DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2019/0520	**LEA VISTA**	**TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND ADDING A PORCH TO FRONT**
Valid 27/08/2019	**25 HIGH LANE BROWN EDGE**	**(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Green Belt
- Design and street scene
- Neighbour amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Two storey later 20thC brick and concrete pan tile dwelling in roadside ribbon of varied residential development. The site is more-or-less level to the road with a slight uphill rise parallel to the road northerly. The frontage is laid to limestone chippings. The rear garden is stepped down slightly with a fall to the west. Land between the dwelling and the detached neighbour to the north was previously part of the curtilage of the neighbour (27 High Lane) but has at some point been taken into the ownership of No. 25 and is now laid to parking. There was 1984 consent for a dwelling on this in-between land but not implemented.

The extant house, considered to be original in its entirety, is 8.5m long x 6.2m deep or 53m2.

PROPOSAL

Following the initial submission, amended proposal plans ref 6284 (P) 002 revision E (15.10.2019) were received at the applicant's request and these have been subject to a further round of neighbour consultation.

The proposal comprises a two storey side extension of width 4.5m recessed relative to the front elevation and set down at the ridge relative to the ridge of the original house.

A single storey rear extension is proposed across the full width of the original house and the across the rear of the proposed side extension. This would project 4.2m and have a shallow pitched lean-to roof with roof lights. The total additional ground plan area of the rear and side extensions combined would be 79m2.

At the front of the house it is proposed to build out with an open fronted portico arrangement with lean-to roof and incorporating a gabled porch to the front door. The built area encompassed by this scales from plan as c.16.5m2.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
R1 Rural Diversification
R2 Rural Housing
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Local Plan Submission Version (February 2018)

SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
H1 New Housing Development
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Local Plan process

The Council agreed to publish the Local Plan Submission Version for representations in February 2018. At this point, the Council agreed that the Local Plan was "sound". Formal representations were then invited from residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide them with the opportunity to support or challenge the soundness or legal compliance of the Local Plan. This stage in the process followed three previous public consultations since 2015 which had informed the preparation of the Local Plan alongside a comprehensive evidence base.

In June 2018, the Council subsequently agreed to submit the Local Plan Submission Version to the Secretary of State for examination. An examination in public was held in November 2018 to determine whether the Local Plan is sound and legally compliant. The Inspector issued his initial post-hearing advice in January 2019 which set out some actions for the Council and a range of modifications that would be necessary to make the plan sound. The full schedule of modifications was the subject of public consultation between 18th September 2019 and 31st October 2019. The schedule consisted of modifications that the Inspector has so far deemed necessary to make the Local Plan sound. Following the consultation, the Inspector is expected to consider the responses before issuing his final report. Depending on the recommendations in the report, the Council may then be in a position to adopt the Local Plan.

In this context, the Council's position on the weight to be given to the policies contained in the Local Plan Submission Version in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is as follows:

- The stage of preparation: the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the Council has submitted it to the SoS for examination;
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies: this varies depending on the policy in question. Where reference is made in this report to

any emerging policies the level of outstanding objections to each policy will be noted and recommendation made as to the amount of weight to be given to the policies at this stage in the process;
- The degree of consistency of policies with the NPPF: given that the Council has submitted a Local Plan that it considers to be sound, all policies are deemed to be consistent with the NPPF.

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide 2018

National Planning Policy Framework July 2018
Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;
Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land;

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
SMD/2019/0185 – single storey side and rear extensions and front porch – approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity
Site Notice expiry date: 3rd October 2019
Neighbour consultation period ends: 17th Sept 2019 with repeat to 8th Nov 2019
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
Brown Edge Parish Council – no objections (response to initial consultation); agreed to forward no comments in response to repeat consultation (8th Nov)

Severn Trent Water
Minimal impact on the public sewer network therefore no objections and no requirement for a drainage condition.

Severn Trent Water advise that there may be a public sewer located within the application site. Although the statutory sewer records do not show any public sewers within the area specified, there may be sewers that have been recently adopted under the Transfer of Sewer Regulations 2011. Public sewers have statutory protection and may not be built close to, directly over or be diverted without consent and contact must be made with Severn Trent Water to discuss the proposals. Severn Trent will seek to assist in obtaining a solution which protects both the public sewer and the building.

Staffordshire County Council Highways
Not consulted for this application but previously in respect of the approved scheme (SMD/2019/0185) no objections subject to conditions.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

General approach
In accordance with policies SS1 and SS1a, the Council expects the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This means that 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: (a) 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 (b) specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Subject to Green Belt requirements Policy SS6c provides for the conversion extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2.

Green Belt
Within the Green Belt, Policy SS6c states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government Policy. The location is in the open rural countryside of the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

The NPPF states at paragraph 144 that: “When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt.”

The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The Government identifies five purposes of the Green Belt:
- To prevent the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic market towns and
- To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (NPPF 143). ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of

inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF 144).

NPPF paragraphs 145 and 146 set out specific exceptions by which certain forms of development can be considered as being appropriate in the Green Belt. One of these exceptions is “the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building” (NPPF 145 c).

Core Strategy policy R1 expects a balanced consideration of the extent to which a proposal protects and benefits rural qualities and supports rural economic and community needs stating that, “appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area”.

Policy R2 allows “extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and character of the rural area”.

Given the original built plan area of the original house of 53m2 the additional 79m2 footprint of the proposed side and rear extensions would represent a 149% increase. When taking into account both ground and first floors, the existing house at two storeys equates to 106m2. The scheme now proposed would total to 121m2 or 115%, taking account of all floor levels.

This is a scale well beyond any measure that might typically be regarded as ‘not disproportionate’. If the 16.5m2 occupied by the proposed front portico is also taken into account the total increase would be 95.5m2 or 180%. On this basis, and indeed from the self evident appearance of the proposal overall, the development would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building and therefore would not comply with Government policy for the Green Belt and be contrary to CS policy SS6c.

No ‘very special circumstances’ are advanced in support of the application. The development amounts to inappropriate development in the green belt, encroach into the countryside, and therefore by definition be harmful to the green belt,

Design

Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy requires that all developments shall be well-designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to, and complementing the character and heritage of, an area. Development should be of a high quality, adding to the value of a local 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, landscape, character and appearance. The adopted Design Guide SPD, sets out that extensions to a dwelling should harmonise with a parent building. An extension would respect the dominance of the original dwelling and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing.

The side extension is considered to be disproportionate in width relative to the width of the main house, it is more than 50% of the width and therefore appears oversized. The open fronted timber framed portico has no particular reference to any design characteristic of the local area and might reasonably be considered an over-elaborate feature.

The unbroken 13m length of the extended rear elevation is somewhat imposing and block like but noting there is limited or no scope for public views – there is a cross-field public footpath some 150m to the rear but intervening trees will mask the property – the design approach is acceptable for a rear elevation in this location.

In terms of external material finishes the proposed partial introduction of render and wood cladding as stipulated in the application form, though not conclusively indicated in the submitted drawing, to what is presently an exclusively brick dwelling is considered inappropriate. It is recognised that High Lane does not have a strong single design type or character throughout all its length but predominantly the characteristic finish is of brick and that is the case with at least the public elevations of the immediate neighbours to the application property. According it is consider that the width of the two storey side extension when combined with the use of materials would fail to compliment the character of the host dwelling area and would adversely affect the visual amenity of the locality, contrary to Policy DC1 and the Councils adopted Design Guide.

Amenity
The adjacent dwelling to the SW at 23 High Lane is a bungalow set down at lower level (by c.500mm to 1000mm) relative to the application property. The bungalow projects significantly further to the rear than the application property. A non-principal side window serving a bathroom faces the side of the application property at a separation of c.4.5m from the proposed extension. A pair of French window doors serving a hall face the side elevation at a separation of c.7m more-or-less aligned with the rear outer limit of the proposed extension. Given that the extension would be positioned to the north east of the neighbour, it is concluded that there would be no adverse harm to this neighbour and no conflicts would arise with the Council's adopted Space About Dwellings standards.

There would be a separation of some 8m between the proposed NE side extension and the side elevation of the neighbour at 27 High Lane, which is considered to be sufficient to ensure that there would be no adverse harm to this neighbour.

The proposal is acceptable in terms of any neighbour amenity impacts.

Adequate garden amenity space would remain for the occupiers of the application property.

Highway Safety
The existing three bedroom property would remain three bedroomed at first floor. In the proposal a ground floor room is also to become a bedroom. Properties of more than 3 bedrooms are expected to provide a minimum of four parking spaces. In the case of this property it can readily be seen that space for four vehicles can be

provided. Accordingly it is considered that sufficient parking is provided at the site top ensure that there would be no harm to highway safety.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The scheme also does not raise any issues in respect of neighbour or public amenity or highways.

Fundamentally however the proposal does not accord with the Government's policy for development in the Green Belt and is therefore contrary to SMDC core strategy policy SS6c.

In strict development planning terms it is necessary to include the front portico as part of the extension. As shown in the report the combined total of the proposed extensions would result in an overall 180% increase in footprint over that of the original dwelling. Even without the portico the scheme would result in a 149% increase, well in excess of what may be considered acceptable in the Green Belt. The existing house two storeys equates to 106m2. The scheme now proposed would total to 121m2 or 115%, taking account of all floor levels.

Consideration needs to be given to the previous approval (SMD/2019/0185) as yet un-implemented. This involved a single storey side extension rather than two storey and whilst a porch was included it did not include a portico along the whole front elevation. The scheme nevertheless resulted in a 150% increase beyond the original ground plan area. As the scheme involved only single storey extensions consideration was given in the assessment to the alternative fall back options available under PD. These were held to provide very special circumstances to justify the scheme at the size approved.

In conclusion it is considered that the 150% increase, allowed under the SMD/2019/0185 approval on the basis of very special circumstances, does not itself become a case of very special circumstances in its own right to support the 180% increase of this present application. Importantly the earlier scheme did not have a first floor element and the fall back PD upon which it relied to demonstrate very special circumstances was entirely based on ground floor PD options only.

Accordingly the proposed extension would result in a disproportionate addition to the dwelling, which would harm the openness of the green belt. In the absence of any very special circumstances to outweigh this harm, the extension by definition is harmful to the green belt.

Moreover the width of the side extension when combined with the use of render timber which is not a commonly found material within the street scene, would fail to compliment the host dwelling and wider street scene.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : refuse

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 8th November 2019

X 

Signed by: JaneC

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council