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PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL : CONVERSION OF GARAGE INTO HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

ADDRESS : HIGH VIEW, LEEK ROAD, LONGSDON, ST9 9QF

APPLICANT : MR & MRS BROOKES

DATE : JUNE 2020 JOB No. : 2020-2395

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr & Mrs Brookes to prepare and submit a full planning application for the conversion of an existing garage into holiday accommodation at High View, Leek Road, Longsdon. The application is accompanied by drawing numbers 2019-2395-01, 2019-2395-02D and 2019-2395-03A which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

This statement analyses the site, the proposal and the policy context within which it is made. Thereafter it provides justification for approval of the proposed development primarily on the basis that the scheme would constitutes a sustainable form of development which is wholly in accordance with adopted development plan policies.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the southern side of Leek Road to the west of Leek. It comprises of a modest detached outbuilding which was formerly the telephone exchange but now used as a domestic garage in conjunction with the adjacent dwelling known as High View. The building which is single storey has a simple rectangular footprint and sits gable end onto the highway. It is constructed from red facing brickwork under a plain clay tile hipped roof. The area to the front of the garage is given over to tarmacadam with garden to the rear. To the east of the site lies the Memorial Hall whilst to the west lie residential dwellings which form a ribbon of development on this side of the main road. Open countryside lies to the north. For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

3.0 PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks conversion of an existing outbuilding to holiday accommodation. The existing building has a floor area of 27 sq metres with an eaves height of 2.6metres and an overall ridge height of 4.3 meters. The converted outbuilding would provide an open plan kitchen / living arrangement with shower room and a single bedroom. Off street parking would be provided to the front of the unit and a small garden area provided to the rear.

4.0 POLICY

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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012 and replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It was revised in February 2019 and 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.

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 material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF also sets out requirements in respect of housing delivery and securing high quality design. The following are considered to be the most relevant chapters:-

- Chapter 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 6 - Economy
- Chapter 12 - Achieving Well Designed Places
- Chapter 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- Chapter 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014) and the Saved Local plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (1998). The most relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles); SS1a (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development); SS2 (Future provision of Development); SS6 (Rural Areas);SS6c (Other Rural Areas Strategy); E3 (Tourism); SD1 (Sustainable Use of Resources); SD3 (Carbon Saving Measures in Development); DC1 (Design Considerations); DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting); C1 (Creating Sustainable Communities); R1 (Rural Diversification); R2 (Rural Housing); T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport) and T2 (Other Sustainable Transport Measures). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section. For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

In terms of Supplementary Planning Guidance the Space About Dwellings (September 1998 - Appendix 3 of the Local Plan [1998]) and Design Principles for Staffordshire Moorlands are also important in the consideration of this application.

5.0 ASSESSMENT

The key issues for consideration in the determination of this application are therefore considered to be: -

- The principle of development particularly in relation to the Green Belt
- Design & impact on the local area
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact on highway safety

The Principle of Development

Policy SS6c requires strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Green Belt policy in the NPPF lists the forms of development which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt and this includes the change of use of buildings, where the buildings are solid and permanent. The application building is constricted from stone and tile. It comprises of a former telephone exchange building which has been converted into a domestic garage building. Historically applications to convert the building into ancillary domestic use and stand alone holiday accommodation have previously been accepted by the Local Planning Authority (referencer numbers SMD/2001/1297 and SMD/1985/0308).

The acceptability of the proposal in Green Belt terms is assessed against the policies set out in Chapter 13 of the NPPF and R1 of the Core Strategy.

Para 146 recognises that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt "provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it". The "re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction" is one of these categories. Because the application building is of permanent and substantial construction, it follows that the proposal is not "inappropriate development". The application building is not being proposed to be extended which means that the openness of the Green Belt will not be affected.

Policy R1 of the Core Strategy allows the appropriate conversion of rural buildings into other uses, including commercial uses including tourist accommodation.

This proposal represents appropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of para. 146 of the NPPF. In addition, the proposal complies with Policy R1 of the Core Strategy in that it proposes a sustainable holiday use that will assist the diversification of the rural area and bring "new spend" into this part of the rural area. This is further supported by the Core Strategy giving priority "to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses". The application building is of a traditional vernacular building which by virtue of its scale, form, design and materials is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The proposal does generally comply with the aims of Policy R1 and in any case, the policy is proposed to be deleted when the forthcoming and advanced Local Plan is expected to be adopted this year. The site is located in a sustainable location on the outskirts of Leek and is easily accessible by walking, cycling and other public transport links.

Design & Impact on the Local Area

The Staffordshire Moorlands "Design Principles" SPD provides useful guidance on conversions of rural buildings. The specific design policies of the CS also seek to promote local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the area, as is also reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Policy DC1 sets out the design criteria relating to new development to reinforce local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area.

The application building is a utilitarian former telephone exchange building and its appearance reflects this. The proposed conversion would be sympathetic as it would be contained within the shell of the existing without any extension. All existing openings would be reused and the only alteration would be the provision of a small set of steps and handrail at the rear of the building to give access from the pedestrian door down into the garden area. Given that the application building is existing and that there would be minimal change to its external appearance it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to the character of the site and the character of the surrounding area. The traditional appearance of the application building will continue to make a positive contribution to the character of this rural area.

In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies DC1 and DC2 of the adopted Core Strategy as well as guidance contained within the NPPF and supplementary planning guidance.

Impact on Residential Amenity

It is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to residential amenity. The site has previously been assessed and accepted for residential use and there has been no change to site circumstances during this time. The converted building sits forward and at right angles to the main dwelling and there would be no opportunity for overlooking either from or to the proposed unit. The unit whilst modest would provide adequate space for a one bed unit with adequate parking and amenity space separate to the main dwelling provided. The proposal provides adequate amenity for proposed occupiers of the unit and would not adversely affect the amenity currently afforded to the occupiers of the host building.

Impact on Highway Safety
The proposed unit would be served by the existing vehicular access point onto the main Leek Road. An existing area of tarmacadam at the front of the building would provide two off road parking spaces. Adequate parking and turning provision would be retained within the site for the occupiers of the host building. In this respect it is not considered that the proposal would be detrimental to highway safety.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. The submitted proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development in that it involves the re-use of an existing rural building which is considered suitable in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the principle of conversion is acceptable and the building is appropriate for conversion into holiday use. The proposal adopts a sympathetic approach to the conversion of the building and will not give rise to any material harm to the character and appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area. The proposal increases "holiday spend" in the District and in doing so assists the rural economy. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies SS6c, R1, DC1, DC2 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes the conversion of the existing domestic garage for holiday accommodation use.

AMOUNT

The proposal is for a modest one bedroomed unit which will be in keeping with the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site and ensures that adopted development plan policies could be satisfactorily achieved.

LAYOUT

The layout of the proposed dwelling is shown on drawing number 2019-2395-03A and will be unchanged.

SCALE

The application building will be converted within the shell of the existing building without any extension or enlargement. The existing garage has a floor area of 27 sq metres with an eaves height of 2.6 metres and an overall ridge height of 4.3 metres. It is considered that this scale of development would be in keeping with the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

LANDSCAPING

Adequate landscaping is currently provided on the site with the existence of established trees and boundary features. No additional landscaping is proposed as part of this application.

APPEARANCE

The proposed development would retain the external character and appearance of the application building with the only alterations limited to the . These are shown on submitted drawing number 2019-2395-02D.

ACCESS

Dedicated off road parking provision will be provided off the shared space in the curtilage of the site, Adequate parking and turning facilities will be provided for the host building. The site is located within a sustainable location and transport links are easily accessible within the city and to outlying areas.