

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0144
Valid 27/04/2022

THORNCROFT FARM
BLACKSHAW LANE
BLACKSHAW MOOR
LEEK

ALTERATION TO EXSITING
FARM HOUSE AND ERECTION
OF A NEW DWELLING
TOGETHER WITH A
PROPOSED DOUBLE
GARAGE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES (SMD/2018/0622)

- Principle of development
- Five-year housing supply
- Design
- Landscape
- Neighbour and public amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is located 200m east of a small village known as Blackshaw moor situated to one side of the A53. The site itself is an established farmstead comprising of a farm house, brick barns and two outbuildings. The barns and outbuildings are all connected to each other.

The farmhouse is a large detached brick and tile dwelling. It features a hipped roof and a two storey rear gable extension, setback from the main road. Whilst the house is set back from the road it is visually conspicuous due to the wide site frontage. Access to the site is restricted by metal gates.

The barns and outbuildings are behind the house and at an oblique angle from the dwelling.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration the application site is located within the open countryside but it does not form part of the Staffordshire Green Belt. There are no Listed Buildings within or close to the application site and the land does not form part of a Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for a number of works on site. For ease, these are as follows:

- New detached dwelling which will sit in the same position as the barn and outbuildings behind the dwelling. The new dwelling will be made up of large glazing, red brick to match the farmhouse with metal roof profiling. The dwelling be 6.3m in height (same height as the cladded outbuilding) by 20m in width by 13m in length.

- A single garage to serve the existing house and a double garage to serve the new dwelling.
- Alteration to the existing farmhouse: the external appearance and footprint remains the same.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
 SS9 Smaller Villages Area Strategy
 DC1 Design Considerations
 H1 New Housing Development
 NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
 T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;
 Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 14/05/22
 Neighbour consultation period ends: 3/06/22

Public Comments

None

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions relating to construction impacts, land contamination and lighting impacts.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objections subject to conditions relating to improved visibility, position of gates, road surfacing, the single garage to be retained for parking only and adequate parking and turning areas.

Severn Trent Water

Minimal impact on the public sewer system therefore no objection and no requirement for a drainage condition.

Staffordshire Wildlife

No objection subject to conditions relating to landscaping, details of surface water drainage and to accord with the mitigation and enhancements as per the bar survey submitted.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Policy SS9 of the Local Plan seeks to allow an appropriate level of sensitive development within smaller villages. Blackshaw Moor is one of the identified smaller villages listed under the policy, which do not have defined development boundaries. Appropriate development within these smaller villages will be supported so long as the development enhances community vitality or meets a social or economic need. All new development is also required to reflect and enhance each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.

Policy H1 4) b) states that outside of development boundaries, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character will be supported subject to certain criteria being met. These include the development being well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village, not creating or extending ribbon development or lead to sporadic development, not leading to a prominent intrusion into the countryside and not having a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

When assessing the location of a new dwelling together with garage, it is considered that the proposal would contrive with the pattern of development of a small village of Blackshaw Moor which is well-defined as a cluster village along the eastern side of the A53 with farming units dotted along the main road. The existing and proposed dwelling would sit disjointly with the village's built form of development particularly as the site itself is kept apart by open countryside from the village. Furthermore, the farmhouse sits awkwardly behind a farmhouse unlike the residential properties within Blackshaw Moor that front the highway, as such, would not reflect the village's pattern of development.

The case officer recognised that while the proposed dwelling would accord with parts of Policy H1 4 b) by providing 'infill,' the policy clearly states that development must adjoin the boundary and to be well related to the existing pattern of development, which on a plain reading, to mean that the site must touch the boundary. Therefore, it is clear that in this case as the site does not adjoin the built form of Blackshaw Moor, it does not comply with the locational strategy of the development plan.

Referring to the services and facilities of this small village, Blackshaw Moor has a school, a bus stop on either side of the A53 and a pub within close proximity of the application site. Between the site and village, there are no footpaths along what appears to be a 60mph road. It is recognised that while the site sits 200m from the village and arguably, a short walking distance to the village, the Council does not consider that the development would enhance or maintain the vitality of the village which offers limited services and facilities and as such, car ownership is necessary for other means that are not available within the village. Therefore, does not accord with Policy SS1 of the Local Plan

This application is not in accordance with Policy SS1, SS9 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Five-year housing supply

Section 2 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development that accords with an up-to-date development plan without delay. As the Local Authority does not have a five year supply of land, the tilted balance in this instance is engaged as the housing needs of the Borough have not been met in these sequentially preferable sites and more sustainable locations. Therefore, it is necessary to meet the 5- year housing supply quota.

Whilst the Council recognises the important contribution small sites can make to meeting the housing requirements of an area, the provision of one additional dwelling would have a limited impact in relation to boosting the supply of housing. Similarly, any employment created during construction and from future occupants use of local services would only result in temporary and modest benefits. This application is therefore considered to have limited benefits and does not out to Policy SS1 of the Local Plan.

Design

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

The proposed development will subdivide the site to create a large modern dwelling behind the existing farmhouse. Garages are proposed for the existing house and proposed house.

When assessing the impact of the new dwelling on site, the large dwelling would appear out of keeping with the farm dwelling in terms of its contemporary design, scale and siting.

It is considered that the proposal would introduce a cumbersome new dwelling that consumes two thirds of the site and therefore, dominates the site and setting of the established farmstead in a harmful way. While it is understood that the replacement dwelling uses the same footprint of the outbuilding/ barn it will replace, it does not outweigh the presence that it would appear out of balance when reading the site as two dwelling plots on a site. Furthermore, the introduction of large glazing, windows in the roof and substantial metal roof sheeting appears stark and urbanising. Collectively, the dwelling appears highly incongruous set against the prevailing rural character of the site and local area. This would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies DC1, which should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings. The proposal would also be contrary to the Framework which states in paragraph 130 that development should be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Amenity

Occupiers' amenity would be amply met both with internal and external space.

With no near neighbours there would be no adverse effects for neighbour amenity.

Highway Safety

With no issues of concern to respond to from the Highways Authority, the scheme would be acceptable in Highways terms subject to conditions.

Other matters

Matters relating to Environmental Health, drainage and ecology have been addressed by technical consultees that have raised no objections subject to conditions.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above, the erection of a dwelling in this location would contrive with the pattern of development of Blackshaw Moor as it sits outside of the built form of development to the east of the A53. In addition, the character and appearance of the new dwelling over dominates the application site as a result of its scale, design and materials that does not relate well with its existing farmhouse and surrounding area. The application would be contrary to SS1, SS9, H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Refuse

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 24/08/22

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On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council