DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2020/0040 **Valid 29/01/2020**	**YEW TREE FARM** **ROUGHCOTE LANE** **CAVERSWALL**	**PROPOSED TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING REAR EXTENSION** **(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)**

MAIN ISSUES
Impact on the Green Belt, character and appearance of the area and the significance of a non designated heritage asset.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE
Included on the County's record of historic farmsteads. The property dates from the early 19th Century as a double fronted red brick and tile cottage at right angles to the road. By the end of that century a new two storey element had been built adjoining the end gable presenting a new front elevation to the road. This later element appears as though it could be a separate dwelling and is of very different style to the original – much taller with a more imposing frontage, rendered walls and large hipped roof. It appears that some early 19th Century outbuildings have been demolished recently without planning permission.

The farmstead is served by the country lane (Roughcote Lane) it is surrounded by farmland in the Green Belt between the small village settlements of Cookshill and Caverswall.

PROPOSAL
To demolish the earliest red brick part of the property and rebuild it as a wider and taller building that would run to the rear of the roadside frontage providing a new contemporary wing to the property.

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 Area Strategy
R2 Rural Housing (relevant to replacement)
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 Historic Environment
NE1 Biodiversity

Emerging Local Plan Status

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; 13 Protecting Green Belt; 15 Protecting Natural Environment; 16 Protecting Historic Environment.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 2nd March
Neighbour consultation period ends: 2nd March
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
Awaited

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the Green Belt
The property is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions in the closed lists that appear at paragraph 145 and 146 of the NPPF. Two of the exceptions that might be relevant to this case are at paragraph 145:

c) 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; and

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

Assuming, the earliest brick part of the building and the later road frontage addition have functioned together as one dwelling since before 1948, this does appear that it might have been the case, both elements would together form the one original building. However, rather than extend and alter the building as it stands, the proposal is to demolish half of it and completely replace that half with a larger building that would amount to a disproportionate addition to the remaining part of the original building.

The replacement part of the building would have a footprint that is some 35% larger than the one replaced (original brick building 52sqm and replacement 82sqm). With an increased eaves (4m to 5.5m) and ridge height (6.5m to 8.3m) and the additional gable width, the replacement would add at least another 250 cubic metres of volume (total volume of replacement around 530 cubic metres) an increase over the replaced part of around 90% (replaced part 280 cubic metres).

The increase in size of the replacement would be clearly much larger than the existing part of the dwelling that it would replace, to the extent that it is an inescapable fact it would be materially larger. This increase in building size would inevitably lead to the loss of openness as there would be a greater volume and mass of built form. The size, volume and massing of the extension proposed is akin to an additional dwelling within the green belt.

Taking the above into account, it is concluded that neither the exceptions outlined at paragraph 145c) and 145d) apply and therefore the proposal must be classed as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would therefore conflict with the Framework and Policy SS6C of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2014) (CS) which amongst other matters seek to maintain the Green Belt and only allowing for exceptions over inappropriate development as defined by Government policy.

Impact on character and appearance of the rural area
The other rural area strategy SS6c and Policy R2 of the Core Strategy (SS10 of the emerging Local Plan) do make provision for replacement dwellings provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the rural character of the area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.

This development will result in both of those harms. Firstly it would result in the demolition and loss of a building that because of its apparent character as a quality building from the past, its arrangment with the remainder of the farmstead, and its prominence from the roadside, is intrinsic to the character of the area.

Secondly, the replacement building would be of a scale, design and proportions that would not reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area – it would appear as a rather new and contemporary intrusion which would relate particularly poorly to the existing dwelling. The existing dwelling is a double fronted georgian style property with a hipped roof. This proposed addition has a gabled roof form, and has little regard to detail such as fenestration, window sizes and proportions. It incorporates small "gablet" features over windows and lean-to roofs which are not characteristic of the main house. Eaves height and detail does not reflect the original dwelling and the extension sits awkwardly to the rear. The width of the new gable also does not reflect the narrow characteristics of the gables of the existing building. It appears almost as a modern suburban detached dwelling "attached" to the rear of an historic building.

The adverse impacts of the new building would be particularly apparent because of its size, height and mass in an exposed and prominent location. The exposure of the existing building and therefore that of the proposed replacement has been increased because buildings in the foreground, between roadside and builidng, have already been demolished and removed. Regrettably, some of those buildings were of particular quality and age as integral elements of the original farmstead layout.

As such the development would be contraty to Policies SS6c, R2 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (SS10 and DC1 of the emerging Local Plan) and the provisions of the NPPF. It also fails to comply with the provisions of both the National Design Guide and the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide which states that (inter alia):

All extensions should harmonise with the parent building. An extension should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing……...The smaller the parent building, the fewer the options for extension. A two storey rear extension to a small cottage is unlikely to be acceptable, even on the rear. ……...Irrespective of size, however, all buildings can reach a threshold point beyond which further extension is just not possible without destroying their character.

Impact on the significance of a non designated heritage asset
The building and farmstead date from the early 19th Century, it is included on the Historic England farmstead survey. Old maps show that the brick part of the building was built first as the original farm dwelling in the early part of the century and formed original farmstead arrangment with other quality buildings of the same vernacular

(regrettably some have been removed recently without planning permission). Before the end of the Century the second element that presents a roadside frontage and is of different architectural style, had been added. There is a liklihood of the propery having historic association with the Caverswall Castle estate.

With consideration for the building's age, its character and appearance and the evidence of historic record, the building is considered to be a non designated heritage asset. The development would be very harmful to the historic environment because it would result in the loss of the earliest part of that heritage asset. There are no other considerations or public benefits that clearly outweigh that harm and in the absence of a heritage statement to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance, there is no evidence that would lead to a different conclusion. In these regards there would be conflict with policy DC2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

Impact on Ecology
The proposal includes the demolition of an evidently sizeable part of an old property in a leafy rural area. It is likely that this could affect or lead to the loss of the habitat of protected species. In this combination of circumstances there should at least have been a survey for bats.

The NPPF requires the following principles to be applied: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

The application has not been submitted with any kind of ecology survey that might enable us to establish the significance of any harm to biodiversity. Normal practice would begin with a preliminary survey which if it ruled out the chance of bats being present, unlikely in the case of this building, this might avoid need for later seasonal activity survey (May thro summer to September latest). In these regards there is concern that work appears underway and some buildings have already been demolished without planning permission.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE
The development would be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt, result in the loss of a building that is intrinsic to the character of the rural area and identified as heritage asset and introduce a new building that would be harmful to local distinctiveness. The development is also likely to result in a yet to be quantified harm to protected species. There are no benefits or other considerations that would clearly outweigh these harms.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst
Recommendation Date: 25th March 2020

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council