

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0850
Valid 11/01/2022

OAKHILL DIMBLE LANE
ALTON

**NEW DETACHED DOUBLE-
GARAGE WITH FIRST-FLOOR
OFFICE SPACE ABOVE TO
REPLACE AN EXISTING
REDUNDANT STORE AND
TIMBER-FRAMED SUMMER
HOUSE.**

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

The impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.
The impact on residential amenity.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is within the development boundary of Alton and lies to the south of the centre of the village. It comprises a large old Tudor-style detached dwellinghouse on the west side of Dimble Lane, a narrow lane with a rural character flanked by several large trees. To the south side are a number of modern dwellings at end of the Glen Drive housing estate cul-de-sac, some with their backs to the site and one with the side facing the south side elevation of the house on site. To the north, there is a considerable gap to the next neighbouring dwelling. To the west there are two further adjacent dwellings down a steep slope. These properties used to be part of the grounds of the house on site and have their backs facing the rear wall of the house. To the other side of Dimble Lane to the east is a row of modern houses which face Shirley Drive. The site is in a Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

This is a full householder planning application for a detached double garage building with first floor office within a dual-pitched roof. It would have materials to match the house comprising ashlar stone on ground floor level and timber framed Tudor-style walls above with white render. The roof would comprise dark grey slates. Cars would access the garage via an existing hard standing between the access to the other side of the house and which extends around the front of the house to the south side and additional hard surfacing to replace the outbuilding near the front boundary.

This is part of an amended scheme replacing the original scheme submitted which comprised a large rear balcony structure at first-floor level, placed at a diagonal angle to the rear wall and partly covered by a large roof overhang. Further amendments have been made including the narrowing of the building and a steeper roof pitch to better match that of the house. Other amendments include the removal

of a completely glazed rear gable and replacement with a smaller amount of glazing higher up the gable and the swapping of rooflights from the south roof slope to the north roof slope facing the house. Solar panels would be placed on the south roof slope instead.

The application was accompanied by a Heritage Statement.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffs Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

DC1 – Design Considerations
DC2 – The Historic Environment

NPPF (Revised July 2021)

Sections 12 (Design) and 16 (Historic Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 10.2.22
Neighbour consultation period ends: 10.2.22 and 30.5.22 for the final amended plans.
Press Advert: 18.1.22

Public Comments

In response to the original plans, four local residents objected to the proposal on the grounds of overlooking and loss of privacy and noise intrusion due to the balcony and also harm to the appearance of the area due to the modern design of the rear of the building i.e. the balcony structure, roof overhang and glazed gable. One of the objectors raised overlooking concerns from the front office window affecting the properties to the east.

The objectors were notified of the final amended plans and also other adjacent residents but no letters/emails were received in response.

Parish Council Comments

No objection in response to the original scheme.

Local Highways Authority

No objection subject to condition to prevent use of building as a separate dwelling.

Severn Trent Water

Advise of the nearby presence of public sewers and to take account of the no-build protection zones around them.

OFFICER COMMENTS

With regard to the impact on the Conservation Area, the site is on a very elevated position near the top of a slope facing west. The rear elevation of the proposed building would be visible from long distance views heading east along Cedar Hill, a residential street to the west and there would also be glimpses between houses of the south roof slope when viewed from one of the Glen Drive cul-de-sacs to the south. The building has been amended significantly and harmonises with the host building i.e. the house, in terms of scale, height, form including roof form including slope pitch and also the building materials. Despite being close to the house it would still be viewed as being a separate outbuilding and subservient to it. Due to the presence of trees along the front boundary, it would be well screened from the road. The trees would not be affected by the building as there is a solid wall store building closer to them than the proposed building, which would have a greater impact on the roots than the proposed buildings and this building would be removed.

The roof slope visible from Glen Drive would be seen against the backdrop of the much larger dwelling. From the west, the modern glazing in the gable would be reduced. Although its shape and style would still be modern and contemporary and in contrast with the traditional qualities of the house and the rest of the proposed garage building, the glazing would be set within a traditional Tudor-style timber frame and also recessed slightly behind the edge of the gable roof which has a slight overhang. Views from the public realm would be restricted to long-range views and although visible, the glazing would not appear as a harmfully intrusive or prominent modern feature which would harm the overall character of the property or the Conservation Area.

With regard to residential amenity, the proposed large raised balcony/terrace area was removed from the screen alleviating the overlooking and loss of privacy concerns and the Council considered this was harmful and unneighbourly. There is an upper floor large window occupying the upper half of the gable. However, this window would no closer to the properties down the slope to the west than the rear windows of the house of which there are several at three floors and some of which are placed higher than the proposed office window. In any case, the distance between the rear office window and the dwellings to the west would far exceed the Space About Dwellings Council design guidance for window separation distances. There is increased overlooking scope when a proposed window is on raised ground levels above neighbouring houses but the separation distances together with the obscure angle of overlooking from the office window into the rear windows of the houses to the west is such that no harmful additional level of overlooking would result to the extent that privacy would be harmfully affected. When stood at first floor level, it would also still be difficult to view over the rear boundary hedges of the more modern Glen Drive properties to the south. The upper floor rear windows of the Glen

Drive would be visible from the proposed office window but views into them would be at an obscure angle and would not lead to a harmful level of overlooking into them.

The rooflights which originally overlooked the side garden of one of the Glen Drive properties, directly to the south, have been moved to the north elevation facing the house on site. These have been replaced by solar panels but I do not consider the visible presence of the roof (above the shared boundary) and solar panels would be overbearing or visually intrusive on neighbours as it would be seen against the backdrop of the much larger and higher house.

With regard to the upper floor front office window, the separation distance between it and the rear windows of the Shirley Drive houses to the east would exceed the required distances set out in the Space About Dwellings SPG. Furthermore, the presence of large trees flanking both sides of Dimble Lane blocks harmful overlooking into those properties from the front office window. Overall, it is not considered the amended proposal would result in any loss of privacy or loss of light provision or appear overbearing to any of the surrounding neighbouring residential properties.

With regard to highway safety, although the hardstanding drive from the access to the garage is narrow, it is possible to reverse cars out of the garage around the bend and down the drive to the existing large hardstanding parking area to the north side of the house where cars can easily turn and leave the access onto Dimble Lane in forward gear. The local highways authority has raised no objection to this and in character and appearance terms (and possibly highway safety terms) would be preferable to creating a new access directly in front of the proposed garage onto Dingle Lane involving the removal of trees which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area and also open up the site to views from the east.

Severn Trent water notify that there are foul or surface water sewers either within or close to the site. Although this is not a material planning consideration an informative will be added informing the applicant of the rules and regulations regarding building close to public sewers/drains including those relating to the exclusion/no-build zones around the sewers/drains.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The amended proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would not harm to the residential amenities of the area and would therefore comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 9.6.22

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council