DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2020/0036	**33 MULBERRY WAY**	**PROPOSED CONVERSION OF EXISTING GARAGE INTO NEW LOUNGE AND FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM.**
Valid 20/01/2020	**LEEK**	
		(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES
Impact on the character and appearance of the area and the amenity of neighbours.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE
A large detached red brick and render dwelling at the head of a cul de sac on a 1990s housing development within Leek Town. The dwelling sits on a plot that appears rather squeezed as the properties fan around the turning head, uniquely this dwelling has an adjoining large double garage with a peaked hipped roof that sits immediately at the front of the dwelling's principal elevation, it's not obvious that this was designed and provided as part of the original dwelling type however, the planning history does not reveal a separate permission for the garage.

The side of the dwelling and property, to the south, is flanked by a row of modest back gardens provided behind a row of four properties that are served by a private drive that braches off the Mulberry Way cul-de-sac. To the north the immediately adjacent dwelling, that shares access of the same turning head as the applicant's, is orientated so that its front elevation turns toward the side of the garage, it is also set back by some small degree making it appear a little pinched in the row.

PROPOSAL
To convert the garage space into living accommodation and to extend the dwelling at first floor level with an extension to the front that would be built above an existing ground floor link between the garage and the dwelling. The development is to provide an annexe for an elderly relative with a new lounge, bedroom and dressing area.

This is a revised resubmission of a proposal to enlarge the dwelling that was refused last year. Rather than continue the first floor dwelling extension out over the top of the converted garage, it would, with this proposal, part way onto the garage with a first floor gable. The peak of the garages hipped roof would be flattened so that it sits below the sill of the new first floor window and the garage door would be replaced with a living room bay window 7m from pavement edge.

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
SS5a Leek Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Emerging Local Plan Policy
SS1a Sustianable Development
SS5 Leek Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations

On 27th February, the Inspector issued his post hearing advice. Key recommendations in the letter include:

- The proposed safeguarded land at Gillow Health, Biddulph should be removed. Neither should the site be allocated for housing as requested by the landowners as the case for exceptional circumstances has not ben met. The land will remain Green Belt as per the Local Plan Submission Version agreed by the Council in June 2018
- No further housing allocations in Biddulph are required
- No further amendments to the housing trajectory are required aside from pushing back the predicted commencement of the Wharf Road, Biddulph site (excluding BDNEW) until 2022/23.
- Monitoring of housing supply will determine if a full or partial Local Plan review is required within 5 years
- Land at Ox Pasture (Cheddleton) and Dorset Drive (Biddulph) should revert back to the Local Green Space designations as per the Local Plan Submission Version as agreed by the Council in June 2018.
- Other modifications were considered during the recent hearings sessions are necessary to make the plan sound, including; updating neighbourhood area housing requirements (Policy SS4) to reflect the latest monitoring data, updating the employment land area for the Tunstall Road allocation to reflect the masterplan and other adjustments to the wording of Policy SS4 and Policy DC2.

No further representations will be sought by the Inspector. As such, the Local Plan policies as proposed to be modified in September 2019 along with the Inspector recommended revisions (February 2020) provide a strong indication of the final policies likely to be adopted in the Local Plan. The Inspector's final report is expected within 2 months and will reflect the post hearing advice. The Council will be able to consider the adoption of the Local Plan at this point. As such, the plan is at a very advanced stage of preparation with some of the key outstanding objections now having been resolved following the February 2020 hearing sessions.

National Planning Policy Framework
Section(s) 2 Achieving sustainable development; 4 Decision Making; 12 Achieving Well Designed Places

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
SMD/2019/0563 Garage conversion and first floor front extension. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 24th Feb 2020
Neighbour consultation period ends: 24th Feb 2020
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Leek Town Council: Awaited

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Object. The scheme would add an additional bedroom and remove garage parking, there would be a bay window to the front of the garage that would project forward encroaching on driveway space.

Waste Services

No issues with this planning application.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The site is within Leek Town where the area strategy SS5a applies. The strategy SS5a generally provides for development that is sustainable and consolidates and regenerates Leek as the principal service centre. Such development might include the alteration and enlargement of a dwellinghouse to meet the needs of a resident. However, to be sustainable and strategy or NPPF compliant the development must represent good design that does not harm the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbours to accord with policy DC1 of the Core Strategy and section 12 of the NPPF. The emerging local plan does not introduce any material change to this approach.

Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

The SMDC design guide, adopted SPD on the 21st Feb 2018, assists with considerations of design and the way in which it might relate to and impact on the character, appearance, distinctiveness of a local area. The guidance requires all extensions to harmonise with the parent building, respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing.
The proposed extension would very much dominate the original dwelling and street scene by bringing a large gable forward of the original dwelling's frontage at first floor level. This projection would not be subordinate to the dwelling and it would close off views across the property to the dwellings beyond.

Slicing the top off the garage roof and building some of the first floor extension partially on top of it, would appear as an odd arrangement of building shapes protruding from the front elevation toward the road, exacerbating this effect by swopping a functional garage door with a bay window in such an advanced position from the rest of the dwelling. The development would not relate well to the street

scene and the character of the area. It would further exacerbate a pinched effect as the dwellings fan around the turning head.

The proposal does not represent good design and there would be significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The development would not comply with Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy or the NPPF as well as the recently adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide.

Impact on Neighbour's Amenity
There are three neighbours to the south that have rear elevations facing the side of the dwelling. The dwelling's side elevation appears unusually long because a linking structure and double garage stretch out to the front. There is just 10metres between neighbouring principal windows and the applicant's side elevation. Currently 39 Mulberry Way has outlook onto what is partly the dwelling's side gable and partly the single storey structure of the double garage and the link hallway, but the proposal is to take that part of the elevation up to two storey height with a full pitch roof – the Council's 'Space About Dwellings' guidance requires a separation distance of 14metres in those circumstances, the whole of No 39s rear boundary would be closed off by two storey structure. This is substandard, on site the proximity of those rear elevations and the applicant's dwelling feels palpable, No 39 would be afforded no outlook or sense of space beyond their rear boundary and the elevation would feel obtrusive, overbearing as it looms above the garden space. The development would be unreasonably harmful to amenity in these respects.

Due to its orientation, the ground floor lounge window of the adjacent neighbour to the north already has its horizontal 45 degree outlook compromised by the side of the double garage. There would be a worsening effect of some significance by taking so much of the structure up to two storey height where it would overshadow and loom over the lounge window, driveway and main entrance of the adjacent neighbour. The development would be unreasonably harmful to amenity in these respects. With identifiable amenity harm of some significance, the development would be contrary to policy DC1 of the development plan.

Highway Safety
The development would add at least another bedroom to a four bed property, however, despite the loss of the double garage space, the applicant demonstrates that there would be three pull on pull of spaces on the drive to the front. Notwithstanding the Highway Officers concerns, this would be compliant with parking standards and guidance for a dwellinghouse of this size. However, the cars would be rather crammed to the front of a new bay living room window or to the side obstructing pedestrian access to the front door.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE
The extension would not be well designed and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and the amenity of neighbours. The development does not comprise sustainable development and fails to comply with the relevant development plan policy and the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst
Recommendation Date: 16.03.2020

X

Signed by: JaneC

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council