

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

LAND AT HURSTONS LANE, ALTON

SEPTEMBER 2021

Site Address:

Land at Hurstons Lane, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 1AP

Applicant:

Mr. & Mrs. Barks

Proposal:

Erection of 2no. Detached Dwellings and Detached Garage

Planning & Heritage Statement:

Date Issued: 28th September 2021

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Report Prepared By:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs Barks to prepare a Planning & Heritage Statement to accompany a full application for the erection of 2no. dwellings on land at Hurstons Lane, Alton, along with the erection of a detached double garage to Plot 2.
- 1.2 The application site benefits from an extant permission for the erection of a detached dwelling, granted originally under application SMD/2018/0245 and subsequently renewed under application SMD/2021/0062. That permission remains extant, expiring April 2024.
- 1.3 This revised proposal encompasses the proposed erection of 2no. detached dwellings on the site. Plot 1 will be located adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the site and will have direct vehicular access off Hurston's Lane with parking for two vehicles provided in front of the dwelling. Plot 2 will be sited to the immediate northeast of Plot 1 and will have its own vehicular access off Hurston's Lane, along with a detached double garage.
- 1.4 Plot 1 will encompass a detached two storey dwelling with a gross internal floor area of 134.76 square metres, standing to a ridge height of 7.7 metres. Its accommodation will comprise of a lounge, kitchen, family room, utility, hallway and w.c. at ground floor, with three bedrooms and family bathroom at first floor.
- 1.5 Plot 2 will also encompass a detached two storey dwelling. It will have a gross internal floor area of 145.44 square metres and stand to a ridge height of 8 metres. Its accommodation will comprise of a lounge, kitchen/family room, hallway, utility and w.c. at ground floor, with three bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor.

2. Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises a broadly triangular shaped parcel of land that lies on the fringe of the village of Alton. The site lies within the defined development boundary of the village as confirmed by the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020, and also lies within the Alton Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The eastern boundary of the site comprises a mature hedgerow, interspersed with mature trees, beyond which runs Hurstons Lane. The hedgerow continues to wrap around the north-eastern and north-western boundaries of the site, providing a pleasant sense of enclosure to the land.
- 2.3 To the northwest of the site lie a row of semi-detached, two storey dwellings (Nos. 3 – 6 The Hurstons), with residential development also extending southwards from the site along Hurston's Lane.

3. Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 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 Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be relevant to the determination of the application:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that 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.

3.3 Policy SS3 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Future Provision and Distribution of Development' and states that 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. The policy goes on to confirm that 25% of the total housing requirement will be delivered within the rural areas.

3.4 Policy SS8 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Larger Villages Area Strategy' and states that the larger villages, of which Alton is one, shall retain and enhance their role as rural service centres, providing for the bulk of the housing requirement of the rural areas and also for employment needs of a scale and type appropriate to each settlement having regard to infrastructure capacity and character. The Council and its partners will achieve this through a number of actions including meeting housing requirements by:

- Supporting the development of housing windfall sites within the village boundaries, subject to wider Local Plan policies

3.5 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that, amongst other requirements:

- New housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in Policy H3, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies.
- All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision.
- All housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area. Higher densities will generally be appropriate in locations which are more accessible by public transport and which have good access to services.
- All new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis subject to considerations such as viability and design.
- All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.
- Housing development on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H2 will be supported within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages subject to compliance with the Spatial Strategy and wider Local Plan policies

3.6 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that 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.

3.7 Policy DC2 of the Local Plan relates to 'The Historic Environment' and states that:

1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.
3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.
4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.

5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.
 6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.
 7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.
- 3.8 Policy NE2 of the Local Plan relates to 'Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows' and states that 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.

3.9 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.
2. Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.
3. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.
4. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of significantly boosting the supply of housing, securing high quality design, and ensuring highway safety. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Staffordshire Moorlands Design SPD & Design Principles SPG

- 4.2 These documents set out guidance aimed at securing good quality design and confirm that the architectural style of new development should be guided through an assessment and understanding of the character and context of the area, going on to confirm that sites may be capable of accommodating both contemporary and traditional forms of development that are high quality and functional. The content of these documents has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Staffordshire Moorlands Space about Dwellings SPG

- 4.3 This document provides a series of numerical standards that new development should seek to achieve in the interests of safeguarding residential amenity. The content of the SPG has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Planning Application SMD/2021/0062

- 4.4 The above planning application granted consent for the erection of a two-storey detached dwelling on the application site. That permission remains extant and therefore amounts to a material consideration in the assessment of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application proposes the erection of 2no. detached dwellings on a parcel of land that is located within the defined development boundary of Alton, as confirmed by the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. New residential development on windfall sites within the development boundaries of the larger villages, of which Alton is one, is supported by policies SS3, SS8 and H1 of the Local Plan. The site is furthermore noted to benefit from an extant planning permission for the erection of a detached dwelling on the site. Consequently, the principle of residential development on this site is considered to be acceptable.

Design & Layout

- 5.2 The application proposes the erection of 2no. dwellings that are each two storeys in height. In doing so the development reflects the prevailing scale of surrounding built development and is also of a similar height to the previously approved permission on the site. The scale of the development is therefore acceptable and in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.3 The proposed layout of the development seeks to respect the character and appearance of the area by continuing the ribbon pattern of development that extends along Hurstons Lane to the southwest. The dwellings, like those further along Hurstons Lane, will be set back from the carriageway, with frontage parking provision, and garden areas to the rear. The layout of the development is therefore in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

- 5.4 The proposed appearance of the dwellings takes its cues from the surrounding built environment and encompasses a number of key design principles which are commonplace in the local area, including the use of gables, traditionally proportioned dormer windows, stone headers and cills to windows, exposed rafter ends and maintaining a high solid to void ratio. The dwellings are furthermore to be constructed in a palette of materials that reflects the surrounding area, utilising Terca Autumn Russet Sovereign Stock bricks with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof (as per those utilised on the adjacent dwelling to the southwest). The appearance of the dwellings is therefore also in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

Heritage Impact

- 5.5 The application site lies within the Alton & Farley Conservation Area, which constitutes a designated heritage asset. There are no listed buildings on the site, nor within the immediate locality. The accompanying Conservation Area Character Appraisal states that buildings in Alton village are diverse in character, date and spacing. This reflects the historic development of the settlement, the topography, and piecemeal construction by numerous owners in a variety of materials. Hollington sandstone jostles handmade brick, and render sits adjacent to painted surfaces, masking a variety of phases and walling materials.
- 5.6 The principle of erecting a new dwelling on this site has previously been established under a number of applications, most recently SMD/2021/0062. This latest proposal will retain the existing hedgerow enclosing the northeastern and northwestern site boundaries of the site that was identified in previous applications as being important to the setting of the site, and the

siting of the dwellings furthermore serves to continue the established linear pattern of development that extends along Hurstons Lane from the southwest and will consequently be in keeping with the established built character of this part of the Conservation Area.

- 5.7 The proposed dwellings have a number of key design principles which are commonplace within the surrounding area including the use of gables, traditionally proportioned dormer windows, stone headers and cills to windows, exposed rafter ends and complimentary materials comprising Staffordshire blue plain clay tiles and Terca Autumn Russet Sovereign Stock bricks and sash style timber windows. The proposed development will therefore not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and meets the requirements of policy DC2 of the Local Plan and relevant guidance within the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 5.8 The siting and design of the proposed dwellings has been carefully considered so as to ensure no adverse impact to neighbouring residential amenity, in particular the properties to the west of the site (nos. 3 – 6 The Hurstons). The Local Authority's Space about Dwellings SPG require a distance of 22 metres to be achieved between principal windows that face one another, and 14 metres between a principal window and an elevation containing no principal windows. A principal window is defined by the adopted Space about Dwellings SPG as "the main window to a living room, dining room, kitchen and first and second bedroom".
- 5.9 The proposed dwellings, like the previously approved applications on the site, have been designed so that they do not have any principal windows at first floor level that face towards the neighbouring properties in The Hurstons, with Plot 1 having one ensuite window facing in a westerly direction. Plot 2

will have three windows, comprising of a window serving Bedroom 3, a bathroom and an ensuite. The dwellings are furthermore orientated such that they sit at an angle to nos.3-6 The Hurstons such that the rear elevations of the proposed dwellings sit more than 14 metres from the principal windows of those neighbouring properties. Consequently, the development will not result in any conflict with the adopted Space about Dwellings SPG in this regard.

5.10 At ground floor level there will be two principal windows facing westward towards nos 3-6 The Hurstons in the form of a lounge window to Plot 1 and a family room to Plot 2. Those windows however will not derive any material loss of impact to neighbouring residential amenity owing to the presence of the existing hedgerow along the western site boundary. The approved scheme on the site has a similar arrangement and will not give rise to any material harm to residential amenity. Plot 1 will also have two side facing windows that face in a north easterly direction towards Plot 2. The ground floor window will serve a family room and will not give rise to any loss of privacy owing to boundary treatments that will be erected between the two plots. The first-floor window will serve Bedroom 3 which is a non-principal room, but is, in any event, located the required 6 metres from the site boundary, thereby meeting the relevant provisions of the Space about Dwellings SPG. No material adverse harm to neighbouring residential amenity will therefore ensue.

5.11 The proposed dwellings themselves will also provide a floor area that exceeds the minimum requirement set out within the DCLG Technical Housing Standards (102 square metres) and each plot will be provided with an area of amenity space that exceeds the minimum requirement set out in the Space about Dwellings SPG (65 square metres). Future occupiers of the proposed dwellings will therefore be afforded an appropriate level of residential

amenity. The proposed development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies DC1 and H1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Impact on Trees

- 5.12 There are three existing trees on this site, all located along the eastern boundary. The applicant's Tree Surveyor has surveyed these trees on a number of occasions over recent years and confirms within the submitted Arboricultural Report that they have continued to deteriorate. Tree T1 (Sycamore) is showing further signs of dead wood and die back and has a limited life span. Tree T2 is noted as a poor tree and is recommended to be cut back into the hedge. Tree T3 is also a poor quality multi-stemmed specimen and will not grow into a decent tree. The applicant consequently proposes to remove Tree T1, and to cut back Trees T2 and T3 into the hedge, a proposal which has been discussed and agreed on site with the Local Authority's Trees and Woodlands Officer. In mitigation for the removal of these poor-quality trees, it is proposed to plant new trees along the roadside frontage with Hurstons Lane, and these are shown on the proposed site plan. In doing so the proposal meets the requirements of policy NE2 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.13 The application proposes to utilise the same vehicular access arrangements as that approved under application SMD/2021/0062 to serve Plot 1, with Plot 2 served by a separate access further to the northeast. Both access points will benefit from good visibility on egress onto Hurstons Lane, with turning space provided within the site to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. The application also ensures that each plot will be provided with a minimum of two parking spaces, thereby meeting the Local Authority's adopted car parking standards. The proposed development is consequently in accordance with policy T1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 111 of the NPPF.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is concluded that the submitted proposal represents an appropriate form of sustainable development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The principle of residential development on the site is acceptable as the site lies within the defined development boundary of Alton.
- The proposed development is of a scale, layout and appearance that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- The proposed development will not detract from the character and appearance of the Alton Conservation Area.
- The proposed development will not give rise to any material adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity.
- The proposed development will mitigate for the loss of the existing poor-quality trees along the roadside frontage.
- The proposed development will not detract from highway safety within the locality and will provide adequate off-street parking to meet the needs of future occupiers of the dwellings.

6.2 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS3, SS8, H1, DC1, DC2, NE2 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, the Staffordshire Moorlands Design SPD, Design Principles SPG and the Space about Dwellings SPG.