

PLANNING STATEMENT

**MILL HOUSE
BLYTHE BRIDGE**

DECEMBER 2021

Address:

Mill House, 10 Stallington Road, Blythe Bridge, ST11 9PN

Applicant:

Mrs. A. Holdcroft

Proposal:

Erection of replacement dwelling and detached garage

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 3rd December 2021

Job Reference: RDP/2021/119

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mrs. A. Holdcroft to seek full planning permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling at The Mill House, 10 Stallington Road, Blythe Bridge.
- 1.2 The existing dwelling on the site comprises a former mill house associated with Blythe Bridge Mill that was constructed in the late 18th Century. It is constructed from red facing brickwork with elements of grey render to the side and rear. The building is in a poor structural condition, with evidence of significant cracking to its elevations and rotten timbers.
- 1.3 The applicant proposes to replace the existing dwelling with a new property that is based on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. It will be set back further into the site to provide greater relief to the existing roadside trees. The accommodation of the dwelling will comprise of a kitchen / dining room, utility, library, shower room, lounge, hallway, porch and cloakroom at ground floor, with four ensuite bedrooms at first floor.
- 1.4 The dwelling will have a total floor area of 301 square metres and stand to a ridge height of 7.55 square metres. The application also proposes the erection of a detached double garage and store that extends to 61.6 square metres, and which stands to a ridge height of 3.8 metres. The existing single storey detached outbuilding on site is to be retained in situ.
- 1.5 The site benefits from an existing means of vehicular access off Stallington Road towards the southeast corner of the site, which is to be reused to serve the replacement dwelling. The existing gates will be relocated further into the site, but otherwise the access will be unaltered. The access will serve a new parking area and the proposed detached garage.

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary of Blythe Bridge and comprises a two storey former mill house located on the western side of Stallington Road. The dwelling is constructed from red facing brickwork with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof and is currently in a poor structural condition. A single storey outbuilding is located to its immediate south, and which is constructed from a complementary palette of materials and connected to the house by a brick wall. The site benefits from an existing means of vehicular access onto the Stallington Road in the southeast corner of the site.
- 2.2 The dwelling sits within a parcel of land that extends to approximately 0.14 hectares and which is enclosed to its south and west by an existing mill pond which lies at a lower level to the application site. Beyond the Mill Pond, and approximately 62 metres distant, lies a three storey Mill Building which is in commercial use. The application site is encircled by a number of mature trees which provide a pleasing sense of enclosure to the site.
- 2.3 To the north of the site lies one half of a pair of semi-detached two storey dwellings, with further residential development extending northwards along Stallington Road. To the east of the site runs the carriageway of Stallington Road, beyond which lies the William Amory Primary School. The site as a whole occupies a sustainable location within easy walking distance of the day-to-day services and facilities on offer within the village, with the village centre lying approximately 100 metres to the north.
- 2.4 The site is not within a Conservation Area, nor are there any statutorily listed buildings located within the immediate vicinity. The site is furthermore located within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding).

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 of relevance:

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, including starter 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*

3.3 Policy SS8 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Larger Villages Area Strategy' and states that these settlements 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. This will be achieved by, (amongst others):

- *Supporting the development of housing windfall sites within the village boundaries subject to wider Local Plan policies.*
- *Ensuring that new development reflects and enhances each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.*

3.4 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that housing development within the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be permitted. 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 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.

3.5 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development should 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 SPD. It goes on to state that new development should (amongst others):

- *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area*
- *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*

- *protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping, as well as noise, odour and light pollution.*
- *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.*

3.6 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.*
- 3.7 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states that biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by ensuring all development schemes have regard to the surveys and actions recommended by the Council's Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys and Local Wildlife Assessment, and include measures for protection and enhancement of site biodiversity and protection of any geodiversity as appropriate. The policy goes on to state that the Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) there is no appropriate alternative site available; and*
- b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and*
- c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible*
- d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.*

3.8 Policy NE2 of the Local Plan relates to 'Trees, Woodland 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

The National Planning Policy Framework

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

Staffordshire Moorlands Design SPD (2018)

- 4.2 This document sets out guidance aimed at securing good quality design and confirms that the architectural style of new development should be guided through an assessment and understanding of the character and context of the area. The content of the SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Space about Dwellings SPG

- 4.3 The adopted Space about Dwellings SPG provides guidance on minimum amenity standards that new development should seek to achieve in the interests of ensuring a satisfactory level of amenity in new development. The content of the SPG has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling on the site, and the erection of replacement dwelling in its place. The application site is located within the defined settlement boundary of Blythe Bridge, which is designated as a 'larger village' within the adopted Local Plan. Within such areas the erection of new residential development is acceptable in principle, in accordance with policies SS8 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.2 The existing dwelling on the site is one which exhibits numerous qualities that reflect Moorlands vernacular. It has a simple gabled roof design, strongly defined eaves and ridge lines, subservient rear projecting outriggers, and a broadly symmetrical front elevation, with windows generally arranged in columns and of a commensurate size to one another. Arched header detailing and stone cills are also evident, with the building constructed principally from red facing brickwork, with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof atop.
- 5.3 The proposed replacement dwelling seeks to maintain the key architectural and design features that are exhibited by the existing dwelling. The application nevertheless takes the opportunity to remove some of the poorer elements of the existing dwelling, such as omitting the grey render to the west and south elevations, utilising facing brickwork to match the remainder of the dwelling. The existing stone plinth at the rear is nevertheless to be reclaimed and incorporated into the new building. The dwelling will be modestly larger in footprint than the existing dwelling and will stand 0.23 metres taller. The resultant dwelling will nevertheless sit comfortably within the site.

- 5.4 The dwelling is to be re-sited further west into the site so as to provide a greater degree of relief to the existing roadside boundary trees. In doing so the development takes the opportunity to improve the character and appearance of the area and the way it functions, in accordance with the design objectives of the NPPF. The proposed development is consequently in accordance with the provisions of policies SS1, H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF and adopted supplementary planning design guidance.

Residential Amenity

- 5.5 The nearest neighbouring occupiers to the development lie to the immediate north of the site, beyond an existing row of mature trees (6 Stallington Road). The proposed dwelling will be sited some 16.5 metres to the south of that neighbouring property and will have no principal windows facing towards it. The side elevation will contain five secondary windows (three at ground floor, two at first floor) but they can be conditioned to have obscure glazing if so required. The principal windows of the dwelling will face east and west such that they will not impact on any neighbouring properties. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policies DC1 and H1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the Space about Dwellings standards.

Heritage Impact

- 5.6 The existing dwelling is not statutorily listed but is of a character and appearance that is likely to lead the Local Authority to consider it to amount to a non-designated heritage asset. To address this matter, the applicant has commissioned a Heritage Statement to accompany the application.
- 5.7 The Heritage Statement is unequivocal in its conclusions – that the house is of minimal historic interest and having nothing internally or any historic or

architectural value, as all the fittings and staircase are modern. The Heritage Statement also notes the poor structural condition of the building and other poor detailing, including extensive areas of render applying to the west and south elevations.

- 5.8 The overall conclusion reached is that the mill house does not qualify as a non-designated heritage asset, and therefore does not merit consideration in planning decisions because of any heritage interest. The proposed development consequently derives no conflict with the provisions of policy DC2 of the Local Plan.

Ecology / Trees

- 5.9 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Elite Ecology which has assessed the habitat potential of the site. The report identified potential bat roosting opportunities within the existing building and recommended that a bat activity survey be carried out.
- 5.10 The accompanying Bat Activity Report confirms that the building is used as a day roost for common pipistrelle bats and consequently a licence from Natural England will be required before carrying out the works of demolition. A number of other recommendations are set out within the report, including the installation of two bat boxes into the proposed new dwelling, along with five bat access tiles.
- 5.11 Such mitigation measures can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition, and in doing so the development will meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5.12 The application is also accompanied by an Arboricultural Report prepared by Elite Ecology which has assessed the impact of the development on existing trees in and around the site. The proposed replacement dwelling itself will not have any adverse impact on the root protection areas of existing trees, and indeed is beneficial in that it will be sited further west within the site, moving it further away from the mature roadside trees, and in doing so will reduce pressure for those trees to be felled.
- 5.13 The proposed detached garage and store is to be located within the root protection area of Trees T12 (Category B) and T13 (Category A) but is to be constructed utilising a reinforced concrete slab, thereby avoiding the need for excavations, and consequently the root protection areas of those trees will be unaffected. The proposed means of construction of the foundation for the garage, along with the other recommendations set out within the Arboricultural Report, can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition, and in doing so the development will meet the requirements of policy NE2 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.14 The application site benefits from an existing means of access onto the Stallington Road in the southeast corner of the site. The access is to be unaltered apart from the removal of the existing gates to a repositioned location 16 metres rear of the carriageway. Within the site it is proposed to provide a large area of hardstanding for the parking and turning of vehicles, with ample space for the parking of at least four vehicles (inclusive of the double garage). The proposed development will consequently meet the requirements of the adopted parking standards and will not derive any severe residual impacts to highway safety. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policy T1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 111 of the NPPF.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The erection of a replacement dwelling on this site is acceptable in principle as the site lies within the defined settlement boundary of a larger village.
- The design, layout and appearance of the proposed dwelling is wholly in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, taking its design cues from the existing dwelling.
- The proposal will not give rise to any heritage impact concerns, as the existing dwelling has no historic merit and does not qualify as a non-designated heritage asset.
- The proposed development will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers.
- The means of access will not derive any unacceptable or severe residual impacts to highway safety and adequate off street parking and turning facilities will be provided.
- The proposed development will not give rise to harm to protected species and will safeguard important trees in and around the site.

6.2 The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS8, H1, DC1, DC2, NE1, NE2 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, SMDC Design Guide SPD and Space about Dwellings SPG.