DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
Land at Garden Street Leek

1- ASSESSMENT:

1.1- Physical Context

The site comprises a roughly triangular shaped plot of overgrown garden land facing west onto Garden Street. It is not related to any specific property in the locality and is bounded on one side (to the north east) by an electricity sub-station and on the other (to the south) by a selection of outbuildings. This is otherwise a densely developed well established residential area.

1.2- Social Context

The nearest houses are those opposite on Garden Street. These are 3 storey terraced properties. Garden Street itself is over 8 metres wide and spacing front to front is generous in terms of terraced housing. The houses in Angle Street to the south east are 16 metres away from the rear boundary (and facing away at about 45 degrees). It is not considered that any existing occupiers would be adversely affected by the proposed development.

1.3- Economic Context

The provision of a small unit of accommodation in this area would help maintain the viability of the town. All amenities are within walking distance.

1.4- Planning Policy Context

The Local Plan has 2 policies which apply here. Policy H5 deals with development boundaries and allows the principal of development within those limits where there are no other over-riding objections. This site is within the development boundary for Leek. The site is overgrown and gives a poor appearance to this part of the street. Development as proposed can be achieved without causing any over-riding problems.

Policy B13 governs the quality of development. The proposal takes the traditional street scene here and incorporates that into a design which achieves modern objectives and allows adequate amenity space for the occupants without affecting the existing residents.

Supplementary planning guidance is given in ‘Appendix 3’ Space about Dwellings. This is a prescriptive document dating from September 1998. It details sizes of gardens and distances between windows. It does not give any flexibility.

Here, the rigid application of that standard would prevent dev elopement of a plot which in the present climate could usefully provide a modest dwelling without affecting amenity. The size of the amenity area is about 72 square metres including the areas to the side. This exceeds the requirement. However, the depth of the garden is less at around 7.5 metres. This, though does not result in any significant over-looking issues as the nearest houses in Angle Street are over 20 metres away, and at a considerable angle. The sub-station building is single storey with a hipped tiled roof and has no openings. This will not form an unattractive outlook. It is considered that whilst the principles of the advice are still relevant, the rigid application is all cases will stifle innovative and beneficial development.

2- INVOLVEMENT:

The scheme has been discussed with officers at the LPA and the feeling from that process was that a single dwelling may be the best solution for the site. Other possibilities considered included a small terrace, 3 storey accommodation or a block of flats.

3- EVALUATION:

The decision was taken to progress a scheme for a single dwelling which would raise the quality of the street scene here and provide modest family accommodation. The scheme will not have any adverse effect on neighbours whilst helping maintain the viability of the town centre. The scheme complies with the Local Plan requirements.

4- DESIGN:

4.1- Use

Use as a single dwelling is proposed.

4.2- Amount

The size of the proposal is similar in scale to the terraced houses further south along Garden Street. Those opposite are larger and taller. It was not felt appropriate to develop to that scale on this site.

4.3- Layout

The layout also matches that of property nearby. It will be set back just behind the pavement with a traditional and simple façade.

4.4- Scale

The scale of the development will be similar to that of those properties to the south. It will be less dominant than those opposite.

4.5- Landscaping

A simple planting scheme for the rear garden to soften features is proposed. There will be grassed areas to form the amenity area.

4.6- Appearance

A traditional appearance is proposed with a red brick walls and blue tile for the roof. Masonry lintels and cills to blend with those nearby are proposed.

4.7- Access

The slight slope on the frontage will enable a level access at the front door to be achieved with minimal ground works.

Signed…….*a*…… Dated 1st April 2010

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