Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

486 ASH BANK ROAD
WERRINGTON

JUNE 2022

Site Address:
486 Ash Bank Road, Werrington, Staffordshire, ST9 0DT

Applicant:
Mr. & Mrs. Pearce

Proposal:
Rear extension with modification to roof and removal of chimneys / front porch

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 21st June 2022
Job Reference: RDP/2022/085

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Pearce to seek full planning permission for extension and alterations to their existing dwelling at 486 Ash Bank Road, Werrington. The works proposed encompass a rear extension, along with modifications to the existing roof of the dwelling, and the removal of existing chimneys and a small front porch.

1.2 The application represents a resubmission following the refusal of application SMD/2021/0641 which had also proposed a rear extension and alterations to the roof of the dwelling and removal of the chimneys and porch, and which was refused for the following reason:

1. *"The application site is located within the Green Belt where development is strictly controlled. The proposed extension would amount to a disproportionate addition to the original building consequently reducing openness and comprising inappropriate development within the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances, none of which have been demonstrated. Furthermore design guidance requires that all 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. The extensions by virtue of their scale and design overwhelm the original building and are not subservient to it. The additions would result in a loss of the dwellings distinctive character and appearance as a mid-20th Century bungalow. The proposal is therefore contrary to policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework including sections 12 'Achieving well-designed places' and 13 'Protecting Green Belt land', Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Design Principles for Development in*

the Staffordshire Moorlands' and Supplementary Planning Document 'Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide.'

1.3 Following on from that refusal a number of significant changes to the proposal have been made, and which are shown on the submitted plans. These include the omission of the previously proposed half-hipped roof, in favour of gable ends, retaining eaves levels at their current height, relocating the front dormer window, the insertion of 3no. rooflights, the removal of the originally proposed basement room and changes to the scale, massing and design of the rear extension. A comparison of the previously refused scheme and this revised proposal is enclosed as Appendix A.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies on the southern side of Ash Bank Road, and forms part of an existing row of detached dwellings that are arranged in a linear pattern along this side of the carriageway. The existing property comprises of a two storey dormer bungalow constructed from red facing brickwork with a pan tile roof. The surrounding area exhibits a wide variety of architectural styles and ages of development and there is no strong prevailing vernacular.

2.2 A mature hedgerow encloses the western boundary of the site, beyond which runs a vehicular access serving Square Meadow Farm that lies to the southwest of the site. A further hedgerow encloses the western side of that access, beyond which lies a small parcel of open land, before the linear pattern of residential development continues. Open fields extend to the south of the site, with the neighbouring residential property of 488 Ash Bank Road enclosing the eastern boundary of the site. The site as a whole is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase 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 the recently adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan 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, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- *a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities*

- *quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;*

- *easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;*

- *increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;*

- *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;*

- *development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.*

- *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 of the Local Plan 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 the Council will allow extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The Council will assess schemes having regard to the original dwelling, in cases where cumulative change has occurred. The policy also states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

3.4 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan 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:

1. *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*

2. *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;*

3. *create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design;*

4. *incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development;*

5. *protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, overbearing development, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;*

6. *promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate;*

7. *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;*

8. *require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links;*

9. *ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;*

10. *ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community;*

11. *be served by high speed broadband (>30mbps) unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with Next Generation Access Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In all circumstances during construction of the site sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate ease of installation at a future date.*

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia,* in respect of safeguarding the Green Belt and securing high quality design. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Guide SPD

4.2 The adopted Design Guide SPD provides advice aimed at securing the delivery of high-quality built development within the District. The content of the Design Guide SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Principles for Development SPG

4.3 The adopted Design Principles for Development SPG was the forerunner to the Design Guide SPD and is still applied as supplementary guidance by the Local Authority. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMD/2020/0166 – 208 Armshead Road, Werrington

4.4 The above application granted consent for extensions to an existing bungalow in the Green Belt a short distance from this site, and which included a rear extension that projects up above the ridge line of the existing property, and which omitted a hipped roof in favour of a gable end. The Local Authority's conclusions in the assessment of that application are referenced within the Planning Assessment section below.

5 Planning Assessment

Green Belt

5.1 The application seeks planning permission for extensions and alterations to an existing dwellinghouse that lies within the rural area and forms part of the North Staffordshire Green Belt. The application represents a resubmission following the refusal of application SMD/2021/0641.

5.2 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan makes provision for the extension of existing dwellings within the rural areas, provided that they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. Policy SS10 also states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development, allowing only for exceptions as defined by government policy.

5.3 Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the erection of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate within the Green Belt unless it is for one of a limited number of exceptions. Those exceptions include:

> *"The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building"*

5.4 The term disproportionate is not defined within the NPPF, but the delegated report accompanying the previous application (SMD/2021/0641) cites the aforementioned provisions of policy SS10 of the Local Plan as the basis upon how the proposal should be assessed, commenting that:

> *"Determination of whether the extensions to the dwelling are inappropriate development involves assessment of their design"*

5.5 The previously refused application drew a number of criticisms from the Local Authority, which this application has sought to constructively address. Each of the concerns with the previously refused scheme is detailed below (extracted from the delegated report) along with commentary on each particular point:

> **"***The raised eaves and ridge height, together with change in the shape of the roof, instantly alter the simplistic and original form of the dwelling"*

5.6 The revised scheme maintains the existing eaves line of the property, with only a very modest increase in the height of the building (0.3m). A change to the roof from its current hipped design to gable ends is now proposed in lieu of the previously proposed half hipped roof. The adopted Design Guide SPD *specifically advocates* proposals that encompass a strong, dominant ridge line emphasised by gables, which this revised proposal achieves. Buildings with gable ended roofs are not uncommon in this area so the proposal will not appear alien within its surroundings. In consideration of this matter, one also needs to have regard to the applicant's fall-back position which would allow for a change from the current hipped roof to gable ends under Class A Permitted Development Rights.

> *"The two-storey front gable does not relate well to the eaves height to which it would be attached, would be a clash of design style and would be a dominant and detrimental feature upon this principal elevation"*

5.7 Unlike the previous proposal, the front gable is to be maintained in its current appearance, so there will no longer be any increases to its height, massing or eaves height. The concerns about the clash of design styles and the overall dominance of the front gable have consequently been resolved.

> *"The combination of the two-storey gable, proposed eaves height (raised in height from original) and additional courses of brickwork above the ground floor windows would confuse the style of the property, it neither reading as a bungalow nor a two-storey house whilst losing the original character of the bungalow"*
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> .

5.8 The two storey gable has now been removed. The eaves height is to be retained at its existing level and no additional courses of brickwork are proposed above the ground floor windows. Consequently, the confusion of style and loss of character identified by the Local Authority has been resolved.

> *"The extent of glazing at first floor within the two-storey front gable and the dormer window appear odd, completely contrasting with the simplistic nature of the existing windows"*

5.9 The front gable is now to remain unaltered, and consequently no longer proposes high level glazing of the kind found to be unacceptable in the previous application.

> *"The proportions, size and design of the existing side and rear elevations would be completely lost to the proposed alterations"*

5.10 The revised scheme sets the two storey rear extensions in from their respective side elevations so that the proportions, size and design of the existing side elevations are preserved. The proposed two storey rear

extensions will still obscure the original rear elevation, but that is no different to the effect that would be caused if a 3m deep two storey rear extension were to be carried out as permitted development across the back of the property. The depth of the rear extensions has also been reduced by 0.5 metres to further reduce the size of the extension compared to the previously refused application.

> *"The legibility of the existing side elevations would be completely lost, in terms of their sizes and design, the raised ridge and eaves height together with the significantly sized rear wings would detrimentally alter the form of the bungalow which is generally a rectangular shaped footprint with small front and rear projections"*

5.11 By setting the rear extensions in from their respective side elevations, the legibility of the existing dwelling is preserved. The rear wings have also been reduced in depth, and now have a steeper pitched roof that is more reminiscent of the host dwelling, as well as a matching eaves height.

> *"The proposal would see the footprint generally 'squared-off' and altered to one which is virtually as deep as it is wide, again a loss of character".*

5.12 The revised proposal will serve to maintain a rectangular form to the dwelling, with the width of the dwelling being between 3.5 metres and 6.2 metres wider than the building is deep.

> *"The two-storey extensions, vast expanses of glazing, first floor extension between the projecting wings and large lower ground floor extension/excavation, results in the dwelling having a three-*

storey appearance, far removed from its current bungalow appearance with small lower level, garden storage area".

5.13 The revised proposal maintains large areas of glazing to the rear elevation, but this does not derive any wider harm to the character and appearance of the area. The previously proposed basement room has nevertheless been omitted so that the rear elevation will appear as a two storey dwelling, not a three storey one.

5.14 In consideration of this matter, I draw the Local Authority's attention to the provisions of Class A of the Permitted Development Order which allow for the erection of two storey rear extensions to existing dwellings provided that they do not project more than 3 metres beyond the original rear elevation of the dwelling (and subject to other dimensional criteria). The applicant would be entitled to carry out such an extension without the need for planning permission, and in doing so could provide as much glazing to the rear elevation as desired. Similarly permitted development rights also permit the instruction of new glazing to the existing rear elevation, as well as rooflights, which would not be materially different in terms of impact to that which is proposed. The fall-back position available to the applicant under permitted development carries significant weight as a material consideration.

5.15 I also draw attention to the Local Authority's approval of consent for extensions and alterations to an existing bungalow at 208 Armshead Road, Werrington (SMD/2020/0166). That approved scheme encompassed extensions that raised the roof of the dwelling and included a large projecting rear gable with high levels of glazing. An extract of the approved scheme is shown in Figures 1 and 2 overleaf.

Figure 1 – Extract of Approved Scheme (SMD/2020/0166)



Figure 2 – Extract of Approved Scheme (SMD/2020/0166)

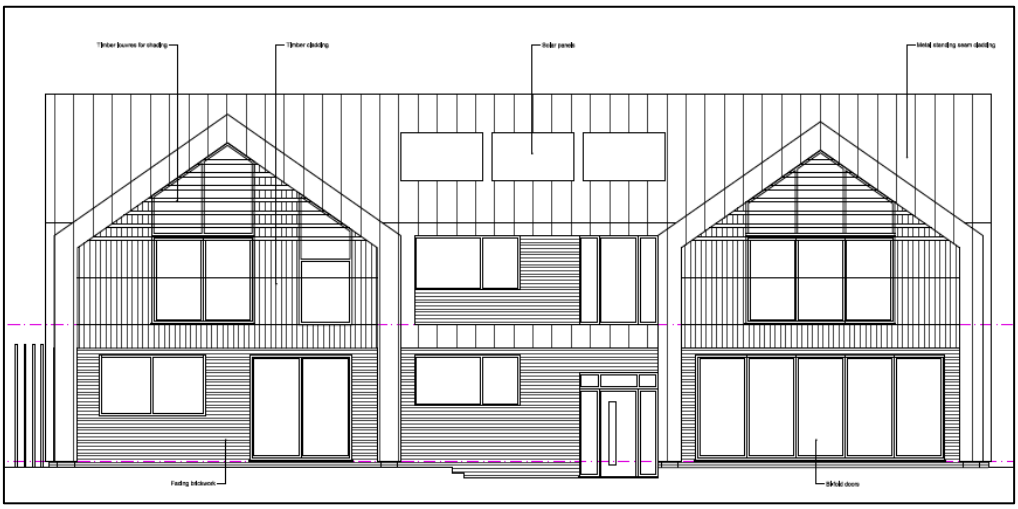


5.16 The proposal was found to constitute an inappropriate form of development within the Green Belt but was nevertheless approved having regard to the applicant's fall-back position available to them under permitted development. I submit that similar conclusions apply here, as the applicant can carry out a

very similar form of development to that which is currently proposed under Class A Permitted Development rights.

5.17 I also draw attention to the Local Authority's recent approval of planning permission for a replacement dwelling at Wildwood on the outskirts of Alton, adjacent to the Conservation Area (SMD/2021/0636). That application encompassed large areas of glazing on its rear elevation that are not dissimilar to that proposed in this application. An extract of the approved rear elevation of that development is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 – Approved Rear Elevation at Wildwood (SMD/2021/0636)



5.18 The scheme at Wildwood was found to be acceptable in design and visual impact terms, despite the site being noted to be *"positioned in a prominent location, approximately half way up a valley and can be seen in long distant views to the south and southeast, as well as from Farley Lane when travelling away from Alton".*

5.19 Given the nature of these two applications the Local Authority has approved elsewhere, coupled with the fall-back position available to the applicant, it is

submitted that the extent of glazing proposed in this revised application is acceptable.

> *"The plans show that the proposed extensions and alterations would completely overwhelm the bungalow on all sides to the point where the character and ability to recognise the original building is completely lost"*

5.20 The revisions to the design serve to ensure that the front elevation and side elevations are clearly discernible, with the extensions reading as a subservient addition to the property, thereby addressing this concern.

> *"The extensions by virtue of their scale and design overwhelm the original building, are not subservient to it and would result in a loss of its distinctive character and appearance as a mid-20th century bungalow"*

5.21 The revised proposal adopts a sympathetic design approach that serves to preserve the character and appearance of the dwelling, with the proposed extensions being subservient to the original property.

5.22 Having regard to the above considerations it is concluded that this revised proposal amounts to a proportionate addition to the original building which is appropriate in its scale and design, and which does not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The application has furthermore resolved the previous concerns raised by the Local Authority in its assessment of application SMD/2021/0641. As a consequence, the proposal amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, in accordance with paragraph 149 of the NPPF and policies SS10 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

5.23 The Local Authority's Design Guide SPD and accompanying Design Principles for Development SPG seek to ensure that extensions are subordinate to the existing building so that the original building dominates. It also states that the size and shape of the extension should respect the height and proportions of the existing house to ensure the new addition fits neatly with the old. The roof form should also be simple, with a dominant roof line emphasised by gables.

5.24 For the reasons set out within the preceding paragraphs, the submitted proposal accords with the aforementioned design guidance, and achieves a design that preserves the character and appearance of the host dwelling, with the rear extensions reduced in depth and changed in design, as well as being set in from the side gable ends such that the original ends of the property can be discerned. By resultant effect the extensions have a subservient relationship to the host building and will not give rise to any material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

5.25 The proposed development will furthermore not give rise to any material harm to neighbouring residential amenity, a conclusion shared by the Local Authority in its assessment of the previous application on the site. The proposed development consequently meets the requirements of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

6 Conclusion

6.1 This revised proposal has sought to constructively address the concerns raised in the determination of the previous application on the site (SMD/2021/0641) and encompasses a form of development that is appropriate in scale and design, and which does not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling or on the character of the rural area. The proposal consequently amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt.

6.2 The scale, massing and design of the extension is furthermore in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing building and will not result in any adverse impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, or to the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers.

6.3 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020), the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, and guidance contained within the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD and Design Principles for Development SPG.