranged in columns, with the elevations maintaining a high solid to void ratio.

5.14 The proposed dwellings have a simple roof form with dominant roof line emphasised by gables, and the roof spans the shorter side. No flat roofs are proposed. A subservient link connects the dwelling to a suitably proportioned double garage, which exhibits matching details to the host dwelling. Each of the dwellings will also benefit from a southerly aspect to the rear thereby maximising opportunities for solar gain.

5.15 The proposal is also acceptable in terms of its layout, incorporating a plan form and juxtaposition of dwellings that will not materially detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers. Each of the dwellings will also be afforded its own area of private amenity space to the rear, that far exceeds the recommended minimum standard set out within the Local Authority's informal space about dwellings standards. The proposed dwellings will also have a gross internal floor area of 196.8 square metres, which exceeds the minimum requirement set out within the DCLG Technical Housing Standards.

5.16 Externally it is proposed that the dwellings will be accessed via a shared access point off the Kingsley Road, with a frontage driveway that will also wrap around the western boundary of the site to provide access to the agricultural fields beyond. Extensive opportunities for frontage landscaping and planting exist, and the set back position of the dwellings is firmly in keeping with the character of the area.

5.17 The proposed development is also considered appropriate in terms of its relationship to surrounding residential development. The proposal does not result in any contravention of the Local Authority's informal space about

dwellings standards, and will furthermore provide appropriately sized areas of private amenity space for use by future occupiers. The proposed development will therefore not result in any significant and demonstrable adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity or the amenity of future occupiers.

5.18 For the reasons set out above it is submitted that the proposed dwellings are of a scale, massing, design and layout that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and will not derive any significant and demonstrable adverse impacts to either the locality or the amenity of local residents. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Landscape Character

5.19 The application site lies within the 'Settlement Plateau Farmlands' character area, as set out within the Planning for Landscape Change SPG. The SPG describes this character area as:

> *"low-grade pastoral landscape where the landcover elements have been allowed to deteriorate to the point where field boundaries are marked by isolated beech, birch and stunted oak, remnant overgrown thorn and holly and lines of fencing. Fields consistently appear overgrazed and poorly drained, with rushes and rough grass present"*

5.20 It goes on to state that:

> *"Overall this is a landscape in which the difficulties facing traditional pasture farming and increasing horsey culture combine to jeopardise the future well being of the landscape*

> *fabric. Difficulties with future care and pressures from the adjacent conurbation will probably result in the continued decline of this landscape, which is now in need of restoration.*

5.21 The SPG goes on to describe characteristic landscape features as constituting drystone walls and remnant hedgerows, small areas of relic heathland and gently sloping landform. Incongruous landscaping features are note as being urban fringe farming, horsey culture, extensive fencing for stock control, some use of inappropriate materials and signs of over-intensive grazing.

5.22 The submitted proposal does not incorporate any elements that are noted to be incongruous within the landscape. The application also affords opportunities to reinforce some of the key landscape characteristics identified within the SPG, including the planting of new hedgerows to the frontage boundary, behind the new dry stone wall.

5.23 Concern was raised during pre-application discussions that the development would result in the joining up of existing sporadic forms of development along the road, setting an undesirable precedent for the infilling of other gaps along the road. It is noted in this context that the application site is enclosed on either side by established built development, and that it relates closely to the historic nucleated core of Cellarhead that is consolidated around the nearby cross roads. There is also further residential development located on the opposite side of the road to the site, and consequently the site is wholly enclosed on three sides by residential development.

5.24 The development of the site would read as part of the village, being very close to its historic core, and therefore would not significantly and demonstrably detract from the landscape character of the area. I also contend that the grant of consent on this site would not set an undesirable

precedent for the infill of other plots along this road, as each site has to be considered on its merits, and the other potential infill plots along the road have materially different characteristics to this one. Consequently I submit that the concerns about precedent should not be afforded any meaningful weight in the assessment of the application.

5.25 For the reasons set out above it is submitted that the proposed development will not derive any significant or demonstrable adverse impacts to landscape character and that the proposal meets the requirements of policy DC3 of the Core Strategy.

Highway Safety

5.26 The application has been subject to pre-application discussions with the Local Highway Authority where it was confirmed that the creation of a new vehicular access towards the eastern end of the site would likely be acceptable. It was nevertheless recommended that a Speed Survey be carried out to demonstrate that adequate visibility could be achieved on egress. The applicant subsequently commissioned SCP Transportation Planning to carry out the Speed Survey, and their resultant Technical Note has been submitted to accompany the application.

5.27 The Technical Note demonstrates that 85th percentile speeds along the Kingsley Road in this vicinity are 29mph in an eastbound direction, and 41mph in a westbound direction. Consequently there is a requirement to achieve a visibility splay of 2.4m x 38m to the left of the access, and 2.4m x 105 metres to the east.

5.28 The submitted plans demonstrate that these visibility splays are achievable, and consequently the application ensures that no harm to highway safety will occur. The site layout also provides adequate parking for each dwelling,

along with associated manouvering space to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. In doing so the development accords with the relevant provisions of paragraphs 108 and 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Diversion of Public Footpath

5.29 Public Footpath Caverswall 27 crosses the site from its northeast corner, to approximately midway along the southern boundary. The proposed development will necessitate the diversion of this public footpath, and the applicant proposes that it be re-aligned to follow the eastern boundary of the site, wrapping around and running along the southern boundary, behind the existing hedgerow, to the point it re-joins its original route. Sufficient space is identified on the plans to accommodate the diverted footpath, and the proposed routing is considered to represent the most appropriate solution. The applicant is nevertheless aware that a separate application will need to be made to Staffordshire County Council in due course to secure approval for the diversion of the public footpath.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is submitted that the proposed development constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The proposal involves limited infilling within a village and thus constitutes an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt;*

- *The Local Authority is unable to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing so the tilted balance in favour of approval is engaged;*

- *The proposal will derive a number of benefits in terms of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;*

- *The scale, massing, design and layout of the proposed development will assimilate well with its surroundings and not derive any adverse impacts to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the surrounding landscape:*

- *The proposed development will not derive any adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity or the amenity of future occupiers of the dwellings;*

- *The proposed means of access will not derive any severe residual impacts to highway safety, and appropriate measures are put forward to address the diversion of the public footpath;*

6.2 For these reasons the proposed development is considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS2, SS3, SS6a, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, and local supplementary guidance.

6.3 The conflict of this proposal with the provisions of policies SS6c ad R2 of the Core Strategy and policy H1 of the emerging Local Plan (Submission Version) is acknowledged, but is considered to be outweighed by other material considerations, in particular the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is furthermore submitted that no adverse impacts will arise to *significantly and demonstrably* outweigh the benefits of the development when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.

6.4 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within policy SS1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.