

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0325
Valid 11/05/2021

2
CHURCH TERRACE BLYTHE
BRIDGE ROAD
CAVERSWALL

PROPOSED TWO STOREY /
PART SINGLE STOREY
EXTENSION TO REAR TO
EXTEND EXISTING KITCHEN TO
FORM DINING ROOM WITH
ADDITIONAL BEDROOM ABOVE

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Archaeology
- Neighbour amenity
- Coal
- Drainage

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is number 2 Church Terrace, Blythe Bridge Road, Caverswall. The dwelling is a previously extended, mid-terraced, two-storey property with gardens to the front and rear. Land levels at the rear of the house rise in the direction of the rear boundary. There is a raised garden area leading onto decking and a pedestrian access gate within the rear boundary.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration the dwelling is located within a 'Smaller Village,' as identified within Local Plan policy SS9, it is also within the Caverswall Conservation Area. the dwelling is not Listed but does sit within a coal development 'low-risk' area.

PROPOSAL

Two-storey and single-storey rear extension with plain clay roof tiles, external walls finished with matching cream render and timber windows and doors. The extension together with internal alterations will provide the occupants with a dining and utility room on the ground floor and a second bedroom and en-suite at first floor level. The dwelling will then become a 2-bedroom property.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS9 Smaller Villages Areas Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC2 The Historic Environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Space About Dwellings
2. Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections;

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2016/0478 New vehicular access and hardstanding. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice. Expired
Neighbour consultation period. Expired.
Press Advert: Cheadle and Tean Times. Expired.

Public Comments:

Three letters of representation received, two confirming no objections and one objecting.
The contents of the letters are summarised as follows;

No objections

- Request that any external lighting is installed sympathetically.
- Request notice of a likely start date.

Objection

Extract of the letter as follows;

- This extension would significantly compromise my own home which is next door to 2 Church Terrace and sits at 90 degrees to the garden of number 2 which means that the entire extension runs in close proximity to the rear of our property.
- The design would partially or completely obscure 3 windows of my property and effectively leave 3 separate rooms (in fact the entire rear of my property) with little or no natural light, let alone any views..

- The upstairs window on my landings would be completely obscured with the extension being less than 300mm from the window, which would also be completely covered, above and beyond. This window provides the only natural light to my hall, stairs and landing. This window sits directly in front of the bedroom door of my mother-in-law, who is disabled and partially sighted. If this work was carried out, the stairs and landings would be left in almost total permanent darkness posing a serious risk to the safety of my mother-in-law and we would have to move her from her current room. Which would mean losing a further room downstairs to safely accommodate her.
- The design also further obscures a second window which has already been greatly compromised by the existing extension. I accept that this lower window is already heavily constrained and doesn't offer any external views but it does provide the only natural light to the cloakroom, toilet and cellar access. Although this is already an oddity, I would not be happy losing the moderate amount of natural light this window currently provides into these 3 rooms.
- A third window in my utility room would also be entirely encapsulated by this extension. I estimate that the extension would be approximated 850mm away from this window which would once again be completely covered, greatly reducing any natural light. I do not feel that is acceptable that the entire rear of my property should be left with no natural light and that I should effectively have to lose 3 windows to accommodate these works.
- Also, in the cloakroom there is a double airbrick. I'm not sure where this leads to but would require as a minimum a Gas Safe Inspection and HETAS report to understand the impact of potentially compromising the air flow around my property.
- Our ground floor toilet has a ventilation fan which will be entirely encapsulated in this proposed design which is obviously also unacceptable.
- I also have concerns about the foundations for the new building and its steel frame and what impact the loadings will have on our cellar and the existing foundations for the rest of our house (which are not likely to be substantial if in existence at all). Please bear in mind that due to the great age of our properties they are unlikely to have any foundations and any excavation or additional loadings could cause structural damage both during the construction process and into the future.

Caverswall Parish Council: Object to the application.

1. It would cause loss of light to the adjacent property Church House, 3 Blythe Bridge Road.
2. Some of the proposed windows would look directly into Church House and therefore would give loss of privacy.
3. Over development of the property/site.
4. Concerns over the foundations for the new building and its steel frame and what impact the loadings will have on the cellar and the existing foundations for the rest Church House (which are not likely to be substantial if in existence at all). We would expect that due to the great age of the properties they are unlikely to have any foundations and any excavation or additional loadings could cause structural damage both during the construction process and into the future.

Conservation (SMDC): No objections. Request some design amendments. Recommend conditions.

Severn Trent Water: No objections but there may be a public sewer running through the site.

Archaeology (SCC): No objections subject to condition.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is identified within Local Plan policy SS9, as forming part of a 'Smaller village.' The surrounding area is predominantly residential with some services within the village. To the rear (north) is a relatively new residential development known as Church Croft. There are no 'in principle' objections to a domestic extension. Matters such as design, visual impact, archaeology, neighbour amenity, the coal-development area and drainage must be considered.

Design and visual impact

There are no concerns in respect of the extension design. The development will see the removal of a flat roof extension and its replacement with a gable style enlargement using matching materials. There has been a minor modification to the scheme since it was first submitted in that cills and lintels have been added and the shape of the ensuite window (whilst remaining small) has changed to take on a more vertical emphasis. These requests came from the Council's Conservation officer and were quickly accepted by the applicant(s).

The dwelling forms a visually prominent part of the Caverswall Conservation Area, the frontage of the property visible from Blythe Bridge Road, set behind a stone wall and pedestrian access gate. As this is a rear extension to a mid-terraced dwelling, there will be no harmful visual impact from the front of the house. To the north (on the other side of number 1 Church Terrace) is an access road leading to the village cemetery. It is off this road that a public footpath (Caverswall 23), provides access to the rear of the house. The proposed extension (once built) would be seen from both the access road and footpath. However, because of the 'sunken' location of the proposed building area (compared to rear garden) and the fact that the extension will be seen in the context of surrounding dwellings, it is considered that the enlargement will not have any adverse Conservation Area impact from the rear. The application proposes the use of matching facing materials which is welcomed. Due to the size of the domestic curtilage, it is not considered that the scheme constitutes overdevelopment of the plot.

Archaeology

Due to the great age of the property (thought to be around the 16th Century), and its proximity to Caverswall Castle, there is the potential for there to be some archaeological interest in the site. The County Council Archaeologist considers that the dwelling should be considered a non-designated heritage asset (age and location within the historic core of Caverswall), listed as Caverswelle within the Domesday Survey of 1086.

The County Archaeologist provides further detailed comments as follows and requests the addition of a condition (in the event of permission being approved).

'Taking the above into consideration, there is certainly some potential for the proposals to reveal below ground evidence of early medieval to post medieval settlement during any groundworks required for the scheme. Likewise, there is also potential for the proposed works to reveal historic building fabric that would provide an insight into the historic development of Church Terrace. With this in mind, should permission be granted, it is advised that an archaeological watching brief be maintained on all groundwork aspects of the scheme, and that any works that have the potential to reveal information about the original building (i.e. not the later extension) such as render stripping and other invasive works, should be archaeologically monitored, and any historic fabric/features revealed should be recorded to a Level 2 standard as per Historic England's 'Understanding Historic Buildings' guidance (2016).

This work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced archaeologist working to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists code of conduct and 'Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief'. This approach, i.e. archaeological watching brief and historic building recording, is supported by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 199 which states that '... they [Local Planning Authorities] should also require developers to record and advance understanding of significance of any heritage asset to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.'

Neighbour amenity

There are no concerns about the development in respect to the properties at Church Croft, this is due to the separation distances involved; the nearest Church Croft property already overlooks the rear garden/deck area of the application property.

To the north-west is number 1 Church Croft, a two-storey dwelling with a ground-floor, flat roof, rear extension. The first floor rear window (within number 1) which is closest to the boundary, serves a bedroom. The plans show that the 45 degree horizontal angle will not be breached by the extension as the first floor extension has a staggered footprint to comply with the angle limitation. The middle and furthest neighbour first floor windows are not principal. Within the neighbours ground floor extension there are large patio doors serving a sitting/sun room (not principal) and a utility (not principal). The occupant of number 1 (neighbour) confirmed he had no objections to the scheme (during officer site visit).

On the south-eastern side is Church House. Church House has its principal elevation facing towards the south-east and sits at right angles to Blythe Bridge Road. The positioning of Church House means that its rear wall generally forms the boundary with the application site (see officer site photographs). A letter of objection has been received from the occupant of Church House (see Consultations section of this report). Reference is made within the objection letter to the presence of three windows which would be affected. However, none of these windows are principal windows as defined by the Council's adopted Space About Dwellings standards. For this reason it is not considered that any loss of amenity would be significant enough to warrant refusal of the application or that a refusal on these grounds could be sustained, although the very limited separation is noted.

Coal

Planning records show that the application site sits within a Coal Development Low Risk area and therefore it is considered reasonable to consider the surrounding area and any coal mining features/hazards. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment would not be required for this application. The Coal Authorities' 'Exemptions List' for the Risk Based Approach to Development Management identifies a householder application as one instance where an assessment is not required. In the event of planning permission being approved it is recommended that a coal related informative note is added to the decision.

Drainage

Severn Trent confirm they have no objection to the proposals as there will be minimal impact upon the public sewerage system. No conditions requested. Severn Trent advise that there may be a public sewer located within the application site and provide information which can be relayed to the applicant/developer via an informative note on the decision notice (in the event of permission being approved).

Other matters

Concerns relating to gass safety, ventilation fans and foundations would be dealt with under the Building Regulations and are therefore, not material planning considerations as they are dealt with under other Legislation. Impact on the value of neighbouring dwellings is also not a material planning consideration

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons set out above the proposal complies with the relevant local plan policies and in the absence of any other material considerations, and having due regard to all other matters raised, including neighbour objections it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions and informative notes.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Conditional approval.

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 10/9/2021.

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council