DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2020/0285	**48 FERNWOOD DRIVE**	**PROPOSED TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION WITH EXTENDED PORCH TO FRONT**
Valid 05/06/2020	**LEEK**	**(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and appearance of the existing dwellinghouse and the surrounding area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Impact on highway safety.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises a two-storey, semi-detached dwellinghouse constructed of brick and tile. The first floor of the property, to both the front and rear, is covered in hanging tiles. A single storey flat roofed garage is positioned to the side of the dwellinghouse, that projects slightly forward of the dwellinghouse's front elevation. The garage is attached to the dwellinghouse by a flat-roofed porch.

The dwellinghouse is located on a residential street, within the Development Boundary of Leek. The street comprises semi-detached properties of a similar appearance to the application site, but some have been extended and altered. The land to the rear of the application site slopes upwards and therefore the properties behind are located on a higher ground level.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to erect a two-storey side extension.

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 Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

On July 20th 2020, the Council published the Inspector's final report thereby drawing a close to the examination in public. The report concludes that with the recommended main modifications, the plan satisfies the requirements of Section 20(5) of the 2004 Act and meets the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As such, the main modifications which accompany the Inspector's report provide a clear indication of the final policy wording when read in conjunction with the Local Plan Submission Version (2018).

In this context, the Council's position on the weight to be given to the policies (as modified) in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is considered below:

- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at the most advanced stage of preparation prior to adoption as the Inspector has concluded that the Local Plan is sound subject to the recommended modifications being made.
- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies – the Inspector has now drawn his final conclusions and there are no further matters to resolve
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework – the policies (as modified) have been found by the Inspector to be sound in the context of the 2012 NPPF under which the Local Plan has been examined. One of the "tests of soundness" that the Local Plan has successfully been measured against is whether it is "consistent with national policy". Because the Local Plan has been prepared and examined under the 2012 NPPF, it should be noted that in some limited cases, its policies do not directly reflect current national policy. However, planning law requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Current national policy is a material consideration and should be given weight accordingly.

Given the above, all policies (as modified) should be given substantial weight.

Emerging Policies:

SS1 Development Principles
1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS5 Leek Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 - 14
Section(s) 4, 12

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 31/07/2020
Neighbour consultation period ends: 30/06/2020
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments: Leek Town Council recommends the application for approval as they do not consider it to be unneighbourly.

Staffordshire County Council Highways: Note the application has increased from 3 to 4 bedrooms along with the loss of the garage. They therefore requested a plan showing the parking layout for 3 vehicles.

A revised drawing showing 3no. off-street parking spaces was submitted and therefore SCC Highways removed their initial objection, subject to the applicant entering into a Section 184 Notice of Approval from SCC for works to drop the kerb. This should be attached as an Informative should permission be granted.

Severn Trent Water: No objections to the proposals and do not require a drainage condition to be applied.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2019) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with policies SS1 and SS1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy the Council will expect all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protecting, and where possible, enhancing the environment. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF (2019).

The dwellinghouse is located within the Development Boundary of Leek; a 'town' as identified by Core Strategy policies SS5 and SS5b. Extensions to dwellinghouses in towns is considered acceptable in principle as they accord with both local and national planning policy.

Design

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2019) requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture.

The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that 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.

During the course of the application, concern was raised by the Planning Officer regarding the design of the proposed two-storey extension. Namely its projection forward of the front elevation of the existing dwellinghouse and therefore would comprise an overly dominant and out-of-character feature, contrary to the Council's Design Guide SPD.

A revised drawing was therefore submitted that retained the ground floor in the same position as the existing forward projecting garage, but set the first floor back behind the front elevation of the dwellinghouse. The application will therefore be assessed in accordance with the revised drawing.

The existing single storey attached garage will be demolished and replaced with a two-storey side extension. It will project forward of the existing dwellinghouse to the same depth as the existing garage, thereby remaining in-line with the attached porch at ground floor level. The extension will be marginally wider than the existing garage, but a gap of 800mm will be retained between the extension and the shared boundary. The extension will extend the full length of the existing house and will be flush with the rear elevation. The first floor will be marginally stepped back from the front elevation. The extension will be constructed of brick and tile to match the existing dwellinghouse. A lean-to roof will be positioned above the existing flat roofed porch and the projecting ground floor of the extension to the front elevation.

It is considered that the revised drawing has overcome the Planning Officer's initial concerns as the proposed extension will now appear subservient to the existing dwellinghouse due to the set back at first floor level.

Any mismatch of material will be avoided in the elevation due to the brick corner detailing and any terracing will be avoided due to the step down to the neighbouring dwelling created by the change in ground levels. Whilst it would have been desirable to have achieved a step down in the roof to create a shadow line to avoid mismatch of materials, in this case it would have been awkward to achieve due to the unusual asymmetrical roof form. Also there are similar extensions in the vicinity. Therefore a materials condition requiring re-use of tiles from the rear roof slope or complete re-roofing is proposed. .

The proposed lean-to roof will improve the appearance of the dwellinghouse, as it will remove the existing flat roofs. The proposed materials and the roof design of the extension will match those of the existing dwellinghouse. It is for these reasons that the proposed extension will complement the character and appearance of the existing dwellinghouse and the surrounding street scene.

Amenity

Core Strategy policy DC1 and paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF (2019) seek to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

The adjacent neighbour, No. 46 Fernwood Drive, has converted their attached garage to additional living accommodation and has a first floor window within the side elevation. The window serves the landing/stairs and therefore comprises a secondary window. 2no. windows are proposed within the side elevation of the proposed extension that will serve a downstairs wc and a first floor en-suite; both secondary windows. The proposed extension will comply with the 45-degree guideline in respect of No. 46. It is for these reasons that the proposed extension will not have a detrimental impact on this property's amenity.

The proposed extension will not extend any closer towards to the properties to the rear than the existing dwellinghouse and a distance of 23 metres will be maintained. The proposed extension will therefore not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the property to the rear.

The property on the opposite side of the road, No. 2 Hillside Drive, is angled away from the application site. There is no direct view from the proposed extension towards this property. A distance of over 30 metres will be maintained between the proposed extension and No. 2 Hillside Drive and the proposed extension will not be any closer to the neighbouring property than the existing dwellinghouse. The proposed extension will therefore not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of this property.

The attached dwellinghouse, No. 50 Fernwood Drive, will not be affected by the proposed development due to the siting and scale of the proposed extension.

Highway Safety

Policies DC1 and T1 seek to achieve a level of parking and an access that is appropriate to the development it serves.

The proposed extension will result in the number of bedrooms increasing from three to four and result in the loss of the existing attached garage. The existing front garden has been cleared and hardcore has been put down to create a large parking area to the front of the property.

The parking standards contained within Appendix 8 of the Local Plan Submission Version states that a minimum of 3no. off-street parking spaces need to be provided for a four-bedroomed property. The Highway Engineer requested a revised drawing showing 3no. off-street parking spaces and one was duly submitted by the applicant indicating that there is space within the front garden for the parking of 3no. vehicles.

On receipt of the revised drawing, the Highways Engineer changed their initial recommendation of refusal to 'no objection'. However the Highway Engineer notes that the current access crossing is not dropped to a sufficient width to facilitate vehicles accessing the hardstanding. Vehicles will be driven over the full height kerb and footway which isn't permitted for safety. The Highway Engineer therefore recommends that 5no. kerbs are altered (4no. additional dropped kerbs and 1no. upward transitional kerb) to widen the existing access towards No. 50 Fernwood Drive. Subject to an Informative being attached should permission be granted, it is considered that the development will not pose a highway safety issue.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development (as shown on the revised drawing) is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, the NPPF (2019) and the emerging policies in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. As such the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to conditions

Case Officer: Ailsa Berry
Recommendation Date: 03/08/2020

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood
On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council