

Planning Statement

Erection of a replacement dwelling
Wildwood, Farley Lane, Alton, ST10 4BZ
For Mr. & Mrs. Green

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hewitt & Carr Services has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Green to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany a revised application prepared by Hewitt & Carr Architects for the erection of a replacement dwelling at Wildwood, Farley Lane, Alton.
- 1.2. The application represents a resubmission following the recent grant of planning permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling on the site under application SMD/2021/0636. That approved scheme encompassed a two storey dwelling with a gross internal floor area of 395.3 square metres and standing to a ridge height of 8.35 metres. The approved accommodation comprises of two open plan kitchen/dining/living areas, snug, utility, home office, hallway, shower room, w.c. and plant room at ground floor, with five bedrooms (one ensuite), dressing room and two bathrooms at first floor. The approved palette of materials for the replacement dwelling comprised of facing brickwork, timber cladding, and a roof constructed from standing seam metal.
- 1.3. This revised proposal encompasses a replacement dwelling of the same scale, massing and general design as the previously approved scheme, with the principal difference between the two being the proposed palette of materials. The differences between the previously approved scheme and the current proposal can be summarised as follows:
 - Provision of standing seam metal cladding to the eastern elevation
 - Provision of recessed timber cladding to the eastern elevation
 - Provision of recessed timber cladding to the western elevation
 - Provision of timber cladding to the gable ends of the building
 - Provision of additional window in northern elevation of the building
 - Minor changes to position of windows within the proposed recesses
 - Changes to interior layout
- 1.4. As with the previously approved scheme it remains the applicant's intention to replace the existing property with a new eco-friendly dwelling that will deliver a high quality, sustainable form of development, adopting a "fabric first" approach, and aspiring to be net zero carbon in terms of both build and energy use, and to provide a house which will be flexible in design to suit future family needs. The dwelling has been designed to meet the Passivhaus standard, will utilise low-carbon building materials, and incorporate photovoltaics and solar thermal technology with battery storage, and utilise heat pumps and mechanical ventilation and heat recovering systems. Materials from the existing dwelling will be recycled into the build wherever possible.
- 1.5. The application is accompanied by the following documentation which should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement:
 - Bat & Bird Survey (Tamworth Property Services)
 - Heritage Statement (Philip Heath Heritage Consultant)

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site comprises a detached single storey bungalow located on the western side of Farley Lane. The land upon which the dwelling sits slopes gently away from the highway in a south-westerly direction down towards the Churnet Valley beyond. The dwelling sits within a large curtilage, enclosed on its southeastern boundary by post and rail fencing, and by a mature, indigenous hedgerow along its southwestern site boundary. The surrounding farmland is owned and farmed by the applicants and their immediate family.
- 2.2. To the northwest of the dwelling lies a part concrete block / part portal framed agricultural building which is predominantly finished in vertical profiled corrugated sheet cladding (dark green). The blockwork walls are painted white. To the northeast of that agricultural building, and northwest of the existing dwelling, lies a single storey stable block constructed from blockwork with a corrugated sheet roof. That building is dug into the bankside, adjacent to which lies a cluster of trees with the Farley Road beyond that. Vehicular access to the site is taken direct off Farley Lane in the easternmost corner of the site, which serves an existing turning and parking area, along with the adjacent agricultural / stable buildings.
- 2.3. The site as a whole lies within the rural area of Farley Parish, on the fringe of Alton village, and adjacent to the Alton Conservation Area, whose boundary comprises Farley Lane. The woodland surrounding Alton Towers and the theme park itself lie to the east / northeast of the site on the opposite side of Farley Lane, with Alton Station lying further to the southeast. Open fields extend to the south, southwest and west, down towards the Churnet Valley beyond. There are no immediate neighbouring properties.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance to the determination of the appeal:
- 3.2. Policy SS1 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 (amongst other matters):
 - a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
 - 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
 - support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.
- 3.3. Policy SS10 relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that housing requirements will be met by allowing the replacement of existing dwellings in accordance with policy H1.
- 3.4. Policy H1 relates to 'New Housing Development' and confirms that in the rural areas, support will be given for proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.
- 3.5. Policy SD3 relates to 'Sustainability Measures in Development' and states that the Council will support further carbon-saving or water-saving measures in both new and existing developments, in the following ways:
1. Supporting developers who propose exceeding the thermal efficiency or water conservation standards required by law for new buildings or extensions, at the time of the application. In the case of larger developments such as housing estates the Council will support measures such as 'communal' renewables, or District Heating installations.
 2. The Council will support measures by landowners/developers designed to contribute to existing or emerging District Heating networks (for example by connecting 'exporters', with receptors, of heat).
 3. The Council will support measures designed to improve the sustainability of existing buildings (such as improved thermal insulation, water conservation, or the installation of micro-renewables).
- 3.6. Policy DC1 relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall 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. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):
- 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
- incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development
- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, 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
- require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links

3.7. Policy DC2 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.

- 3.8. Policy DC3 relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:
1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence
 2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence
 3. Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds
 4. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape
 5. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park
- 3.9. Policy NE1 relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states 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.
- 3.10. Policy NE1 goes on to state that all development will be expected to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable,

developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of supporting the transition to a low carbon future and shaping places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, as well as securing high quality design, ensuring highway safety, and delivering a net gain to biodiversity. The NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is referenced within the Planning Assessment section below.

SMD/2021/0636 – Wildwood, Farley Lane, Alton

- 4.2. The above application granted consent for the erection of a two storey dwelling on the site as a replacement for the existing bungalow. The approved scheme constitutes a material consideration of significant weight in the assessment of this application and discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment section below.

HNT/2021/0010 – Wildwood, Farley Lane, Alton

- 4.3. The above application granted prior approval for the erection of an upward extension to the existing dwelling under the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended). The approved scheme constitutes a material consideration of significant weight in the assessment of this application and discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment section below.

SMD/2021/0211 – Wildwood, Farley Lane, Alton

- 4.4. The above application granted a lawful development certificate confirming that proposed single storey side and rear extensions to the existing dwelling would be lawful, in accordance with Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (As Amended). The approved scheme constitutes a material consideration of significant weight in the assessment of this application and is discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

SMDC Design Guide SPD

- 4.5. This document provides guidance aimed at securing the delivery of high-quality design within the Staffordshire Moorlands. The content of the document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is referenced within the Planning Assessment section below.

SMDC Climate Emergency Declaration

- 4.6. The Local Authority declared a climate emergency on the 10th July 2019, making a commitment to start working with partners, across the district and region, towards making the Staffordshire Moorlands carbon neutral by 2030. The terms of reference of the declaration are discussed in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 5.1. Policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan make provision for the erection of replacement dwellings provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.
- 5.2. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling within the rural area and represents a resubmission following the recent approval of planning permission for the erection of a replacement dwelling under application SMD/2021/0636. As with the previously approved application, the proposed replacement dwelling will be a two-storey dwelling and have gross internal floor area (395.3 square metres) that is larger than the existing bungalow on the site (179.8 square metres).
- 5.3. In granting consent of application SMD/2021/0636 the Local Authority concluded that the replacement dwelling would be larger than the bungalow being replaced, but that it would have a smaller footprint than the extant permissions on the site (established under applications HNT/2021/0010 and SMD/2021/0211) and would have a comparable floorspace, eaves and ridge height. The Local Authority also confirmed that the existing building was not intrinsic to the character of the area and had no architectural merit. That approved scheme constitutes a fallback position that carries substantial weight in the assessment of this revised proposal.
- 5.4. This revised replacement dwelling will be of the same scale, massing, height and footprint as the extant permission and consequently will have no greater impact on the character of the rural area than the extant permission. The main difference between the extant consent and this revised proposal is the palette and distribution of materials, which will now be considered.
- 5.5. The dwelling approved under application SMD/2021/0636 encompassed the following palette of materials:
- Red Facing Brickwork
 - Timber Cladding
 - Standing Seam Metal Cladding

- 5.6. In determining that application, the Local Authority concluded that:

*"The existing bungalow is constructed of non-traditional materials (i.e. render, reconstituted stone, buff brick and concrete roof tiles) and the extant permitted development scheme utilises a mix of these non-traditional materials to comply with the requirements of the GPDO. The existing dwellinghouse therefore does not currently conform with the predominant building materials within Alton and neither does the extant fallback scheme. **Whilst it is preferred for the replacement building to be constructed of red brick / stone and Staffordshire Blue clay tiles to reflect the character of Alton, it is recognised that the proposed palette of materials will not exacerbate the existing situation** and will, to a degree, reflect the adjacent agricultural buildings which also have sheet metal roofs. On balance, the revised palette of materials is considered acceptable in this instance" (our emphasis)*

- 5.7. This revised proposal utilises the same palette of materials as that approved under application SMD/2021/0636, and thus will not be introducing any materials to the site that have not already been accepted by the Local Authority.
- 5.8. The principal difference between the scheme is how the palette of materials is distributed within the elevations, with the revised proposal incorporating standing seam metal cladding to the upper section of the front elevation, and the insertion of a small area of recessed timber cladding set within it. Timber cladding is also proposed on the side elevations of the dwelling, located at first floor level and within the gable ends. A small area of recessed timber cladding is also proposed on the rear elevation on the section of elevation that sits between the two rear projecting gable ends.
- 5.9. It is submitted that the resultant design of the dwelling will have no materially greater impact on the character of the rural area than the extant permission. Indeed, it is contended that the incorporation of more extensive areas of timber cladding will lend the dwelling a more muted appearance compared to that of the facing brickwork that it would otherwise be constructed from if the approved scheme were implemented.
- 5.10. The choice and distribution of materials is furthermore a deliberate one. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council declared a climate emergency on 10th July 2019, recognising the serious threat posed by climate change, the responsibility institutions, businesses and communities have to eliminate net CO2 emissions, and the need to take immediate measures to prepare for climate change impacts. The objective is to move towards making the Staffordshire Moorlands carbon neutral by 2030. The accompanying Terms of Reference seeks to encourage households to reduce their carbon emissions and identify low cost / no cost 'quick wins' to generate momentum.
- 5.11. Domestic properties account for 30% of energy use and around 19% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK (Committee on Climate Change). As yet,

there is no agenda in place for improving the housing sector, although central government has proposed an ambitious uplift in the energy efficiency of new homes through changes to Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) of the Building Regulations. The Future Homes Standard consultation sets out energy and ventilation standards for existing homes and includes proposals to mitigate against overheating in residential buildings. It is understood that SMDC's Climate Change Working Group (meetings 26/9/2019 and 5/8/2021) is also looking at the role of Planning to assist with reducing carbon emissions within the District.

- 5.12. The existing dwelling on this site has very poor thermal efficiency and has been rated on its EPC Certificate as Category F (Score of 28). The EPC certificate estimates that the existing dwelling generates 17.0 tonnes of CO₂ per annum, which is nearly **triple** the emissions generated by a typical household (6 tonnes per annum). The EPC Certificate goes on to identify a number of measures that should be considered in order to improve the energy efficiency rating of the property, but even if *all of those are implemented*, the best rating the dwelling could achieve would be Category C (Score of 74).
- 5.13. As with the previously approved application, the proposed replacement dwelling affords the opportunity to deliver a building with an exemplary thermal efficiency, and utilising renewable sources of energy to achieve a net carbon neutral form of development. The following key credentials of the new dwelling have been identified:
1. Designed to be of Passivhaus standard (highly insulated, airtight and energy efficient)
 2. Build materials to have low embodied carbon (timber frame, cellulose insulation and metal/timber cladding)
 3. Incorporation of solar photovoltaics and solar thermal (solar water heating), battery storage, and electric car charging
 4. Make use of heat pump technology and a Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) system
 5. Hardcore and timber building materials will be reused from the original house where possible
- 5.14. The proposal also utilises large overhangs to mitigate against overheating, with large amounts of glazing on the rear elevation to optimise solar gain, with smaller windows on the north elevation to avoid heat loss, in line with the recommendations of SMDC's Design Guide SPD. Materials and construction methods have also been chosen to achieve a low carbon build, with a timber frame system to be utilised, fabricated off site with pre-insulated cellulose fibre insulation with very low embodied energy. External cladding will take the form of part brick / part standing seam metal and sustainably grown timber. Building materials from the existing dwelling will be recycled wherever possible, with the bricks and concrete to be used as the hardcore for the underlying base of the new dwellinghouse.

- 5.15. In determining the previous application on the site, the Local Authority recognised the submissions made by the applicant that the provision of a standing seam roof would derive 10 times less embodied carbon than that associated with a more traditional Staffordshire Blue tiled roof. In addition, the provision of a tiled roof gives rise to a need for extra support for the additional weight, and in turn for larger footings, adding to the environmental impact.
- 5.16. This revised proposal retains the same eco-credentials as the previously approved scheme but advances these further by utilising more materials with less embodied carbon. The revised proposal further reduces the level of embodied carbon by some 14%.
- 5.17. Paragraph 7.3 of the Design Guide SPD explicitly promotes the use of:
- “materials will low-embodied energy (the energy needed for extraction, processing, manufacture, and transportation)”*
- 5.18. The submitted proposal fully accords with that objective and will result in a dwellinghouse with 14% less embodied carbon than the extant permission on the site. Such benefits lend substantial weight in favour of the approved development.
- 5.19. Following a review of the Passivhaus Trust website it is readily apparent that there are no dwellings within the Staffordshire Moorlands that meet the Passivhaus standard. The submitted proposal does and represents a 'quick win' to gain momentum in the drive towards making the Staffordshire Moorlands carbon neutral by 2030 (SMDC Climate Emergency Declaration refers). The proposal will be an exemplar for sustainability in the District and will provide a great example of what new housing developments should be striving to achieve, whilst also raising standards in line with other areas of the country which have more certified Passivhaus projects.
- 5.20. As with the previously approved application on the site, the applicants intend to use electricity as the principal source of energy for the site, utilising photovoltaic panels, battery storage and heat pump technologies to minimise the production of carbon dioxide. The 8 kWp photovoltaic system to be installed on the adjacent farm buildings under Permitted Development will generate 6.35 MWh/year, and the use of battery storage means that this energy can be stored and used during periods when the sun is not shining. The proposed Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery system will also ensure that the building is kept well ventilated, and that heat is recovered from the expelled air.
- 5.21. By resultant effect the proposed replacement dwelling is expected to utilise a maximum of just 5.25 MWh/year for heating and cooling compared to the 40MWh/year used by the existing dwellinghouse. It will also achieve an energy efficiency rating of A (score of 95+) which would not be achievable via a retrofit of the existing house. Indeed, the best the existing dwelling would be capable of achieving is Grade C (score of 68).

- 5.22. Paragraph 152 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that:

“The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure”.

- 5.23. Paragraph 158 of the National Planning Policy Framework goes on to state that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

“not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions”.

- 5.24. The above guidance is enshrined within Policy SD3 of the Local Plan, which confirms that the Council will support carbon saving or water saving measures in new developments, by:

“3. Supporting developers who propose exceeding the thermal efficiency or water conservation standards required by law for new buildings or extensions, at the time of the application”

- 5.25. For the reasons set out within the preceding paragraphs, the submitted proposal is firmly in accordance with the objectives of paragraphs 152 and 158 of the NPPF and the provisions of policy SD3 of the Local Plan and will secure the delivery of a highly sustainable replacement dwelling on this site to replace the wholly inefficient existing building currently in situ. Such eco-credentials lend significant weight in favour of the proposed development and lead to the conclusion that the proposed replacement dwelling is acceptable in the context of policies SS10, H1, DC1 and SD3 of the Local Plan.

Design & Amenity

- 5.26. The application site is isolated from surrounding built development and consequently presents an opportunity for a more contemporary form of development to be accommodated. The Local Authority concluded likewise in its assessment of application SMD/2021/0636, commenting that:

“The application site is isolated from other [sic] and therefore the replacement dwellinghouse has no buildings to guide its architectural design or materials, and no local traditions to follow. The nearest buildings to the application site are the applicants’ modern agricultural buildings located to the northwest that comprise dark coloured metal cladding to both the walls and roof. Other than these agricultural buildings, the next nearest buildings to the application site

*comprise a number of listed buildings and structures. These buildings are constructed of stone **and it is preferred that the replacement dwellinghouse does not try to replicate these traditional stone buildings through a pastiche design.** However, the predominant building materials within Alton are red brick/stone and Staffordshire Blue clay tiles and a contemporary design utilising these materials would provide a reference point to its setting. (our emphasis)*

- 5.27. The scale, massing and height of the proposed dwelling is the same as the previously approved application, with the only differences to the design being the change / distribution of materials on the proposed elevations, and the insertion of a small window at first floor level on the northern gable end.
- 5.28. The adopted Design Guide SPD states that in the countryside, buildings should sit comfortably in the landscape, which is best achieved by emulating the horizontal, ground hugging form of traditional buildings with their strong eaves and ridge lines. It goes on to state that sites may be capable of accommodating both contemporary and traditional forms of development that are high quality and functional. The Design Guide SPD also acknowledges that modern design construction and materials allows for much larger openings, which has become particularly desirable as it provides light habitable space. It goes on to state that the insertion of such openings may prove acceptable when considering the design of new contemporary buildings.
- 5.29. Despite the changes to the distribution of materials on the proposed elevations, the development retains several design elements that are characteristic of the Staffordshire Moorlands, as set out within the adopted Design Guide SPD. These include:
- A horizontal ground hugging form with strong eaves and ridge lines
 - A balance of proportions between the overall shape of the walls and the openings they contain
 - A high solid to void ratio in which the wall dominates
 - A simple arrangement of openings
 - Keeping windows away from the corners of the building
 - Maximising solar gain
 - Minimising heat loss by limiting openings to the north
 - Simple dominant roof line emphasised by gables
 - Roof spanning the shorter side
 - Roof pitch to match those exhibited in the surrounding locality
- 5.30. The Design Guide SPD also offers guidance on materials, stating that high quality modern materials may be used as substitutes or replacements for traditional materials in exceptional circumstances where appropriate to the design or setting, provided they harmonise well. The proposed palette of materials to be utilised on the site is the same as those approved under the previous application, so will not result in the introduction of any materials that the Local Authority has not already approved on the site. It is furthermore highlighted that the existing

dwelling on the site already utilises non-traditional materials in the form of its buff brickwork, non-local stone and buff concrete roof tiles.

- 5.31. Attention is also drawn in this regard to the biomass building approved at Alton Castle (SMD/2015/0591) which approved the use of timber cladding for all elevations of the building (Western Red Cedar). That site is located within the Alton Conservation Area (unlike the current application site which lies outside it) and the Conservation Officer's consultation response confirmed that: *"Given that the surroundings are quite wooded I have no objection to timber facing"*. The context of the setting of that application site with woodland is almost identical to that of Wildwood, which has a woodland located to its east on the opposite side of Farley Lane. The introduction of greater levels of timber cladding to the proposed dwelling compared to the extant scheme will therefore not derive any material adverse impact to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development is therefore of a scale, massing and design that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and accords with the objectives of policies SS1, DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the Design Guide SPD.

Residential Amenity

- 5.32. There are no immediate neighbouring properties who will be affected by the proposed development and no conflict with the adopted space about dwellings standards will arise. Furthermore, the proposed replacement dwelling will have a floor area that exceeds the minimum requirements set out within the DCLG Technical Housing Standards. No harm to residential amenity will therefore ensue as a consequence of this development. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the relevant provisions of policies SS1, H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Highway Safety

- 5.33. The site benefits from an existing means of vehicular access direct off the Farley Lane which is to be reused to serve the proposed replacement dwelling. No alterations are proposed to the existing access or its associated turning and parking areas, which will continue to afford off-street parking provision for at least three cars, in accordance with the Local Authority's parking standards. The proposed development therefore derives no conflict with paragraphs 110 and 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Biodiversity

- 5.34. Owing to the proposed demolition of the existing dwelling, the application has been accompanied by a bat and bird survey to assess the impact of the development on protected species. The bat and bird survey confirms that there is no evidence of bats using the building as a place of shelter, nor any roosting opportunities, or evidence of birds nesting. Consequently, no adverse impact to protected species will arise as a consequence of this development.
- 5.35. The bat and bird survey nevertheless suggests that a new bat roosting opportunity could be created by installing a brick-built bat box into the new dwelling, along

with new bird nesting opportunities. These will be created to ensure a net gain to biodiversity is achieved and can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition. 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.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The proposed replacement dwelling constitutes an exemplar form of sustainable development that will make a substantial contribution towards reducing carbon emissions within the District. The scale, massing and height of the development is no different to the previously approved scheme on the site, and the proposed design is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, utilising a palette of materials that is the same as the extant permission, and which encompasses a substantially lower level of embodied carbon. The proposal overall represents an appropriate contemporary design solution for this otherwise isolated site that will accord with the objectives of the recently updated National Planning Policy Framework in delivering high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings (paragraph 136 refers). The proposal furthermore raises no concerns with regards to residential amenity, highway safety, heritage impact or biodiversity.
- 6.2. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS10, H1, SD3, DC1, DC2, DC3 and NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and SMDC Design Guide SPD.