

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0549
Valid 18/08/2021

KIRK HOUSE MALTHOUSE
ROAD
ALTON

OUTLINE PERMISSION WITH
DETAILS OF ACCESS (ALL
OTHER MATTERS RESERVED)
FOR THE ERECTION OF A 2 -
BEDROOM BUNGALOW

(OUTLINE - MINOR APPS)

MAIN ISSUES

The principle of the development in this location
The impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.
The impact on residential amenity
The impact on highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is within the development boundary of Alton and comprises part of the garden area/curtilage to the side of a dwelling on the east side of Malthouse Road, a narrow lane with a mix of dwellings either side, modern and old, within the Conservation Area. The dwelling at the property, Kirk House, is a traditional stone cottage with the side gable elevation abutting the lane to the west. A footpath runs along the back wall of the dwelling and the north boundary of the site which is to the east of Kirk House. To the north of the path is further dwellings including ones facing the lane and also a “backland” dwelling to the rear of them. To the front of the cottage, to the south, is a garden area and access off the lane and driveway leading into the site where there is also a garage building at the end, close to the east boundary. To the south of the site and to the east, are further “backland” dwellings. There are further dwellings on the other side of the land to the west, some of which are cottages directly fronting the lane. The land in this area slopes downwards gradually towards the south.

PROPOSAL

This is an outline planning application for a brick-and-tile 2-bed bungalow with details of access also to be determined. The access would comprise the existing access, assumed to become a shared access with the existing dwelling and the existing driveway is also included in the site. The drawings include a location plan and a site plan with an indicative siting for the dwelling shown to be in the middle of the plot. Although a garden and parking area are to be provided for the bungalow, there is no annotation of this on the site plan.

The application includes a Heritage Statement and Design and Access Statement

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffs Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

SS8 – Large Villages Strategy

H1 – New Housing

DC1 – Design Considerations

DC2 – The Historic Environment

NPPF (Revised July 2021)

Sections 5 (Housing), 12 (Design) and 16 (The Historic Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2011/0869: Outline application for dwelling. Refused.

SMD/2012/0131: Full application for dwelling. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 12/10/21.

Neighbour consultation period ends: 12/10/21.

Press Advert: 24/8/21

Public Comments

One letter has been received from a local resident neither objecting or supporting but raising concerns about the intensification and overdevelopment of the site and an increase of vehicles using a an access with poor visibility onto a hazardous narrow lane.

Town / Parish Comments

No objection.

Local Highways Authority

Objection raised due to the increased use of an access with substandard visibility.

Environmental Health

No objection subject to standard conditions for a new dwelling on an uncontaminated site.

Conservation Officer

“Recommendation of refusal based on lack of adequate heritage statement and inadequate info to assess impact.”

SCC Footpaths Team

The application documents don't recognise the existence of Public Footpath No.33 Alton which runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the proposed development site. It is not clear whether the proposed bungalow will be accessed from the footpath which runs along the track from Malthouse Road towards Smithy Bank and clarification is sought regarding this. The attention of the developer should be drawn to the existence of the path and to the requirement that any planning permission given does not construe the right to divert, extinguish or obstruct any part of the public path.

Peak and Northern Footpaths

Point out that the adjacent footpath must not be affected during works.

Severn Trent Water

No objection.

Waste Collection Services

No issues

OFFICER COMMENTS

The site is in the “Large Village” of Alton as outlined in the Council’s Local Plan. Policy SS8, the strategy for large villages, allows new dwellings within the development boundaries. Although the housing needs of the District are to be met largely via new major housing land allocations, small numbers of housing on “windfall” sites in sustainable locations can also make a contribution towards housing need and there is a particular shortage of small units and also bungalows, often demanded by a growing elderly population. The principle of providing one dwelling in this sustainable location which is within easy walking distance of shops and services is not unacceptable but in order to fully comply with the Local Plan and NPPF, the proposal must also comply with other policies which seek to protect the surrounding environment in general and which resists development which harms the visual and residential amenities of the area and which compromises highway safety, amongst other matters.

The site is in a Conservation Area and therefore it must be demonstrated that the development would protect and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As the application is in outline form only, there are no details of the scale, siting, design and appearance of the bungalow so therefore the impact on the Conservation Area cannot be fully assessed under this current application. Moreover the heritage statement submitted with this application is woefully inadequate with no consideration being given to the character and qualities of the

conservation area and the impact of a new dwelling. It may not be out of keeping with the area as there are other backland plots in the area some with modern bungalows. However, the site is considerably smaller than the surrounding backland plots and smaller and narrower than all the plots in Malthouse Road in general. The site appears constrained for the purposes of providing even a small 2-bed bungalow together with the required parking and garden areas in accordance with Council standards and guidance.

I consider that a proposed 2-bed bungalow on the plot would have the potential to appear as a relatively over cramped form of development in this area which would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As the site includes part of the parking and turning area for Kirk House (and is taken up by the indicative siting of the bungalow in the middle of the site), there would be a need to provide parking and turning areas for both dwellings. Given the indicative siting, this would need to be provided close to the south boundary where there are large trees which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. No Tree Report has been provided which assesses the quality of the trees. The trees could be harmed by the parking area footings leading to their demise and further harm to the Conservation Area. I consider that in this particular case it is crucial that further details of the scale, siting and design of the bungalow are required before any approval is given so that the impact on the Conservation Area can be properly assessed and should not be left to be dealt with via future Reserved Matters applications. I consider that due to the potential for harm, the proposal would not comply with Policy DC2 or Section 16 of the NPPF and therefore the application should be refused on the grounds of inadequate information to assess the impact on the Conservation Area. This also formed the reason for refusing the 2011 outline application for a bungalow. Furthermore, the Heritage Statement is deemed to be inadequate and this also conflicts with Policy DC2 and the NPPF.

It also cannot be properly assessed if a bungalow on the site would provide satisfactory impacts on the residential amenities of the area in terms of privacy and light provision for example. Due to the limited size of the site and proximity of surrounding dwellings, including Kirk House, I consider there is significant potential for harm to result but due to the absence of details about the scale, height, siting and design of the bungalow (including window positioning) the exact impacts again cannot be properly assessed.

Based on the indicative siting shown on the site plan, there would be a distance of 20 metres between the south elevation of the bungalow, where there is likely to be primary windows and also the front elevation of the dwelling to the south, Sandy Hollow where there are primary windows. This does not comply with the separation distances set out in the Council's Space About Dwellings SPG which requires at least 22.0 metres between opposing front or rear elevations in order to prevent a high degree of overlooking through main windows which would harm the privacy of the occupants. The harm would be further exacerbated by Sandy Hollow being on lower ground leading to higher degree of overlooking from the proposed bungalow into Sandy Hollow. A solution to this would be to place the bungalow further to the north, but by doing this, the required private garden area which could only be realistically placed to the north of the bungalow, would be diminished in size and based on the indicative siting, would only just reach the garden threshold of 65 sq.m

set out in the SPG which affords an outdoor amenity area of decent size in the interests of the residential amenities/living conditions of the occupants. Furthermore, the bungalow would be pushed closer to both Kirk House and the dwellings to the north of the site which could compromise the levels of privacy enjoyed by those occupants.

Finally, the proposal in leading to an additional dwelling at the property would increase the number of vehicle movements at the site access which due to the presence of stone retaining walls to the north, supporting raised ground and boundary hedges on top, has a substandard level of visibility along the lane for drivers leaving the site. The local highway authority considers this would harmfully affect the level of highway safety along the road and therefore recommends refusal of the application on this basis. It is also worth noting that to provide improvements and visibility splays would involve the removal of sections of wall and the hedge which would potentially lead to even further harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Although this is an outline application with only the access to be determined, due to the limited size of the site and the nature of the surroundings, it is likely a proposed bungalow on the site would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and harm residential amenity. However, these impacts cannot be properly assessed as the information included in the application is insufficient and this includes the Heritage Statement. With regard to the access this is deemed to be substandard with a poor level of visibility and therefore the proposal is considered to harm highway safety. The proposal therefore does not comply with the Local Plan or the NPPF and the outline application should therefore be refused.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 13.10.21

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

