

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0131
Valid 11/03/2022

WESTERLY BIDDULPH
PARK ROAD
BIDDULPH

ERECTION OF ADDITIONAL
STOREY

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the Green Belt, character and appearance of the area, and the amenity of neighbours

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The applicant's late 20th century brick built bungalow is in a row of four dwellings of similar age, size and character. The row is at the end of a little hamlet grouping of stone cottages placed around the cross roads and Methodist Church of Biddulph Park. All of these buildings are located in the Green Belt, approx. 2km to the north of Biddulph, and are all otherwise surrounded by open countryside with an area of woodland opposite to the south.

The applicant's bungalow has a shallow full pitched roof with a wide gable front, facing the roadside, and rear, facing the large back garden and fields behind. The bungalows either side have differing orientation with side gables and roof plains that face front and rear. The adjacent bungalows to the east, on the higher side as the road slopes up and climbs the hillside, have steeper taller roof ridges with dormer windows.

PROPOSAL

To enlarge and alter the dwelling with the construction of a replacement roof structure. The new larger roof structure would have a higher ridge and steeper pitch, the ridge would be reorientated 90 degrees so that, like its neighbours, the ridge and front roof plain would be parallel to the road. From the ridge at the rear a first floor gable addition would extend out and be built off the existing single storey elevation below.

The proposal here is essentially the resubmission of a scheme that was refused last August, this proposal includes some revision to detailing and window positioning – omitting a Juliet balcony at the rear and reducing the size of the rooflights that would be installed to the front.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

- S01 Spatial Objectives
- SS1 Development Principles
- SS10 Other Rural Area
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC3 Landscape Character
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

SMDC Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0423 Addition of first floor. Refused.

HNT/2021/0027 Prior Approval to add an additional storey. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 27/04/2022

Neighbour consultation period ends: 27/04/2022

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Biddulph Town Council: No Objection

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the Green Belt

The site is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions in the closed lists at paras. 149 and 150 of the NPPF. One such exception is the alteration or extension of a building providing the additions do not result in a disproportionate increase over and above the size of the original building.

The proposal here is essentially the resubmission of a scheme that was refused last August. The planning officer in consideration of the scheme noted that the footprint of the original bungalow had already been extended by 20% with the addition of a sun room at the rear. They then pointed to the further floor area increase and additional bulk and volume that would result from the proposal to conclude that it would result in disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling and inappropriate development and harm to the Green Belt.

However, where householder development is proposed, much can be done to alter and enlarge a dwelling, whether it is in the Green Belt or not, disproportionately and less considerably, without planning permission. The planning officer noted that Class AA of Part 1 of the GPDO permitted the addition of an additional storey, but did not give the point weight because the applicant had not applied for the prior approval of the development and met the condition of the order. The officer also reasoned that if such an application were submitted it would be subject to the same policy considerations as that of the application for planning permission.

Since that decision however, the applicant has indeed applied and been granted prior approval for development permitted by Class AA of Part 1 of the GPDO that would add a first storey and turn the bungalow into a two storey dwelling house. With this

application submitted drawings overlay the two schemes to show how the already approved GPDO scheme would add considerably more bulk and volume than the development that is proposed here. Where that permitted development, which is now very likely to be carried out if this application were refused, would introduce an oddly proportioned two storey house in between the existing bungalows, the development currently proposed would, from the front, retain the appearance of a bungalow, not dissimilar to its neighbours in size and character.

The fact that this current proposal would result in notably less increase over and above the size of the original dwelling and be more in keeping with adjacent development is a consideration that now clearly outweighs the harm to the Green Belt identified above and weights in favour of the application. A grant of planning permission could be on the condition that no further development is carried out, that might otherwise be permitted by the GPDO, without the prior consent of the LPA.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Local Plan Policy DC1 requires all development to 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. Local Plan Policy DC3 states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements by resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside.

The Council's Design Guide SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that extensions should harmonise with the parent building. An extension should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing. In terms of alterations it states that 'alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building'.

Against that policy, the previous case officer offered some criticism of the design, commenting that from the front, the height increase to the ridge, would appear 'topheavy' and would proportionately dominate the scale of the original bungalow's elevation below. In addition, they felt that 2no. roof lights in the front roof slope would be overly large. With this application, the criticism of rooflights has been addressed and it is proposed to instead install three evenly spaced smaller rooflights to the front.

However, considering those criticisms of roof height and proportions within the context of the surrounding environment and the dwelling's position within a row of four other bungalows, there are obvious merits with the design approach taken here. Firstly, the existing bungalow is the only one in the row with a gable front and roof ridge at right angles to the road, the others on either side have roof plains facing the road. The new proposed roof design would reorientate the roof structure to match that convention. Moreover, a street scene drawing has been submitted with the application that shows how the new roof would sit comfortably within and follow the existing gradual stepping up of ridge heights when travelling along the road from west to the east. Although the proportion of roof to brick elevation would obviously increase, it would share similar proportions to the two neighbouring dormer bungalows on the eastern side. Importantly from the front the dwelling would still appear as a bungalow of similar character and size to its neighbour's, rather than an oddly located two storey dwellinghouse that might otherwise be built if this application were refused.

The rear elevation will appear as a two-storey dwellinghouse, with a shallow pitched roof and wide gable proportions, extending from the rear roof plain and built above the existing rear elevation. The development in these respects would not have any design or character references within the immediate locality. However, the rear of the property is not visible from public vantage points and no public footpaths are located in close proximity to the application site to the rear. Tree lined boundaries to the gardens and intervening fields screen the rear of the dwelling from positions along Biddulph Park Road to the west. The application form states that the extension will be constructed of materials to match (i.e. brick, cladding, render and tile) although the drawings do not indicate where render or cladding would be used or applied. There is no render or cladding within the locality and a condition could accordingly require brick and tile to match the existing and prohibit the use of cladding or render without further agreement. The proposed rear elevation, therefore, would not be harmful to local distinctiveness or the character and appearance of the area, it would not lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside. There would be no conflict with policies DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan in these regards.

Overall the proposed development would represent good design that would respect local distinctiveness and the character and appearance of the area. In these regards there would be no conflict with policies SS10, DC1 or DC3 of the Local Plan (2020), the Design Guide SPD or the NPPF (2021).

Amenity

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 dwellings to either side of the application site have windows within their side elevations. However, these windows comprise secondary or non-habitable windows. 2no. additional windows are proposed within either side elevation of the proposed first floor. These windows will serve a landing/stairs and a secondary window to a snooker room and therefore they can be obscure glazed in order to protect neighbouring amenity. It is for these reasons that the proposed first floor extension 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 proposed extension will result in the number of bedrooms at the property increasing from two to three, although there is potential for the 'snooker room' to become a fourth bedroom. The property has a large front garden that includes a driveway with space for the parking of a minimum of 4no. vehicles. The proposed development will therefore comply with the Parking Standards detailed at Appendix 2 of the Local Plan, whether it comprises a three or a four bedroom property. It is therefore not considered to have a detrimental effect on highway safety. The development will therefore comply with policies DC1 and T1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed additions would result in disproportionate size increase over and above the size of the original dwelling, it would be inappropriate development and harmful to the Green Belt. However, they would not result in as much harm to the Green Belt as alternative development which could be otherwise carried out and they would result in development that would have a better relationship to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and its adjacent neighbours. This is a consideration that clearly outweighs the harm that would occur to the Green Belt. There would be no other planning harms or conflict with the Local Plan Policies listed above.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 6th May 2022

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council