SAMMONS Architectural LIMITED

Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists

10 Cawdry Buildings
Fountain Street
Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6JP
Tel / fax 01538 386002
e-mail info@sammonsltd.co.uk

PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING MATTERS OF DESIGN AND ACCESS

PROPOSAL : FULL APPLICATION FOR ALTERATIONS TO OUTBUILDING AND CHANGE OF USE OF FIRST FLOOR TO ANCILLARY ACCOMODATION

ADDRESS : EASING VILLA, THORNCLIFFE, LEEK, ST13 7LS

APPLICANT : MR & MRS MORRIS

DATE : SEPTEMBER 2020 JOB No. : 2019-2451

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr & Mrs Morris to prepare and submit a full planning application for the alterations and change of use of the first floor of an existing outbuilding to ancillary domestic accommodation at Easing Villa, Thorncliffe. The application is accompanied by existing and proposed drawings numbered 2019-2451-01, 2019-2451-02B and 2019-2451-03 which should be read in conjunction with this planning, design and access statement.

This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of these proposals, primarily on the basis that the development would result in a sustainable form of development which would not impact adversely on the character and appearance of the application building or its wider setting, prejudice residential amenity, harm highway safety or affect any established ecological interests.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application building comprises of a traditional two storey outbuilding which is constructed from red facing brickwork with stone quoins and detailing under a plain clay tile roof. A single storey extension which runs the entire length of the rear elevation before wrapping around the north eastern gable of the building has been constructed in a mix of timber and brick with a corrugated sheet roof. The application building, along with the existing dwellinghouse and a stable block development lies on the north eastern side of Stilehouse Lane, close to its junction with Thorncliffe Road. It sits at right angles to the main dwelling, gable end on the highway but set back from it. The site lies in an attractive rural area outside any designated settlement boundary.

3.0 PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks consent for alterations and change of use of the first floor of the outbuilding to ancillary domestic accommodation. The existing single storey wrap around extension would be demolished and replaced with an extension on the same footprint constructed from more traditional materials. A set of stone granary steps would be provided on the north eastern elevation and an existing opening would provide pedestrian access to the first floor which would be used as a hobby room. Two velux rooflighs would be provided in the north west (rear) elevation of the building. In addition to the above a new 1800mm high brick wall would replace the existing block work and timber fence which currently enclosed the yard area between the application building and the stable block development which lies to the north east.

4.0 PLANNING 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) which was published on 27th March 2012 and revised in February 2019 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.

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 12 - Achieving Well Designed Places
- Chapter 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the adopted Local plan (September, 2020). The most relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles); SS10 (Other Rural Areas Strategy); DC1 (Design Considerations); DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting); NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Resources) and T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

5.0 KEY PLANNING ISSUES

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

- The principle of development
- Design and appearance
- Residential amenity
- Highway safety

The Principle of Development

For the purposes of planning policy consideration the application site lies outside any defined settlement boundary within the open countryside. The conversion of existing buildings in the countryside into other uses is not unacceptable particularly if the building is solid, permanent and in keeping with the rural and traditional character of the area.

The application building is currently used as a garage, workshop and store at ground floor and this use would be retained. The use of part of the upper floor as a small hobby room by the applicant would introduce an appropriate ancillary domestic use which would be used in conjunction with the main farmhouse. Accordingly the principle of development is considered acceptable in principle in accordance with the provisions of policy SS10 of the recently adopted Local Plan.

Design & Appearance

The specific design policy of the LP also 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. Developments should function well and establish a strong sense of place creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Proposals should also optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and respond to local character and history including local materials and the use of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Developments should also create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

The removal of the existing brick and timber lean to and its replacement in more traditional materials would positively enhance the character and appearance of the building. Alterations to facilitate the proposed use are minimal and limited to the re-opening of an existing doorway in the gable elevation, construction of stone granary steps to provide external first floor access and the introduction of two small Velux rooflights in the rear roof slope of the building which would not significantly harm the character and appearance of the building.

Given that the application building is existing, structurally sound, already in domestic use 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 and appearance of the application building, its setting or the valued characteristics of the wider area In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies DC1 of the adopted Core Strategy as well as guidance contained within the NPPF and supplementary planning guidance.

Amenity

The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that good design is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The NPPF also states that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area. Local Plan policy DC1 requires that all development proposals should 'protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.'

Given the relatively isolated location of the application site and the fairly sporadic spattering of farmsteads and dwellings t is considered that the proposal would not raise any adverse amenity issues.

Highways

Paragraph 108 and 109 of the NPPF states: Plans and decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe is reflected in LP Policy T1 Development and Sustainable Transport.

Having regard to the existing use of the application building and the fact the application proposes the creation of additional ancillary use at first floor level it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any material intensification of the use of the existing vehicular access. Adequate parking and turning facilities are provided within the site and in this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with CS policy T1 and guidance contained within the NPPF.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. It also states in the NPPF that where proposals accord with the development plan they should be approved without delay, and where policies are out-of-date permission should only be refused where there is significant and demonstrable harm to outweigh the benefits of the development.

This proposal represents appropriate development in the open countryside in accordance with LP policy SS10. In addition 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. The proposal adopts a sympathetic approach and will not give rise to any material harm to the character and appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area. The proposal furthermore will not derive any significant issues in respect of highway safety nor will it be prejudicial to residential amenity. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies SS10, DC1, DC3 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes the alteration and re-use of the existing rural building for ancillary domestic purposes which is considered sustainable and appropriate in this location.

AMOUNT

The proposal will maintain the ground floor use of the building as a garage, workshop and store and introduce a hobby room in part of the first floor of the building.

LAYOUT

The layout of the proposal is as shown on the submitted plans numbered 2019-2451-02B.

SCALE

The application building will be converted within the shell of the existing building. The existing single storey wrap around extension will be rebuilt on the same footprint. The only alterations relate to the provision of stone granary steps, alterations to an existing first floor gable window and introduction of 2 velux rooflights on the rear elevation of the building.

LANDSCAPING

The application proposes to replace the existing block work and timber fence which encloses the yard area between the application building and the stable block to the north east with a more appropriate 1.8m high brick wall. No additional soft landscaping is proposed as part of this application.

APPEARANCE

The proposed development will retain the external character and appearance of the application building with the only alterations limited to the alterations set out above as shown on the submitted drawings.

ACCESS

Pedestrian access will be as shown on the submitted plans. The existing parking and turning facilities for the main dwelling retained and no alterations to the vehicular access are proposed as part of this application.