

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0064
Valid 08/02/2022

28 ASQUITH CLOSE
BIDDULPH

CONVERSION OF GARAGE
INTO ADDITIONAL BEDROOM

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Impact on highway safety.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises a one-bedroom ground floor flat that is located within a block of 4no. flats (2no. to the ground floor and 2no. to the first floor). The block of flats are constructed of buff brick with a pitched roof covered in concrete interlocking tiles. The 2no. ground floor flats are accessed via a door within a single storey projecting front porch, whilst the 2no. first floor flats are accessed via a door in either side. Each flat has its own driveway. The 4no. flats have the appearance of a pair of semi-detached dwellings.

The flat is located on a residential street within the Development Boundary of Biddulph.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of an existing integral garage to additional living accommodation. The garage door will be replaced with a window.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS6 Biddulph Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 - 14
Section(s) 4, 12

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 08/03/2022

Neighbour consultation period ends: 02/03/2022

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments: None

SCC Highways: No objection subject to a condition.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2021) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental. In accordance with policies SS1 and 1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, the Council will expect all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protecting, and where possible, enhancing the environment. When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF (2021).

The flat is located within the Development Boundary of Biddulph; a 'town' as identified by Local Plan policies SS2 and SS6. Extensions and alterations to flats in towns are considered acceptable in principle as they accord with both local and national planning policy.

Design

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2021) 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 Council's Design Guide SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that *'alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building...The aim is to revitalise the building without altering its fundamental character'*.

The existing flat has an integral garage located to the front of the building. It is proposed to convert the garage into an additional bedroom and replace the garage door with a window. The proposed window will be the same proportion and design as the other windows within the front elevation of the building and the brickwork below the window will use buff bricks to match.

The attached ground floor flat within the block has undertaken the same development as is proposed by this application. The proposed development will therefore mirror the other half of the building and will not adversely affect its character or appearance.

The application site is located on a residential street that comprises a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellinghouses and small blocks of 4no. flats. The character of the street scene is mixed and it was noted that other garages have been converted into additional living accommodation. The proposed alteration to the front elevation will therefore not adversely affect the character or appearance of the street scene.

Subject to a condition in respect of materials, the proposed development is considered to comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020), the Design Guide SPD and the NPPF (2021).

Amenity

Local Plan policy DC1 and paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF (2021) seek to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

The proposed window will not directly face another dwellinghouse, as it will face the access road opposite. The conversion of the garage to a bedroom will be less disruptive to the other residents in the block of flats than its use as a garage where noisy activities could take place. It is for these reasons that the proposed development will not adversely affect neighbouring amenity and will comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Highway Safety

Policies DC1 and T1 seek to achieve a level of parking and an access that is appropriate to the development it serves.

The Highways Engineer has assessed the application and made the following comments:

'The 1-bedroom property currently benefits from off highway parking (parking area and garage). The garage is to be converted into a 2nd bedroom; this will increase the property footprint to 2 bedrooms. Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards state: Detached/Semi-detached property of up to 3 bedrooms will require 2 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m each space) for residents and visitors within the curtilage of the dwelling. The conversion of the garage will incur a reduction in available parking.'

The submitted Drawing No. AC_28_01 detailed that the front garden can accommodate parking for 2 vehicles, this was also noted at the site visit. The proposal therefore meets with Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards. I have no objection to the proposal subject to the following condition:

The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the parking area shall be provided in accordance with Drawing No. AC_28_01, in a bound and porous material and shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.'

It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and it will comply with policies DC1 and T1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021). As such the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to Conditions

Case Officer: Ailsa Berry

Recommendation Date: 11/03/2022

X *J. Colley*

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council