

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0744
Valid 16/11/2021

1 CHURCH TERRACE
CASTLE HILL ROAD
ALTON

**PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF
SINGLE STOREY FLAT ROOF
KITCHEN AND
CONSTRUCTION OF NEW 2
STOREY EXTENSION
COMPRISING
KITCHEN/DINING WITH 2
BEDROOMS AT FIRST FLOOR
LEVEL**

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Design
- Alton Conservation Area
- Setting of Listed Buildings
- Neighbour amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Prominent corner position. Somewhat unsuitable existing single storey block work extension and unfortunate addition of render to two storey gable wall. A characterful and obviously historic stone built original small one-bedroom dwelling.

PROPOSAL

Two storey side extension with rear build out and removal of the existing flat-roofed single storey. Creates a three-bedroom dwelling. Proposed in coursed natural stone and plain clay tiles. Nb revised plans 4797-02 scheme 2d. Alterations are also proposed to the rear of the original dwelling to change the style of a dormer and insert a ground floor back door along with removal of a ground floor rear window. A heritage assessment statement accompanies the application.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

- SS1 Development Principles
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS8 Larger Villages Area Strategy – Alton
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC2 The Historic Environment
- NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;

Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2015/0367 – Demolition of single storey side extension and erection of a two storey side extension – approved on revised plans – not implemented

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 15.12.2021

Neighbour consultation period ends: 08.12.2021

Press Advert: 22.12.2021

Public Comments

From the occupier of the attached neighbouring property at no.3: "It would be useful to see the plans as there are pre-existing rights of way between properties which may require variations; also consideration of works (Party Walls Act 1996) and shared drainage between Nos 1/3 and St Anthony's House".

Town / Parish Comments

Alton Parish Council – no objection

Historic England

On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant. It is not necessary for us to be consulted on this application again, unless there are material changes to the proposals. However, if you would like detailed advice from us, please contact us to explain your request.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

This will increase the property from 1 to 3 bedrooms. Off highway parking provision required for a 3-bedroom property, as stated in the Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards, is 2 spaces (2.4m x 4.8m each space). Although parking was not

identified on the submitted plans a parking area to the rear of the property, within the red outline plan and under the applicant's control, was noted during the site visit. The parking area is sufficient to accommodate parking for 2 vehicles and therefore meets with the Parking Standards.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Development within the Alton larger village development boundary is acceptable in principle. Key issues are scale relative to the original dwelling and implications for heritage significance. Alteration of the dormer at the rear and insertion of a door could be implemented as PD.

Design

The overall structure is properly recessed relative to the front and the roof is set down relative to the existing. The overall width of the extension would be 3.36m which is narrower in proportion relative to the original dwelling front of c.5m.

Although the rear buildout would be prominent and somewhat dominant relative to the original dwelling it would not be excessively so as it is shown recessed by 150mm relative to the new proposed side wall and would project rear of the original dwelling by a modest 1.5m. Although not implemented and now lapsed the 2015 scheme as approved involved no rear build out but a wider side extension of 4.0m at the front, stepping out to 5.0m towards the rear. The now proposed 2022 scheme could perhaps reasonably be considered a more harmonious means of achieving additional space for this very small original dwelling and with the very significant improvement resulting from removal of an inappropriate earlier single storey flat roofed addition.

Painted timber flush casement windows are proposed, save for the multi-fold rear patio door window. Some minor revisions to fenestration were obtained and very close consideration has been given to the ground floor rear patio door window. This is not a traditional window form but it is found at this site that it would not be a conspicuous feature (see eg file photo 90180). Only the upper or lintel area of the window would be likely to be visible and its effects are not judged problematic.

The original dwelling comprises very finely dressed masonry to the front elevation using large uniformly laid blocks of closely matched sizes. Similar large dressed stone is used in the rear though less finely dressed and with less uniformity in the block size and coursing structure. As noted above the side is cement rendered.

Amenity

There would be no conflicts of privacy or overlooking in relation to neighbours and the existing dwelling which has a generous 30m x 9m plot to the rear would retain sufficient outdoor amenity space and parking.

The neighbour's concerns regarding access rights and shared drainage routes are obviously important matters to be resolved but they are considered 'private' matters in the planning assessment. The granting of planning consent would not overcome or remove any such private rights and an informative can be added to this effect in the decision.

Heritage

A building very likely to be the application building was present at least by 1881 by reference to the OS map extract in the submitted heritage statement. Given its age and character and evident contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area it would be appropriate to regard the building as a non-designated heritage asset.

The location occupies a prominent public position central to a unique and locally exceptional concentration of heritage assets. The site faces St Peter's Church which is Grade II* Listed and within 30m separated only by the surrounding grave yard within which there are two Grade II Listed memorials standing between the application site and the church. The St Peter's Church perimeter walls at 5m away across the road from the application property are separately Grade II Listed. At c.22m to the north west is 'The Priest's House' which, along with the perimeter walls and gateways to the property, coming within 10m of the application property, are Grade II Listed. Separated only by Castle Hill Road and a tarmac yard or car park, the Hospital of St John building lies 42m to the north of the application site and is Grade II* Listed. The application building and proposal stands in conjunction with several key views of these various designated heritage assets.

Historic England has been consulted as is statutorily required where the settings of Grade II* Listed Buildings could be affected. Historic England has given advice and leaves the determination in this case to the LPA under guidance of the LPA's own specialist Conservation Adviser as necessary.

As regards the surrounding Listed Buildings there is a statutory duty placed on the LPA, under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to consider the impact of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Buildings affected, and specifically in this case their settings and "have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

As regards the Alton Conservation Area, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 places a statutory duty on the LPA in assessing planning applications in respect to any land or buildings in a Conservation Area to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. In reaching its decision the LPA has to demonstrate that the Section 72 Duty has been applied and discharged. Section 72 (and Footnote 6 of para.11 of the NPPF) creates a strong presumption in favour of the preservation of Conservation Areas and their setting.

An LPA can only discharge its duty if it has carried out a proper assessment of the impact on a Conservation Area and/or a Listed Building, is conscious of the duty and has demonstrably applied it in assessing the proposal. This assessment extends to setting, the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced.

Historic Environment Policy DC2 of the Local Plan is to give protection to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.

NPPF paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, "great weight should be given to the asset's conservation".

Paragraph 200 goes on to say that: "any harm or loss [to a heritage asset] should require clear and convincing justification."

NPPF paragraph 202 states that: "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use."

For a non-designated heritage asset the requirement is set at NPPF 203 which says that: "In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset."

A balanced assessment of this proposal in terms of the non-designated heritage asset can take account of the benefit of removing the previous extension and that this new proposal would use matching stone and roof tiles. Whilst there is some loss to the scale and form of the original dwelling specifically with the build out to the rear which runs counter to the original linear form, the proposal is also moderated by subordinating measures by recessing and the set down of the roof. The agent also points out that a not dissimilar arrangement exists at the other end of the row at St Anthony's, though the historical context for this is not known.

In terms of the settings of the adjacent Listed Buildings and in terms of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area the proposal may reasonably be judged an improvement as it brings appropriate traditional materials and, as a two storey pitched roof structure, a more appropriate traditional design form, in place of the flat roof concrete block extension. In terms therefore of DC2 and the NPPF there is not found to be any harm to heritage assets and there is therefore no requirement for any balancing weighting under NPPF paragraph 202.

Highway Safety

Acceptable on basis of the HO advice.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In conclusion of all of the above the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions in particular as to facing stone work – block size and coursing structure.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 6th April 2022

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council