Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

7 CHEDDLETON HEATH ROAD
CHEDDLETON

JANUARY 2020

Site Address:
7 Cheddleton Heath Road, Cheddleton, Staffordshire, ST13 7DX

Applicant:
Mr. P. Watters

Proposal:
Conversion of annex to form independent holiday let

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 29th January 2020
Job Reference: RDP/2020/014

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. P. Watters to seek planning permission to allow the use of an approved residential annex at 7 Cheddleton Heath Road, Cheddleton as holiday accommodation.

1.2 The annex has been used for the last 18 months to provide holiday accommodation, either as part of a larger holiday let encompassing the entirety of no.7 Cheddleton Heath Road, or as an independent holiday let for two people. During the last 12 months it has been predominantly the latter. The annex was formed through the conversion of an existing single storey garage attached to the western elevation of the property, and was approved retrospectively under application SMD/2019/0401. In granting consent the Local Authority imposed a condition to preclude the use of the annex for the provision for holiday accommodation, which has given rise to this planning application.

1.3 The existing annex accommodation comprises an open plan kitchen and living room area, with separate double bedroom and bathroom. Pedestrian access to the annex is available at the front of the property, independent from the existing dwelling. The application proposes no changes to the layout of the internal accommodation. Externally it is proposed to retain an area of private amenity space to the rear of the annex that has already been subdivided from the adjacent dwelling (no.7), whilst to the front it is proposed to create a separate parking area for one car to serve the holiday accommodation.

1.4 This Planning Statement sets out the justification for the proposed development to be granted, having regard to local and national planning policy and other material considerations.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site comprises a single storey annex attached to a detached, two storey dwelling, located on the northern side of Cheddleton Heath Avenue, a short distance east of its junction with the Leek Road. The existing dwelling is one of a row of properties that form a linear pattern of development along the northern side of the road.

2.2 The property is flanked by a detached property to its west (no.6) and has an agricultural vehicular access enclosing its eastern boundary, beyond which lies a further detached dwelling (no.8). The annex is located towards the westernmost side of the plot. The carriageway of Cheddleton Heath Road encloses the southern boundary of the site, with a dry stone wall and hedgerow separating it from the agricultural fields beyond.

2.3 To the rear of the site there is a large area of private amenity space that has already been subdivided from the existing dwelling by way of a close board fence, to provide a separate area of amenity space for occupiers of the annex. The existing hot tub within the rear amenity space is due to be decommissioned and removed from the site. The frontage of the site has recently been cleared and will provide space for the parking of one car to serve the holiday let, with the remainder used to provide parking for no.7.

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 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 allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2. The policy 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.

3.3 **Policy SS7** of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Churnet Valley Area Strategy' and identifies the area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. Within this area particular support will be given to, amongst others, short stay and long stay visitor accommodation. Any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and demonstrate strong sustainable development and environmental management principles.

3.4 **Policy R1** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Diversification' and states that all development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment. Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise and pollution. Wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.

3.5 **Policy E3** of the Core Strategy relates to 'Tourism and Cultural Development' and states that new tourism development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports the local economy and promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District and enhances the role of the Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination. It goes on to state that new tourist and visitor accommodation should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering, good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. They should normally be located in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available, or in areas specifically allocated for tourism development. Outside of these locations facilities should be of a scale and design which can be easily assimilated into the area, and should normally be limited to the conversion of existing buildings. All development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and

character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area, and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance.

3.6 **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;*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

4.1 This document sets out the Government's approach to development in the Green Belt, and also provides guidance, *inter-alia*, in respect of supporting the rural economy. The content of this document is explored in more detail in the Planning Assessment section.

Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD (2014)

4.2 This supplementary planning document sets out guidance aimed at promoting and enhancing the Churnet Valley as a tourist destination within the Moorlands. The content of the Master Plan has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Tourism Economic Impact Assessment (2009)

4.3 This document was prepared by the Local Authority to provide an appraisal of the role and impact of the visitor economy of the Staffordshire Moorlands. It also aimed to identify the opportunities for economic growth based on the visitor economy, with a particular emphasis on the Churnet Valley corridor. The content of this document is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment section.

5 Planning Assessment

Green Belt

5.1 The application proposes the conversion of an existing residential annex to form an independent holiday let. Policies SS6c and R1 of the Core Strategy make provision for the reuse of existing buildings for alternative uses, with particular encouragement given to commercial or tourism uses as these have the potential to boost the local economy. Policy SS6c nevertheless identifies that strict control will continue to be exercised over development in the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by national policy. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF confirms that the reuse of existing buildings can be regarded as acceptable in the Green Belt, provided that the building is of a permanent and substantial construction, and that the use preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

5.2 The existing building is evidently of a permanent and substantial construction, and its conversion to a holiday let has not derived any material impact to the openness of the Green Belt, or given rise to any conflict with the five purposes of the Green Belt. The only external changes comprise the installation of close board fencing to the rear of the site, but it is noted that such works are in themselves permitted development under the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. To the front of the site the existing area of hardstanding is to be retained to provide parking for one vehicle to serve the independent holiday let.

5.3 For these reasons I reach the conclusion that the conversion of the building to a holiday let constitutes an appropriate form of development within the

Green Belt, and that the proposal accords with the provisions of policies SS6c and R1 of the Core Strategy, and paragraph 146 of the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

5.4 In granting consent to retain the existing annex on the site (SMD/2019/0401) a condition was imposed precluding the use of the annex accommodation for holiday-let purposes, in the interests of safeguarding residential amenity. It is nevertheless submitted that the use of the annex for holiday accommodation will *not* have a demonstrable adverse effect on neighbouring residential amenity.

5.5 The amenity space to the rear of the annex had previously formed part of the amenity space of no.7 Cheddleton Heath Road, which itself is rented out as holiday accommodation by the applicant (for which planning permission is not required). The garden area of that property had extended all the way up to the western site boundary with no.6 Cheddleton Heath Road, which comprises a close board fence and hedgerow. The established boundary treatment serves to ensure that the neighbouring occupiers are not affected by overlooking or other disturbance any more than if the property were occupied as a dwelling. Subsequently, the applicant undertook works to subdivide the garden to provide an area of separate amenity space for the occupiers of the annex. Those works in themselves did not require planning permission, as they amounted to Permitted Development (Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A).

5.6 The annex has been used successfully for the last 18 months as holiday accommodation, with only one known incident in December 2018 causing disturbance and complaints from neighbours, which led to the applicant introducing vetting of prospective tenants, and restrictions being imposed on the use of a hot tub that was previously located within the rear garden of the

annex. There have been 32 bookings since then, with no complaints lodged with either the applicant or the managing agency (Sykes Cottages). The applicant has nevertheless confirmed his intention to remove the hot tub entirely from the site, such that neither no.7, nor the annex will have a hot tub facility.

5.7 In assessing the impact of this proposal on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers, one also needs to have due regard to the applicant's fall back position – that being the ability to rent out no.7 Cheddleton Heath Road and its associated rear garden as a holiday let (excluding the annex portion of the building). The consequential effect is that the rear amenity space can already be used as part of a holiday let operation without the need for planning permission. The subdivision of the annex to create a separate holiday let derives no greater impact to neighbouring residential amenity than this fall back position, which leads me to conclude that this proposal is in accordance with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Highway Safety

5.8 To the front of the site is an existing area of hardstanding that has capacity to provide a single parking space for use by occupiers of the annex. The remainder of the site frontage provides a suitable level of parking for any occupiers of no.7 Cheddleton Heath Avenue. Given the sustainable location of the site the level of parking provision available on site is considered to be entirely appropriate, and that it does not give rise to any material adverse harm to highway safety within the locality.

Tourism Benefits

5.9 The application site is located within the Churnet Valley Master Plan area, wherein there is a focus on improving the tourism offer to attract more people to come and visit and stay within the Moorlands. The Local

Authority's Tourism Economic Impact Assessment identifies that in 2009 there were 3.35 million visitors to the Moorlands, but of those, only 7% were overnight visitors. This development serves to encourage visitors to remain within the Moorlands and the Churnet Valley area, and in doing so facilitates longer stays in the area and associated participation and experience of other tourism activities, to the benefit of the tourism economy.

5.10 The site occupies a sustainable location within easy walking and cycling distance of facilities within Cheddleton (a larger village), with public transport connections also available to Leek and the wider area, and consequently guests staying in the accommodation have a choice of means of transport to access local facilities and attractions.

5.11 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should support rural tourism which respects the character of the countryside. This proposal derives benefits to local tourism by enabling visitors to remain in the Moorlands, and thereby contributes to the local economy through associated expenditure. For these reasons the development is considered to be in full accordance with the Churnet Valley Master Plan, and meets the requirements of policies E3 and SS7 of the Core Strategy.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is submitted that the conversion of the existing annex to form an independent, one-bedroomed holiday let represents an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, and fully accords with the development strategy for the Churnet Valley. It is furthermore submitted that the proposal does not materially detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers, and that there are no adverse impacts to highway safety.

6.2 The development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS6c, SS7, R1, E3, and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Churnet Valley Master Plan DPD. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully request to grant planning permission for the development.