

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

APPLICANT : **MR M RANGLES**
ADDRESS : **WOODHEAD FARM, TOP ROAD,
BIDDULPH MOOR, STAFFORDSHIRE,
ST8 7LF**
PROPOSAL : **FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION AND
VEHICLE ACCESS TRACK**
DATE : **SEPTEMBER 2021**
JOB No. : **2019-2430**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application which seeks consent for the erection of a first floor extension to an existing dwelling and a new vehicle access track at Woodhead Farm, Top Road, Biddulph Moor. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mr M Randles and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2019-2430-15, 2019-2430-16, 2019-2430-17, 2019-2430-18 and 2019-2430-19 which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

1.2 This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter it provides justification for approval of the proposed development on the basis that it would comprise of appropriate development within the Green Belt without any material harm to its openness or visual amenity. Furthermore the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the application building or the wider setting, nor would it harm residential amenity or be detrimental to highway safety. The proposed development therefore accords with the provision of local and national planning policy and should therefore be approved without delay.

2.0 APPLICATION SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt to the north east of Biddulph Moor Village. It forms part of Woodhead Farm. The farm is no longer in agricultural use and the former farm buildings have recently been converted to holiday accommodation under approval (SMD/2019/0623)

The application building is an L shaped, one and a half storey stone building with a tiled roof which was originally constructed as a domestic garage with office above. Planning permission to convert the application building to an unencumbered open market dwelling was originally refused in May 2020 under application number SMD/2019/0644 but subsequently allowed earlier this year (9th February 2021) following a recent appeal (APP/B3438/W/20/3263910). This permission has now

been implemented and the application building is currently occupied as a stand alone dwellinghouse.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL

The application proposal essentially comprises of two parts. The first is the erection of a first floor extension to the dwellinghouse and the second is the change of use of part of the adjacent agricultural land to form a separate dedicated vehicular access to the dwelling. Each of these are discussed further below.

The first floor extension, which would provide a third bedroom, would be located above an existing lean to on the north elevation of the existing building. The proposed extension which would have a pitched roof design would be constructed from matching facing and roofing materials and its overall design and appearance would be reflective of that of the host building.

The proposed access would provide a dedicated separate access solely for the use of this unit which would be taken from the north western corner of the existing curtilage run across the northern elevation of the building and proceed in a eastern direction towards Top Road before connecting onto the existing driveway. The new access would be formed by removing a section of existing drystone wall and inserting two gate posts with a 7 bar timber field gate. The proposed access which would have a uniform width would be constructed from graded angular stone placed between timber edgings. The access will remain open and will not be divorced or separated from the agricultural field. The gate located on the existing drive will be relocated further down the existing drive. No alterations to the existing vehicular access onto Top Road are proposed as part of this application.

4.0 PLANNING POLICIES & GUIDANCE

The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council consists of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020). For the sake of brevity the policies are not repeated here but referred to below where appropriate.

In addition consideration should also be given to the provisions of the recently adopted the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD which sets out the importance of good design and high quality development and identifying that requirements of the design guide area material consideration in all relevant planning considerations and the Supplementary Planning Document and the Council's Local Plan Supporting Evidence Document: Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008).

National Planning Policy and Guidance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was republished in July 2021. The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision for sustainable development which should be interpreted and applied in determining planning applications/appeals.

In addition, the Government published its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in March 2014. The web-based resource pools together a series of planning guidance documents into a new format. It is updated regularly and is intended to be used to assist in the interpretation and execution of the NPPF. It is also therefore a material consideration in the determination of this application.

5.0 ASSESSMENT

As the application building is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt the main issues for consideration during the determination of this application are considered to be as follows:

- (1) whether the proposed development would be appropriate or inappropriate development for the purposes of the NPPF and development plan policy;
- (2) the effect of the proposal on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt
- (3) impact upon the character and appearance of the application building and the wider part of the countryside;
- (4) impact upon the residential amenities of the area

(5) impact upon highway safety.

(1) whether the proposed development would be appropriate or inappropriate development for the purposes of the NPPF and development plan policy and (2) the effect of the proposal on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt

Part 6 of Policy SS10 of the adopted Local Plan states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy. The policy goes on to state that extension or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings will be allowed 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.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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 149 of the NPPF states that the extension or alteration of a building is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The NPPF does not define "disproportionate" therefore it is a matter of judgement having regard to the original building and the proposed extension.

The application building was constructed as a domestic garage building for use by the adjacent farmhouse following approval in October 2008 (application reference SMD/2008/0533). A copy of the approved plans have been provided at Appendix 1. The approved plans for the conversion of the application building from a garage / office to an unencumbered open market dwelling essentially retained the external appearance of the original building with the only alterations comprising of three rooflights on the northern roof plan and a new one on the southern elevation. No extensions to the application building were permitted as part of its conversion or

have been carried out since its erection as evidenced by the existing plans numbered 2019-2430-17 and 2019-2430-18 submitted in support of this application.

The proposed extension, being located above an existing lean to would not increase the footprint of the application building. The application building has an overall floor area of 112 sq metres and a cubic volume of 332 metres. The proposed extension would equate to some 15.4 sq metres in floor area and 52.3 cubic metres which would result in a 14% increase in floor area and a 16% increase in volume neither of which cannot be considered to be disproportionate.

Whilst the proposed extension would result in some increase in the overall size, scale, form and massing of the application building this is modest as set out above and will be read in conjunction with the existing built development. It conclusion therefore it is considered that the proposed first floor extension is considered an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt which would not harm its visual amenity or openness and is therefore acceptable in principle subject to other considerations as set out below.

In terms of the new vehicle access track the provisions set out in Part 6 of SS10 also apply to this part of the proposed development. Paragraph 150 of the Framework identifies that engineering operations are not an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt providing they preserve its openness and do not conflict with its purposes.

The proposed vehicular access would involve the provision of a new track from the north western corner of the existing curtilage around the rear of the existing dwelling and through part of the adjacent field before terminating onto the existing vehicular access drive for Woodhead Farm. The proposed access track has been designed so that it appears akin to an agricultural field access and would be constructed from angular stone enclosed with timber edgings in order to ensure that it is in keeping with its rural surroundings.. Whilst the change of surfacing material from grass to stone could be considered to have a more urbanising appearance but it would not affect openness in a visual or spatial sense.

On that basis it is considered that the proposed development would comprise of appropriate development within the Green belt which would not have a materially greater impact upon its openness or its visual amenity.

(3) Impact upon the character and appearance of the area

Policy DC1 of the Local Plan states that all development should 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

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 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 application building is a vernacular building typical of the local area. Despite being originally constructed as a domestic outbuilding for the adjacent farmhouse the building is constructed from high quality materials and to a good standard of design and detailing reflective of that on the main farmhouse.

The overall design and appearance of the proposed extension would reflect and respect that of the host building and would use matching facing and roofing materials to ensure that it is quickly assimilated into its surroundings. On this basis it is not considered that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building or the wider surrounding area.

The proposed vehicular access has been designed to have a very low key minimal impact. Its width, at 3.2 is the minimum required and its overall design and materials gives it the appearance akin to a agricultural access track. Entrance gates would have a very simple rustic design and stone wall would simply reflect the existing field boundary treatment. Care has been taken to ensure that it closely follows the physical site boundaries so that it does not encroach into the open countryside. The development would be modest in scale and would not appear excessively prominent. Overall the development would preserve the character and appearance of the area.

In this respect it would accord with policy DC1 of the Local Plan which aims to ensure development respects the site and its surroundings and Local Plan policy DC3 which seeks to protect the local landscape as well as guidance contained in the NPPF.

(4) Impact upon the residential amenities of the area

Local Plan Policy DC1 and Paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF states, amongst a number of other matters, that new development should create a high standard of amenity for both existing and future occupiers. Policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan states that all development should protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.

The application building occupies a relatively remote and isolated location on this side of the ridge and due to the nature and modest scale of the proposal it is not considered that the proposed development would adversely impact upon the existing residential amenity afforded to any of the surrounding residential properties nor would it be detrimental to any neighbouring land uses. In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with policy DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF.

(5) impact upon highway safety.

Policies DC1 and T1 of the Local Plan seek to achieve a level of parking and an access that is appropriate to the development which it serves. The application proposes no alterations to the existing vehicular access which is currently provided onto Top Road. This has previously been assessed by the both the Highways Authority and the Local Planning authority in relation to the change of use of the agricultural buildings to 3 holiday lets and most recently the change of use of the application building to an open market unencumbered dwelling and found to be acceptable. The provision of a third bedroom for the property is not considered to result in any significant intensification in use of the site and adequate parking and turning facilities will be retained within the application site. On this basis it is considered that the proposal complies with Local Plan policies DC1, T1 and national guidance in this respect contained in the NPPF.

6.0 Conclusion

In conclusion therefore it is considered that the application proposes a sustainable form of development which is inappropriate within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and which would have no harm to its openness or visual amenity. Furthermore, the proposed development would be well design and use good quality traditional materials which are in keeping with the character and appearance of the host building and reflective of its rural location. The proposed development would not therefore adversely affect the character and appearance of the application site or the wider surrounding area. Furthermore it would not be prejudicial to residential amenity enjoyed by the occupiers of the surrounding dwellings or impact adversely on neighbouring land uses nor would it harm highway safety. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in compliance with Local Plan policies SS10, DC1, DC3, T1 as well as guidance contained within the NPPF.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes the extension of the existing residential dwellinghouse and the creation of a new vehicular access track to serve it. This reflects the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

AMOUNT

The application proposes the provision of a first floor extension above an existing lean and new vehicular access track as shown on the submitted plans. The proposed extension would have a floor area of 15.4 sq metres and a volume of 52.3 cubic metres. The proposed access track would be 56m long x 3.2m wide. This amount of development is considered to comply with both the adopted Local Plan and National planning policies in relation to appropriate development within the Green Belt.

LAYOUT

The layout of the development will be as shown on the submitted site layout plan. The proposed extension would be located above the existing single storey lean to on the northern elevation of the host building. The proposed vehicular access track will be taken from the north western corner of the existing curtilage and wrap around the northern elevation of the building before extending eastwards terminating onto the current shared access arrangement.

SCALE

The application proposes the erection of a first floor extension and vehicular access track. The resultant dwelling would be two storey in nature with a eaves height of 3.7m and an overall ridge height of 6.8m. This reflects the scale of the nearby farmhouse and associated outbuildings.

LANDSCAPING

The existing tree, shrub planting and field hedgerow will be retained.

APPEARANCE

The proposed development will deliver a traditional design using traditional materials.

ACCESS

The proposed development would be served by the existing vehicular access point off top Road with adequate parking and turning facilities provided/retained for the extended dwelling. The site is within easy walking and cycling distance of the centre of Biddulph Moor village which has a wide range of services and facilities. Public transport links are easily accessible to Leek and other parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands as well as the neighbouring city of Stoke on Trent.