

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

APPLICANT : **MR & MRS A CLOWES**

ADDRESS : **PARK HAYES FARM, BLACKWOOD
HILL, ENDON, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST9 9AH**

PROPOSAL : **REPLACEMENT DWELLING**

DATE : **APRIL 2022**

JOB No. : **2021-2603**

INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application which seeks consent for a replacement dwelling at Park Hayes Farm, Blackwood Hill, Endon. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mr & Mrs Clowes and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2021-2603-00, 2021-2603-02C, 2021-2603-08B, 2021-2603-10E, 2021-2603-11, 2021-2603-12, 2021-2603-13 and a Bat Activity Survey undertaken by Absolute Ecology (September 2021).

This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter it provides justification for approval of the proposed development on the basis that it would comprise of appropriate development within the Green Belt without any material harm to its openness or visual amenity. Furthermore the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area, nor would it harm residential amenity, be detrimental to highway safety or adversely impact upon any established ecological interests. The proposed development therefore constitutes a sustainable and appropriate form of development which accords with the provision of local and national planning policy and should therefore be approved without delay.

APPLICATION SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

The application site comprises of a detached two storey traditional Moorlands longhouse with a single storey rear lean to constructed from stone and render under a plain clay tile roof which sits within an irregular shaped plot. Tiered gardens lie to the front of the dwellinghouse which step down to a level parking area to the south west. A small range of single storey brick and tile outbuildings lie in the north eastern corner of the site with a large 'L' shaped converted barn, also within the applicant's control beyond. The application site is access via Blackwood Hill Lane which comes in from the north west and the dwellinghouse effectively sits within an island of land which is contained by the access track which serves the adjacent dwelling passing alongside its northern, eastern boundaries before swooping round to the south and west and linking back up to highway.

The Horton 62 Public Right of Way runs along the North and East curtilage of the site, branching off into the Horton 0.1769 Public Right of Way heading East. The closest neighbour at the address The Ostlers Cottage, Blackwood Hill Lane is situated to the North-West of the site and Blackwood Old Hall Farm, Blackwood Hill Lane is located to the North. For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt where restrictive development plan policies apply.

THE PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks consent for the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement. The replacement dwelling is to be located on the site of the existing dwelling

The replacement dwelling will provide a new high quality sustainable form of development which will be flexible in design to suit future family needs. The proposed replacement dwelling will have a footprint of 143 sq. metres, a floor area of 243sq metres with an eaves height of 5.25m and an overall ridge height of 6.8m. It will comprise of 4 bedrooms all served with end-suites, an office, lift and utility room at ground floor with a large open plan living space above with separate storage space and pantry above.

Predominately positioned on the site of the former dwelling the proposed dwelling it will be reorientated slightly so that its main axis runs in a north east to south west direction and its principal elevation looking to the south east. A single parking space will be provided to the side of the dwelling whilst two further spaces will be provided in the area currently used. Drystone retaining walls will be provided to the north of the proposed dwelling, as shown on the submitted site plan, and all other boundaries will be retained.

PLANNING POLICIES & GUIDANCE

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (September 2020). The following policies are considered to be relevant:-

SS1 Development Principles

SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

SD3 Sustainability Measures in Development

SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy

H1 New Housing Development

DC1 Design Considerations

D3 Landscape and Settlement Setting

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources

National Planning Policy and Guidance.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was republished in July 2021. The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. Taken together, these policies articulate the Government's vision for sustainable development which should be interpreted and applied in determining planning applications/appeals.

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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 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.

In addition, the Government published its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in March 2014. The web-based resource pools together a series of planning guidance documents into a new format. It is updated regularly and is intended to be used to assist in the interpretation and execution of the NPPF. It is also therefore a material consideration in the determination of this application.

In addition consideration should also be given to the provisions of the recently adopted the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD which sets out the importance of good design and high quality development and identifying that requirements of the design guide area material consideration in all relevant planning considerations and the Supplementary Planning Guidance Staffordshire Moorlands New Dwellings and Extensions to Dwellings which sets out guidance in respect of the design of new residential development, including matters of siting, roof design, elevations and materials. Furthermore, the Council's Local Plan Supporting Evidence Document: Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008) which categorises the District into distinct character areas with specific guidance for each should also be considered.

ASSESSMENT

As the application building is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt the main issues for consideration during the determination of this application are considered to be as follows:

- (1) whether the proposed development would be appropriate or inappropriate development for the purposes of the NPPF and development plan policy;
- (2) impact upon the character and appearance of the application site and the wider part of the countryside;
- (3) impact upon the residential amenities of the area
- (4) impact upon highway safety
- (5) impact upon biodiversity.

(1) whether the proposed development would be appropriate or inappropriate development for the purposes of the NPPF and development plan policy and (2) the effect of the proposal on the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings is regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt save for several specified exceptions. One such exception is (d) the replacement of a building provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. The Framework therefore establishes two tests for assessing proposals, firstly relating to the use, and then an objective assessment of the relative size of the existing and replacement building. The application proposal would be the same use, passing the first test. The second test is a matter of judgement based on the evidence of each case as the Framework does not define 'materially larger'.

The dwellinghouse is located within the Open Countryside, whereby policy SS10 is applicable. Policy SS10 lists a number of types of development that are deemed acceptable in principle in the Open Countryside, including 'allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H1'. Local Plan policy H1 outlines when new housing development is acceptable in principle. Part (5) of the policy outlines the types of housing development that will be permitted in the other rural areas, which includes the Open Countryside. Part (c) states that proposals for replacement dwellings will be permitted 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.

In terms of the first criteria the replacement dwelling proposed as part of this application would be two storey and comparable in height to that of the existing dwelling. Whilst the proposed dwelling would have a footprint and floor area greater than the existing consideration needs to be had to the fall back position. The existing dwelling currently benefits from no extensions or alterations. In December 2021 a prior approval application for a larger homes notification which proposed a single storey 8m deep extension was submitted to the council under application number HNT/2021/0030 and subsequently approved. This permission, which remains extant, would if implemented, result in an additional increase in floor area of 113.48 sq. metres and 364 cu metres of volume resulting the overall dwellinghouse having a result floor area of 245.98 sq metres and an overall cubic volume of 804 metres.

In addition to the above a separate certificate of lawfulness application was also applied for under application number SMD/2021/0736 and subsequently granted in January this year which confirmed that a single storey side extension and two storey rear extension could be added to the property under permitted development rights. Such development would, if implemented result in an additional increase in floor area 133.92 sq. metres and 414.5 cu metres volume resulting in the overall dwellinghouse having a result floor area of 266.42 sq metres and an overall cubic volume of 854 cu metres. The table below provides a useful comparison between the size and scale

of the existing dwellinghouse, with that proposed as part of this proposal and that previously approved under a larger homes notification prior approval and a certificate of lawfulness application:-

	FOOTPRINT SQ. METRES	FLOOR AREA SQ. METRES	VOLUME CU. METRES	EAVES HEIGHT (M)	RIDGE HEIGHT(M)
EXISTING DWELLING	90.3	132.5	440	4.65	6.7
PROPOSED DWELLING	143	243	850	5.25	6.8
PRIOR APPROVAL DWELLING	203.78	245.98	804	4.65	6.7
CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS	213.09	266.42	854.50	4.65	6.7

The extant planning consents do provide the applicant with a genuine fallback position which should be afforded significant weight. The proposed replacement dwellinghouse will be larger than the dwelling it will replace. As can be seen by above the replacement dwelling would have a footprint of just 143 sq metres which is more than 50% less than that approved under the certificate of lawfulness application with a consequent 10% reduction in floor area and comparable volume. It will also have a similar eaves height (0.6 metres higher) and a ridge height that would be just 100mm higher. Whilst sited on the site of the existing dwellinghouse the proposed dwellinghouse will be re-orientated slightly with its main axis running in a north east to south west direction. This will improve the relationship with the adjacent dwelling which lies to the east and work better with the levels on the site. In places it would introduce buildings on land that is currently open but it would also return some areas that are currently occupied by buildings to open garden land. Whilst the replacement house would be larger than the dwelling it would replace, it would not be excessively large, having regard to the established fall back position,

topography of the site and its setting. The harm that the replacement dwelling would have on the openness of the Green Belt would be no greater than the extended original dwelling. On this basis, the replacement of the dwellinghouse with a new dwellinghouse is acceptable in principle and will comply with policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan (2020). It is considered that the proposed development would comprise of appropriate development within the Green belt which would not have a materially greater impact upon its openness or its visual amenity.

The second part of Local Plan Policy H1 (5) (c) also requires the development to not result in the loss of a building that is intrinsic to the character of the area. The existing dwellinghouse is not listed, is it not located in a Conservation Area, and there is no Historic Environment Record associated with the property. The existing property contributes little to the character and appearance of the area and cannot be considered to constitute a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area. The proposed development is considered to comply with policies DC1 and H1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019).

(2) Impact upon the character and appearance of the application site and its wider setting

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF lists 6 criterion (a) to (f) which planning policies and decisions should accord and details, amongst other things, that developments should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built development and landscape setting whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Policy DC1 of the Local Plan states that all development should 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.

The council's adopted Design Guide SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design. It 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.

The proposed replacement dwelling would be of a traditional two storey design with a horizontal ground hugging form with strong eaves and ridge line but offers a more contemporary design approach. Whilst the submitted scheme includes a number of large ground and first floor windows on the front and rear of the property these have been carefully balanced between the overall shape of the walls and the openings they contain in order that a high solid to void ratio in which the wall dominates has been created.

There are only a limited number of dwellings close to the application site, however there is a mixture of design styles and the majority are two storey traditionally designed properties. The closest property, a large 'L' shaped barn conversion which lies to the east of the application building lies a reasonable distance away and this combined with the falling ground levels across the site means that the two are not readily read together. As such it is considered that the overall external appearance, with respect to the proposed materials and design character, is appropriate for the area.

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 submitted proposal encompasses a mixed palette of materials including standing seam metal cladding, stone, render and timber

cladding, and is considered to amount to an appropriate materials palette given that this dwelling occupies an isolated position away from surrounding built development and reads as a stand-alone development.

Whilst it is recognised that the replacement dwelling would result in a clear visual change to the application site the proposed dwelling would not result in any significant change in views from the due to the sloping topography of the area. In addition the site also benefits from being set within a generous plot and can therefore accommodate the proposed development without appearing as an overdevelopment of the site itself.

The submitted scheme avoids a pastiche approach, and the submission makes no apology for this as it delivers a new contemporary, exemplar piece of architecture, whilst enhancing the rural surroundings. The proposed contemporary form of development on the site 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 DC1 of the Local Plan which aims to ensure development respects the site and its surroundings and Local Plan policy DC3 which seeks to protect the local landscape as well as guidance contained in the NPPF.

(3) Impact upon the residential amenities of the area

Local Plan Policy DC1 and Paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF states, amongst a number of other matters, that new development should create a high standard of amenity for both existing and future occupiers. Policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan states that all development should protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.

The closest neighbour at the address are The Barn, Blackwood Hill Lane situated to the east, Ostlers Cottage, Blackwood Hill Lane is situated to the North-West of the site and Blackwood Old Hall Farm, Blackwood Hill Lane is located to the North and are separated from the application site by pockets of Green Belt. Given the separation distances between and topography of the site it is not considered that the development as proposed would adversely impact upon the existing residential

amenity afforded to any of the surrounding residential properties nor would it be detrimental to any neighbouring land uses.

The proposed replacement dwellinghouse significantly exceeds the minimum internal floorspace requirements, as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards and the area of private amenity space exceeds the minimum required by the Space About Dwellings SPG. The amenity of future occupiers will therefore be acceptable.

In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with policy DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF.

(4) impact upon highway safety.

Policies DC1 and T1 of the Local Plan seek to achieve a level of parking and an access that is appropriate to the development which it serves. The replacement dwelling will be served by the existing access off Blackwood Hill. The proposal is for a replacement dwellinghouse and therefore it will not involve an intensification in the use of the existing access.

No alterations are proposed to the site access or its associated parking and turning areas. The replacement dwellinghouse will have 4 bedrooms and therefore 3 off street parking spaces, as provided, are required in order to comply with the Parking Standards contained in Appendix 2 of the Local Plan (2020). On this basis it is considered that the proposal complies with policies DC1, T1 and Appendix 2 of the Local Plan and national guidance in this respect contained in the NPPF.

(5) Impact upon biodiversity

Policy NE1 outlines that the biodiversity of the District will be conserved and enhancement by positive management and the strict control of development by (1) protecting and enhancing habitats and species of principal importance for conservation; (2) ensuring development produces a net gain in biodiversity and; (3) any unavoidable impacts are mitigated.

The application is supported by a bat activity survey which has been undertaken by Absolute Ecology (September 2021). Evidence of bats was found during the

internal inspection and an application for an EPS licence from Natural England shall be required for the demolition of the building. As the existing building will be demolished it will not be possible to retain any of the existing bat roosts however a number of mitigation measures have been incorporated into the replacement dwelling including the provision of external bat boxes on the replacement building and on nearby trees/buildings and further site enhancement secured through additional landscaping works. A sensitive lighting scheme is also required in order to safeguard and protect the bat habitat and this and the mitigation measures proposed can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. Having regard to the above it is considered that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the established ecological interests of the site and as such is compliant with Local Plan policy NE1 and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

Conclusion

In conclusion therefore it is considered that the replacement of an existing dwellinghouse is an appropriate form of development which is acceptable in principle. 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 design of the development is comparable to the fallback option that has already been accepted by the Council through approval of a certificate of lawfulness and prior approval applications for single/two storey development to the rear and sides of the existing dwelling. The proposed dwelling would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and 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 or biodiversity. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS10, H1, SD3, DC1, DC3, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and SMDC Design Guide SPD.