

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0294
Valid 07/05/2021

GARDEN VILLA
EAST DRIVE
CHEDDLETON

**CHANGE OF USE FROM
RESIDENTIAL DWELLING TO
CHILDREN'S DAY NURSERY
AND CHANGE OF USE FROM
CHILDREN'S DAY NURSERY
TO RESIDENTIAL DWELLING**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- Impact on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Impact on highway safety.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises an existing children's day nursery with on-site dwellinghouse that is occupied by the owner of the nursery. It was a former hospital building on the St Edwards Hospital site before being converted into its current uses following the grant of planning permission in 2003. The site is isolated, being surrounded by playing fields, fields and woodland. The application site is located in the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing dwellinghouse to a children's day nursery and to change the use of part of the existing nursery to a dwellinghouse.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

- SS1 Development Principles
 - 1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 - 14

Section(s) 4, 12, 13

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2003/0659 Change of use of former hospital building to part residential and children's day nursery
Approved 08/05/2003

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 15/06/2021
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments: None

Town / Parish Comments: Cheddleton Parish Council have no objection.

SCC Highways: No objection on highways grounds to this proposal.

Severn Trent Water: No objection 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 1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, 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 application site is located in the Open Countryside and Green Belt whereby policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.

Part (2) of policy SS10 seeks to sustain the rural economy by '*enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified*'. The application site involves an existing children's day nursery and the proposal seeks to swap around the existing uses within the existing buildings to facilitate more space for the nursery, providing an additional 30 children's spaces and additional employment for 8-10 people.

The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable as it will comply with policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020).

Green Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt whereby policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) and chapter 13 of the NPPF (2019) are applicable. Part (6) of policy SS10 states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

The proposal seeks to swap the building currently used as the owner's on-site dwellinghouse with the building that is currently used as the nursery's baby unit. The development will involve the change of use of these buildings, with minimal external alterations. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF (2019) outlines that certain other forms of development in the Green Belt are not inappropriate provided they do not affect openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. One such type of development is:

d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

The existing buildings the subject of this application are currently used as a dwellinghouse and as part of the existing children's day nursery. The buildings are therefore of permanent and substantial construction. The development will improve the openness of the Green Belt as an existing conservatory and a single storey utility will be demolished. The development will also comply with the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt, as outlined at paragraph 134 of the NPPF (2019).

The proposed development therefore comprises an exception to inappropriate development and complies with policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2019) and chapter 13 of the NPPF (2019).

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 *'alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building...The aim is to revitalise the building without altering its fundamental character'*.

No changes are proposed to the single storey building that will change from children's day nursery to dwellinghouse.

The works involved in changing the use of the existing two-storey dwellinghouse to a children's day nursery include:

- Demolishing a modern conservatory;
- Demolishing a single storey brick built lean-to that is used as a utility room; and
- Blocking up 1no. ground floor door that provides access into the utility room that is to be demolished.

The removal of the modern conservatory will improve the appearance of the existing building, whilst the demolition of the single storey utility room is not considered to adversely affect the overall character or appearance of the existing building. The blocking up of what is currently an internal door into the utility room will also not adversely affect the character or appearance of the existing building and could be undertaken without planning permission. The proposed alterations are located to the rear of the existing building or within an existing courtyard and therefore they will not be visible from public vantage points.

It is for these reasons that the design of the proposed development is considered to comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019).

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 application site is isolated and therefore there are no amenity issues associated with the proposed development.

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 Highways Engineer has assessed the application and made the following comments:

'Principle of use as a nursery is already established as building is in current use as a nursery. Proposal involves an additional 43.4 sqm of floorspace for the nursery use and an additional 10 employees.'

Application form states that there is no parking on the site. When I visited the site, there did however appear to be a small car park. At the time of my site visit, mid-afternoon, weekday there was one vehicle in the car park when I arrived. There was no evidence of vehicles parked on the highway.

Nursery is likely to be busier at drop off and pick up times, but these are likely to be more spread out than school drop off times.'

The Highway Engineer raised no objection to the proposed development and therefore it is not considered to have a detrimental effect on highway safety. The development will therefore comply with policies DC1 and T1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019). As such the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to Conditions

Case Officer: Ailsa Berry

Recommendation Date: 02/07/2021

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

