



FOREFRONT

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Design and Access Statement

Outline planning application for a single detached dwelling on
land adjacent Houghwood Cottage Farm, Stanley Road,
Stockton Brook, ST9 9LL

1.0 Introduction

The application site is currently a piece of a larger field. It has a road frontage, and it lies within houses either side.

This application proposes a single detached dwelling. This application is in outline form with no specific plans and details of the new house, although it is likely to be a dormer bungalow. However, the means of access to the site (off Stanley Road) is included for determination at this stage.

The submitted plans show the application site edged in red, whilst the remainder of the field is edged in blue. The application site excludes an area to the eastern boundary which will remain as a field access to the land to the rear. This access uses the existing field gate.

2.0 Site Location and Setting

The site is designated as Green Belt. However, the site lies within a ribbon of other houses. It lies to the east of the village of Stanley.

The site adjoins other residential properties and has a road frontage. A new vehicular access would be created, approximately in the centre of the site's road frontage. There is an existing gated vehicular access. The site is also partly screened by vegetation. None of these are rare or unusual and have become overgrown.

The Local Authority have recently imposed a Tree Preservation Order on two trees close to the site, both Horse Chestnut specimens. Neither protected tree is affected by the development proposals. The remainder of the trees on the site would have been assessed when this TPO (SM322 (2021)) was imposed, no other vegetation on the site has been identified as being of sufficient merit to warrant protection to ensure retention.

The site is generally flat and level. There is no evidence on the site of significant biodiversity value. Nevertheless, a biodiversity investigation has recently been completed and submitted as part of the planning application.

There are no environmental restrictions prohibiting or severely restricting the potential for residential development of the site.

There are mains services nearby which are capable of serving the proposed additional dwelling.

The site is accessible to services and facilities by means other than a private car.

3.0 Planning History and Constraints

The site has been the subject of a planning application for two dwellings under SMD/1985/0483. However, no details of that application are publicly available.

The site lies within the designated Green Belt. It does not lie within or within the curtilage of a Listed Building nor Conservation Area. None of the trees on the site are protected. Planning permission has been granted on the adjacent site under SMD/2008/1011 for conversion of a garage and outbuilding to form a residential annex. This means that in close proximity to the application site planning permission has been granted recently for a new dwelling in the Green Belt.

Anecdotally there is information about localized flooding of the road past the site in times of heavy rain. The development of the site will not necessarily worsen that issue, as new and drains could be installed if required, during the construction of the house to attenuate runoff from the site.

4.0 Proposed Use

The proposed use of the site is for a residential development, and this application is in outline form without details of the new dwelling. However the size of the site is comparable to the residential plots in the surrounding area. Both traditional and modern building styles are seen in the locality and two-storey dwellings predominate. The site therefore has the potential to be developed for a single house without a detrimental effect on the neighbour's amenities or prevailing development character

5.0 Layout and Access

Developing the site for a new dwelling will not be at odds with the general pattern of built form in the area. Neither will it appear cramped or over-developed.

The new dwelling would be served by a new vehicular access, located approximately centrally in the site's road frontage. An updated plan showing the proposed access has been submitted showing visibility from the new site entrance. This makes it clear that the existing road-side hedge to the site would be removed in its entirety in order to create a safe point of access. A new hedge would be planted, of species to be agreed, located approximately 3 metres from the highway to increase visibility for the new access.

The space created between the new and existing hedge will be hardsurfaced to provide a pedestrian footway.

The visibility splays able to be created at the site access fall short of the highways engineers' standards. However, the potential splays enable a good range of forward visibility. Stanley Road has a speed limit of 40mph past the site. Furthermore drivers will be clearly aware of the generally built up nature of the locality and awake to the unexpected dangers of traffic entering and leaving residential properties immediately around the application site.

Traffic travelling from the west to the east will already be preparing for an uphill section and a sharp bend just beyond the application side to the east. These geographical features already alert drivers to the need for special care when driving near the application site and the proposed access is not therefore likely to cause a traffic danger in isolation.

The proposed visibility splays will be, in all likelihood, better than the exceed the vision splays to existing properties nearby.

The provision of a 3 metre wide strip of hardsurfacing across the site frontage in front of the new boundary hedge will provide a refuge for pedestrians to stand away from passing vehicles. This is a positive benefit of the scheme to the local community as Stanley Road has no pavement in the vicinity of the appeal site.

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF makes it clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. It is not considered that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety for the reasons detailed above

6.0 Planning Policy Appraisal

The site is located within the designated North Staffordshire Green Belt. The development the subject of this application is considered to represent infilling within an otherwise built up frontage, of a form supported by Local Plan Policy H1 (b)

The relevant planning policy comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, which was adopted in September 2020.

NPPF

Paragraph 9

Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.

Paragraph 11

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development... For **decision-taking** 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 most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this 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 this Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 79

To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.

Paragraph 80

Planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside...

NOTE- the plans do not propose an isolated new house, it lies in a ribbon of development.

Paragraph 111

Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Paragraph 137

The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Paragraph 138

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

NOTE- the application site does not fulfil any of these functions.

Paragraph 147

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 148

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 149

A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Local Plan

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan is a District wide development plan which replaces the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, Biddulph Area Action Plan (AAP) and previous

Local Plan to provide a framework for delivering development for the period 2014 to 2033. The Local Plan was adopted on 9th September 2020.

The LP has a list of challenges as follows:

“Staffordshire Moorlands is an area of great diversity and opportunity which faces a number of significant challenges, both from external influences and pressures at a global, national and regional level and from changes occurring at a more local level. These will drive the changes that are going to be necessary to bring about a sustainable improvement in the social, economic and environmental conditions of the District. The following summary of the challenges and the related issues are those which were identified in the Core Strategy and any subsequent issues arising from the evidence base, the consultations we have undertaken, the various information and monitoring sources and the requirements of various key bodies and organisations.”

However, the protection of the Green Belt is not one of these stated challenges.

The LP also includes a Vision, which states:

“The Rural Areas will have viable, attractive villages and smaller settlements which will continue to foster appropriate, sensitive growth and vitality to support rural living and work. The larger villages will be the rural centres for services, facilities and jobs acting to sustain the rural areas. Smaller village communities will also continue to thrive with a range of housing opportunities and improved access to community services.”

This Vision also does not include protecting the Green Belt.

The following LP policies are relevant

Policy SS 1 Development Principles

The Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers.
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community; increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce.
- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment.
- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings.
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.
- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

All proposals for development will be considered in the context of the District-wide Spatial Strategy and with regard to both its direct and indirect cumulative impact over the longer term. New development will make effective use of land and the best use of previously developed land and buildings.

Once again, the protection of the Green Belt is not included in this policy.

Policy SS 2 Settlement Hierarchy classifies the appeal site as lying within other rural areas to which Policy SS 10 Other Rural Areas Strategy applies.

Policy SS 3 Future Provision and Distribution of Development

Provision will be made for at least 6080 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed in Staffordshire Moorlands during the period 2014 to 2033 - an annual average of 320 homes per year. Sufficient deliverable land will be identified to provide at least 5 years of development at all times.

This policy states that 25% of new houses will be provided in rural areas, such as the application site, this equates to 698 dwellings for the period (2019 - 2033)

Policy SS 4 Housing Land Supply - States that In order to meet the housing requirements identified in Policy SS 3, sufficient land will be identified to accommodate 330 dwellings on small sites in rural areas in the form of infill provision at a rate of 30 per year.

The site constitutes an infill plot of a small site located within a rural area.

Policy H 1 New Housing Development

Housing development on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H 2 will be supported as follows:

- a) Within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages, residential development and development on unidentified (windfall) sites will be permitted, subject to compliance with the Spatial Strategy and wider Local Plan policies.
- b) Outside of the development boundaries, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the Spatial Strategy will be supported, provided that: The development will adjoin the boundary of a larger village and be well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses, or; The development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development; and
- c) In all cases the development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

This policy does not therefore preclude in principle new houses in the Green Belt. In actual fact it supports limited infill in the countryside subject to caveats as listed above, furthermore SS4 supports the development of small sites in rural areas to provide infill provision at a rate of 30 dwellings per year.

Policy SS 10 Other Rural Areas Strategy

The other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages.

These areas will provide only for development which 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. The Council and its partners will achieve this through the following actions:

1. Meet housing requirements and specific needs by:
 - Restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with Policy H 1
 - Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H 1;
 - Allowing extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The Council will assess schemes having regard to the original dwelling, in cases where cumulative change has occurred.
 - Allowing suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with Policy DC 2.
 - Allowing rural exceptions housing (in accordance with Policies H 1 and H 3).
 - Allowing community facilities where that need cannot be met in a settlement within the hierarchy. In such cases the development should be in a sustainable location close to an existing serviced settlement.
2. Sustain the rural economy by:
 - Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified
 - Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises
 - Supporting the development of appropriate ICT and new means of communications to enable homeworking and small businesses reliant on e-technology.
3. Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by:
 - Giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.
 - Limiting uses which generate a substantial number of regular trips in areas that are not well served by public transport.

- Ensuring renewable energy schemes are of an appropriate scale, type and location. Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park (in accordance with Policy DC 3).
- Encouraging measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity, geological resources and heritage of the district.

4. Regenerate underused major developed areas in the countryside including: Bolton Copperworks, Froghall and Anzio Camp, Blackshaw Moor (in accordance with policies DSR 5 and DSR 6). Development of these areas shall be complementary to and not undermine the role of the towns and larger villages nor shall it undermine wider strategic objectives. It shall also avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets. Facilitating the appropriate redevelopment of other major developed areas where the proposed development brings positive benefits to the area and any resultant environmental or highways concerns could be adequately addressed and minimised. Such proposals will be expected to provide supporting information that demonstrates clearly that the redevelopment will complement the overall development strategy for the District.

5. Enhance tourist opportunities by:

- Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD;
- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E 4); Establishing strong linkages between recreational and tourist resources; Recognising and developing the close linkages to the Peak District National Park.

6. Maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

Any development proposal that might have the potential to affect a European or Ramsar Site must itself be subject to appropriate assessment.

The development satisfies this policy as it represents a rural exception under Policy H1 (b) as an infill site. The development would not breach any of the remainder of the policy aims.

Policy DC 1 Design Considerations

All development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

1. be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area.
2. be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.
3. create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design.
4. incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development.
5. protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.
6. promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate.
7. provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.
8. require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links.
9. ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed.
10. ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community.
11. be served by high speed broadband (>30mbps) unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with Next Generation Access Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In all circumstances during construction of the site sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate ease of installation at a

future date.

The proposed development has the potential to satisfy all of these requirements.

Policy DC 3 Landscape and Settlement Setting

The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence.
2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character, and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence.
3. Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or manmade features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds.
4. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape.
5. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park.

The proposed development would not breach these policy requirements.

Policy NE 2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The Council will protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, in particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows from loss or deterioration. This will be achieved by:

- Requiring that existing woodlands, healthy trees and hedgerows are retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh their loss.
- Requiring new developments to provide tree cover that secures a good level of sustainability through tree retention, planting and soft landscaping, including where possible the on site replacement of any trees that are removed with sufficient tree planting to replace or increase the canopy cover on-site as appropriate. Landscaping schemes will also be required to mitigate against negative landscape impact and complement the design of new development and make provision for future maintenance. Where it is not possible to secure this new or replacement tree planting within the site, the Council will work with applicants to ascertain if a suitable site(s) can be found off-site for replacement planting in the locality.
- Resisting development that would directly or indirectly damage existing ancient woodland, veteran trees and ancient or species-rich hedgerows. The Council will refer to its adopted Tree Strategy in the consideration of proposals; and will in general seek to retain as many trees and as much hedgerow on site as possible.

The proposed development will not result in the loss of protected or important trees. New hedge planting to the site frontage is proposed and the addition of new trees to the Site.

7.0 Other Issues

Landscaping

The layout of the site and its size will allow new trees and shrubs to be planted. This includes a new hedge set back from the site frontage, and planting around the parking and manoeuvring space. The specific plans can be the subject of a condition on a planning permission. No protected trees will be affected by the proposals.

Drainage

The site is not shown to be susceptible from flooding on the Environmental Agency maps. The storage and controlled release of surface water during extreme storm events can be accommodated through collection systems such as permeable surfacing, soakaways,

rainwater harvesting etc to slow down the peak-rate run-off. This has the potential to improve the present situation where run off from the site runs onto Stanley Road

The details of the drainage system for the site will be subject to a condition for a suitable drainage system to be agreed with the council and the utility company.

8.0 Conclusion

Although the site lies within the Green Belt, its development for a single dwelling would not result in harm to interests of acknowledged importance as the site does not serve a Green Belt purpose. The site does not separate built up areas and does not prevent encroachment into the countryside as it is a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage.

Local Plan Policy H1(b) supports new housing on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H 2 when the plans represent limited infill residential where the development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development. This policy does not preclude development in Green Belt locations when this policy applies. It is considered that a dwelling on the site will be well related to the pattern of development around it and will not represent an isolated dwelling.

There are no constraints to developing the site other than Green Belt policy. In the Green Belt, new housing is usually resisted unless very special circumstances exist to allow the normal presumption to be set aside. In this case Local Plan Policy H1 (b) is considered applicable and this constitutes very special circumstances.