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PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL: Erection of Dwelling, alterations to existing vehicular access, construction of car parking spaces for Ridgeway House.

ADDRESS: Ridgeway House, Leek Road, Longsdon, ST9 9GF

APPLICANT: Mr P Latham

DATE: January 2020

JOB No: 2019-2462

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the erection of a dwelling on land adjoining Ridgeway House, Leek Road, Longsdon. It has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mr Latham and is accompanied by drawings numbered 2019-2462-01C, -02, -03 and -04.

1.2 This statement analyses the site, the proposal and the policy context within which they are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of the proposal on the basis that the proposal would constitute appropriate development which would be in accordance with Development Plan as it would result in the provision of an appropriately sized, suitably located dwelling that would not harm the Green Belt and not harm the character and appearance of the wider landscape. Furthermore, it would not be prejudicial to residential or visual amenity, detrimental to highway safety or adversely affect local landscape or any established ecological interests. This statement also serves as a Design & Access Statement as required by Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as set out in Circular 01/2006.

1.3 The site has the benefit of outline planning permission for the erection of a dwelling (SMD/2016/0647 and SMD/2017/0783) and a Reserved Matters Approval (SMD/2019/0079). The principle of erecting a dwelling on this acknowledged “infill plot” has therefore been accepted by the Council. This proposal is effectively an application to change the design of the approved house.

2. APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SETTING

2.1 The application site comprises of a 0.12 hectares irregular rectangle of part of the garden of Ridgeway House. It lies within a loose ribbon of residential development on the northern side of Leek Road, Longsdon. The north western and north eastern boundaries of the site are marked by native hedgerow supplemented with mature trees. The south eastern roadside boundary is marked by a drystone wall with a hedgerow behind. To the south west of the application site lies Ridgeway House, a detached two storey brick dwelling and associated rendered outbuilding. Beyond the boundaries of the application site open countryside lies to the north and south and residential development lies to the west. The surrounding area has an unmistakable linear pattern of which the application site forms a part. For the purposes of the Development Plan the application site lies outside any settlement boundary and is in the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 This is a full application which seeks consent for the erection of a detached dwellinghouse. The application building measures: -

House- 12.0m x 7.0m- two storey

Garage wing- 10.0m x 6.5m- one and a half storey

The proposed house would accommodate a living room, kitchen/dining room and laundry room on the ground floor and three bedrooms and a study and bathroom at first floor. The garage wing has space for three cars with a bedroom and en-suite above. The combined buildings have a footprint of 148.6 sq.m.

3.2 The proposal is to be constructed with Ibstock Birtley Old English facing brick with Staffordshire Blue roof tiles. Windows will be upvc "anthracite" with buff reconstructed stone lintels and a rooftile cill detail. The vehicular access proposed by this application is the same as that approved in the recent planning permission.

3.3 The siting of the proposed dwelling will be determined by the presence of valuable trees on and near the site boundaries. The footprint of the proposed building is outside the RPAs of these trees. The application is supported by an Arboricultural Report. It is also determined by a "rear line" of development on neighbouring plots.

3.4 The application proposes improvements to the existing vehicular access which currently serves Ridgeway House. The access will be shared by this and the proposed dwelling. The application drawings show parking facilities for Ridgeway House within the application site.

4 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2019 and it and its predecessors replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan, which in this area comprises of the Core Strategy document which was adopted in March 2014.

4.3 Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. The NPPF confirms that

at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless materials considerations indicate otherwise. It also sets out ways in which the planning system, should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment and minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity.

4.4 The following policies are considered to be relevant to this application:

Local Plan DC1 Design Considerations, T1 Development and Sustainable Transport, H1 – New Housing, R1 Development in Rural Areas

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)- Sections 5 (Housing), 12 (Design) and 13 (Green Belts)

4.5 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy states that new development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Proposals should 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.

4.6 Policy T1 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and helps deliver the priorities of the Staffordshire Local Transport Plans, where this is consistent with other policies.

4.7 Policy R1 of the Core Strategy 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 rural economy, facilities 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. It goes on to state that where new or replacement buildings are required development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.

5. KEY PLANNING ISSUES

5.1 The key issues for consideration during the processing of this application are considered to be the principle of development in the Green Belt and the visual impact of the proposed

development on the character and appearance of the site and the wider surrounding area, impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

Principle of the Proposed Development

5.2 Longsdon village is categorised as a “smaller village” in the Core Strategy. It has no development boundary and is “washed over” by the Green Belt. The erection of dwellings in the Green Belt represents “inappropriate development”. However, the application site represents an “infill plot” within a string of ribbon development. As such, the proposal complies with one of the exceptions to the general resistance of inappropriate development in Green Belts as set down in Paragraph 145 of the NPPF. This view in enforced by the two grantings of planning permission for a dwelling on the site in 2017 and 2018.

Effect on the character and appearance of the area

5.3 The site is on the western edge of the cluster of dwellings that form the focus of the small village of Longsdon. The pattern of development in Longsdon mainly comprises ribbon development along the main roads. The site, which is the side garden of Ridgeway House, is a narrow gap within that pattern, where a row of houses in large plots face the A53.

5.4 The specific design policies of the CS seek to promote local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area as is similarly reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It furthermore states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; is indivisible from good planning; and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

5.5 The application proposes a building which is in keeping with the size and form of buildings nearby. Its design has followed a traditional approach with a principal two storey section with a tradition pitched and gabled roof. It is typical in terms of its form and appearance and, combined with the use of good quality natural materials, ensures that it is in keeping with the character of the village and the rural landscape and result in a positive enhancement to the character and appearance of the area.

Highway Safety

5.6 In terms of highway safety considerations Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that "development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residential cumulative impacts of development are severe". Core Strategy Policy DC1 states that development proposals should provide for safe and satisfactory access whilst also meeting the parking requirement for the necessary car use.

5.6 The proposed development will be served by the access approved in the last two planning applications off the A53. The proposal will not lead to any increase in traffic over and above what has already been approved on the site, and therefore is considered to represent an appropriate and sustainable use of the site.

6. Conclusion

6.1 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle as it represents an accepted infill development in the Green Belt and is therefore consistent with adopted Development Plan policies and the NPPF. Furthermore, its size and scale are commensurate with the character of the village of Longsdon, and its overall form, design and siting will ensure that the building would sit comfortably within the landscape area within which it would be located. As a consequence, the character and appearance of this rural landscape would not be harmed, nor would it raise any adverse amenity issues or be detrimental to highway safety. The proposal would therefore comply with policies SS6(c), DC1, DC3, R1 and T1 of the Core Strategy which require, amongst other matters, the protection of the character and appearance of a locality through well designed development. It would also comply with the National Planning Policy Framework which in relation to new development seeks good design that would complement the character and appearance of an area.

DESIGN AND ACCESS

Amount

The application building has a floorspace of 148.6sq.m. and stands within an area of ground of 0.12ha.

Layout

The siting of the proposed dwelling reflects the limitations imposed by the position of trees on and close to the site. It has been sited centrally within the site in a way that avoids RPAs and respects a notional “rear line” of development on neighbouring plots.

Scale

The principal building will be two storeys with the garage wing being one and a half storeys.

Landscaping

The majority of trees and hedges to the whole of the application site will be retained- three trees will be felled. It is not considered that additional landscaping is necessary given the level of tree cover on and near the site.

Appearance

The application building has a traditional design approach, and its appearance and its overall form and design is in keeping with the character of this rural village

Access

The existing vehicular access to the site will be retained and improved. The site is located within a reasonably sustainable location with a pub and community centre in the village and good public transport along the A53 between Leek and Stoke on Trent.