Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

WHITE CHIMNEYS, LONGSDON

JANUARY 2020

Site Address:
White Chimneys, Devils Lane, Longsdon, Staffordshire, ST9 9QR

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. M. Fludgate

Proposal:
Erection of two storey rear extension, alteration to existing openings, and erection of canopy to front elevation

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 13th January 2020
Job Reference: RDP/2020/006

Report Prepared By:
Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
70 Ferndale Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7DL
Email: rob@robduncanplanning.co.uk
Tel. 07779 783521

1. Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Fludgate to seek planning permission for the erection of a two-storey rear extension and other alterations at White Chimneys, Devil's Lane, Longsdon.

1.2 The existing dwelling has a two storey extension to its rear, and it is proposed to replace this with a new two storey rear extension. The proposed extension will have a roof pitch to match the existing dwelling, as well as a matching eaves line, but will have modestly lower ridge height to the host property. The roof of the extension will run east/west with a modest pitched roof link connecting it to the existing property. The extension is to be finished with white render to give it a homogenous external appearance and to a draw a clear distinction between it and the host dwelling.

1.3 The application also proposes alterations to the existing elevations of the property, comprising the blocking up of the existing doorway in the southern elevation up to cill height, and retaining the remainder of the opening as a window. An adjacent opening is to be made full height to create a new centralised front doorway serving the hall, with an oak canopy erected above to create a centralised focal point to the front elevation. The application also proposes to insert a new rooflight, and to remove some previously infilled stonework to create a new opening in the southern elevation.

1.4 The application represents a resubmission following the withdrawal of application SMD/2018/0656 which had also proposed a two storey rear extension and alterations to the existing elevations of the property, but which had raised concerns about its impact on the Green Belt and about the extension not relating well to the original dwelling and adjacent extension. This revised application seeks to address those previously raised concerns.

2. Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site comprises a detached two storey cottage, constructed from stone, with a two-storey extension to its rear. To the immediate west of the site lies a vehicular access that provides access to a range of equestrian buildings in the applicant's ownership, and which extend for approximately two thirds of the length of the garden of the property. These buildings are finished in render and dark green cladding. A utilitarian garage building is located to the southwest of the dwelling, which is also finished in render with elements of grey cladding to its gables. To the east of the site lies Old House Farm, with one of its associated rendered / clad agricultural buildings located to the southeast of the application site. Vehicular access to the site is taken via an existing track that connects with Devil's Lane to the west of the site.

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 the area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 **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):

- *Allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2*

3.3 **Policy R2** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Housing' and states that 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;*

- *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 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.*

3.4 **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;*

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

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of safeguarding the Green Belt and securing high quality design, and is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment section.

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD (2018)

4.2 This document identifies the overarching principles in securing high quality design and sets out various criteria against which applications will be assessed. The content of the SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

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4.3 This Householder Prior Notification application is a material consideration in the determination of the application, and relates to erection of a single storey rear extension, projecting 8 metres off the rear elevation.

5 Planning Assessment

Green Belt

5.1 Policies SS6c and R2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy allow for the erection of extensions to existing dwellings within the rural areas, provided that 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. Similarly, paragraph 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) allows for extensions to existing buildings within the Green Belt, provided that they will not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5.2 A review of historic Ordnance Survey mapping of the site shows that the original building constitutes the main two storey section of the dwelling running east/west, along with an existing lean-to at its eastern end, as well a modest addition off its northern elevation at the westernmost end of the property. The previously withdrawn application on the site had raised concerns that because the existing dwelling had already been extended to the rear, the proposed extension would enlarge the dwelling disportionately. This led the Local Authority to conclude that the previous proposal represented an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt.

5.3 This revised submission encompasses a not dissimilar footprint to the previously withdrawn application, and consequently it is expected that the Local Authority will continue to conclude the proposal is an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 144 of the NPPF goes on to advise that very special circumstances

will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

5.4 Since the previous application was withdrawn, the applicant has submitted a householder prior notification application to the Local Authority under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended) for the erection of an 8 metre deep single storey flat roofed extension to the rear of the property (LPA Reference: HNT/2019/009). That application was approved, and the consent remains extant. It therefore constitutes a material consideration in the determination of this application.

5.5 Paragraph 134 of the NPPF confirms that the Green Belt serves the following five purposes:

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

5.6 Paragraph 144 of the NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that substantial weight should also be given to any betterment to the Green Belt that may arise as a consequence of a proposal. In this case the approved householder prior notification encompasses a footprint of 60m^2, which is a significantly greater footprint than the proposed extension (32.3m^2). Consequently, the fall back position available to the applicant would derive a far greater degree of

encroachment into the Green Belt and conflict with the five purposes of the Green Belt than the submitted proposal.

5.7 The submitted proposal will also consolidate development in close proximity to the existing cluster of buildings in and around the site, and in turn will have a far lesser impact on the Green Belt than the fall back position, which would see an extension project a considerable way down the site. The applicant's intentions are to add a further bedroom to the property, and to have a larger kitchen and living area. The scheme approved under the householder prior notification application (copy enclosed as Appendix A) demonstrates achieves the same accommodation to that which is proposed in this application, and it is the applicant's intention to implement that consent in the event of planning permission being refused for the proposed extension. For these reasons the fall back position established under the householder prior notification approval should be afforded substantial weight.

5.8 The submitted proposal also represents a more appropriate design solution compared to the fall back position, incorporating proportions that reflect and reinforce the host dwelling, as well as a matching roof pitch and header/cill detailing. The extension will furthermore be finished in off-white render thereby giving the extension a homogenous appearance, subservient to the original stone property. The extant prior notification scheme by contrast incorporates a flat roofed design that is at odds with the more traditional design of the host dwelling, and which is in conflict with the adopted Design Guide PD which seeks to avoid the provision of flat roofs. The approved flat roofed extension also projects 8m from the original rear wall of the building, and consequently appears somewhat disproportionate in relation to the host property.

5.9 For these reasons I submit the fall back position would have a significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area, whereas the proposed development will not. Such benefits are considered to be carry significant weight in favour of the proposed development, having regard to the objectives of paragraph 127 of the NPPF in ensuring that developments will add to the overall quality of an area, are visually attractive as a result of good architectural, and are sympathetic to local character and surrounding built development.

5.10 By re-constructing the rear extension in the manner proposed, the development will also achieve a higher degree of thermal efficiency compared to retaining the existing extension and adding to it, as per the previously withdrawn proposal. The introduction of the proposed rooflight and the re-opening of the previously infilled opening on the southern elevation will also afford natural daylight into the property, thereby helping to reduce reliance upon artificial sources of illumination. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the objectives of paragraph 150 of the NPPF, and such benefits lend further weight in favour of the proposed development.

5.11 The aforementioned considerations are considered to cumulatively amount to very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the totality of harm to the Green Belt arising from this proposal. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle in the context of policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy, and paragraphs 143 and 144 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design & Layout

5.12 The previously withdrawn application had raised concerns for the Local Authority that its connection with the existing rear projecting gable would

appear disjointed and awkward. To address those concerns the extension has been re-designed to have a flush rear elevation, with the roof orientated east/west to match the existing dwelling. A small, pitched roof will connect the two together.

5.13 The resultant effect of these changes is to arrive at a scale, massing and design that is in keeping with the existing dwelling, and which in views from Devils Lane will read the roof as if it were the original roof slope. The design solution arrived at is appropriate for the site, and takes its cues from the host dwelling, with matching roof pitch, gable depth, and cill / header detailing, and is subservient in ridge height. Likewise the alterations to the openings in the southern elevation of property, along with the new canopy addition, are also acceptable. These elements are no different to that which were proposed in the previous application, where no issues of concern were raised.

5.14 The alterations are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and will serve to enhance the front elevation by providing a central focal point to the dwelling. The proposal also avoids any conflict with the Local Authority's informal interface distances, and consequently no adverse impact to neighbouring residential amenity will arise. Consequently, the development is considered to be acceptable from a design and residential amenity perspective, and meets the requirements of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is recognised that the Local Authority is likely to consider the submitted proposal to constitute an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt. It is nevertheless submitted that this proposal will have a considerably lesser impact on the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the area than the applicant's extant household prior notification approval, and will enable a higher degree of thermal efficiency to be achieved. These considerations are collectively considered to amount to very special circumstances to justify approval of the proposed development in the context of established Green Belt policy. The proposed extension is also considered to be of a scale, massing and design that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and that of the surrounding area, and will not materially detract from the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

6.2 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS6c, R2 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and adopted Design Guide SPD. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development.