Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC)

Planning Department

<By Planning Portal>

31st December 2022

Dear Sir / Madam,

22-48: Re-submission of approved householder planning application SMD/2013/0215 at Rock Cottage, Bagnall Road, Bagnall, Staffordshire, ST9 9JY

1.0 Description of the Proposals & Analysis

1.1 The proposals are associated with the property Rock Cottage, accessed via Bagnall Road within the local authority of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, hereafter abbreviated to SMDC. Rock Cottage is a semi-detached 2 storey house built from local stone which uses a traditional pitched roof weathered in Staffordshire blue plain clay tiles. The property is of historic origin and is known to pre-date 1880. Historically this is thought to have been one single pile dwelling (single linear run of two storey roof).

1.2 The property is outside the settlement boundary of Bagnall within the Green Belt; therefore, the proposals must demonstrate that they are not disproportionate additions. There are no nearby Listed Buildings, the site is not within a Conservation Area, flood risk zone or a Nature Conservation Site.

1.3 Between 1880-1899 the house was extended to the rear as can be seen on Historic OS Maps. It is thought that at this time the building was subdivided to form two dwellings referred to as the 'Salter's Well Cottages'. Historic maps from 1937 and 1963 have also been referenced and these evidence that the rear projecting single storey 'outrigger' on Rock Cottage can be considered 'the original house' in planning terms. This is by virtue of the fact they were constructed prior to 1st July 1948 as described in the Technical Guidance for 'Permitted development'. (DCLG.2017.)

1.4 The present-day Rock Cottage benefits from a high quality two-storey side extension which has increased the building volume from 213.7 m^3 in pre 1948 to 350.6 m^3 in present day. This was built in matching stone with a clay tile roof and was approved under application reference SMD/2004/1448. This proposal increased the building footprint by 22m^2 and replaced a former flat roofed addition. The present-day structure is a 3-bedroom, 5 persons dwelling with a 97m^2 gross internal area. This is in-keeping with its surroundings, and it is modest in scale by any account.

1.5 On the Ground Floor the ceiling height is circa 2170mm, with beams lowering the head height further down to 2060mm. Whilst these traditional features are charming, the limited height and traditionally sized windows mean that natural light is quite supressed within the cottage.

1.6 In 2013 the applicant gained householder planning permission for the 'Erection of single storey extension to rear to form sun lounge' under planning reference SMD/2013/0215. This was approved with the following comments made by Case Officer, Robin Forrester for the following reasons:

1. POLICIES CONSIDERED
The policies taken into account in the determination of this application are as follows:
The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Policy B13, N2 and N7
Core Strategy (Revised Submission Document) - Policy DC1, DC3 and
Space about Dwellings - Supplementary Planning Guidance

2. REASONS FOR GRANTING PERMISSION:
In view of the modest nature of the development, it is not considered to be disproportionate and not inappropriate in greenbelt terms as it would not impact on open-ness and is an appropriate design. The development will not harm the amenity of neighbours nor impact on highway safety and complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan, and there are no material considerations that warrant making a different decision.

3. POSITIVE AND PRO-ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT WITH THE APPLICANT/AGENT
The development followed pre-application discussions and was acceptable as submitted and no other involvement was necessary as application was considered against current policy and considered to be acceptable.

1.7 The Case Officer also noted in their delegated report that "the applicant wishes to exploit the fine views". It also stated that the building did not cause harm to the Green Belt and did not "intrude into the rear garden to any greater degree than the rear patio, and it is hidden at the rear". Unfortunately Planning permission SMD/2013/0215 expired on 11-06-2016 without a material start being made by the applicant.

1.8 More recently, in 2021 several slightly larger proposals were submitted at significant cost to the applicant. These remained "hidden" from the frontage and maintained a compact footprint, but the combined volumes and size additions were seen as 'disproportionate' by SMDC. The extension to this modest cottage has become somewhat essential with home working more prolific post-pandemic. Furthermore, the extension will make a significant difference to the amount of natural light entering the internal spaces. This is significant given the cottages traditionally proportioned windows and low ceilings. As result, the applicant has elected to return to the footprint, scale, and mass of the approved design in SMD/2013/0215. This creates an internal floor area for the new room that is 12.7m^2 in lieu of the former 5m^2 Utility Room. This is the minimum size of room to be a functional addition.

1.9 Following the previously approved design the new proposals are for a single storey structure with a maximum height of 3.5m from external ground to ridge. The eaves of the existing 'outrigger' will be maintained, and a 'Staffordshire Blue' plain clay tile roof will be used, as was recommended in the previous applications. The extension will project 3.565m from the rear of the original house and 2.225m from the side or the 'outrigger'. The overall increase in volume will be 23.5 m^3 and the house will be 7% larger than it currently is. This modest addition will not be seen from any public spaces and by virtue of its siting, behind the two-storey cottage with limited size increase it does not affect the 'openness' of the agricultural land beyond the rear garden boundaries.

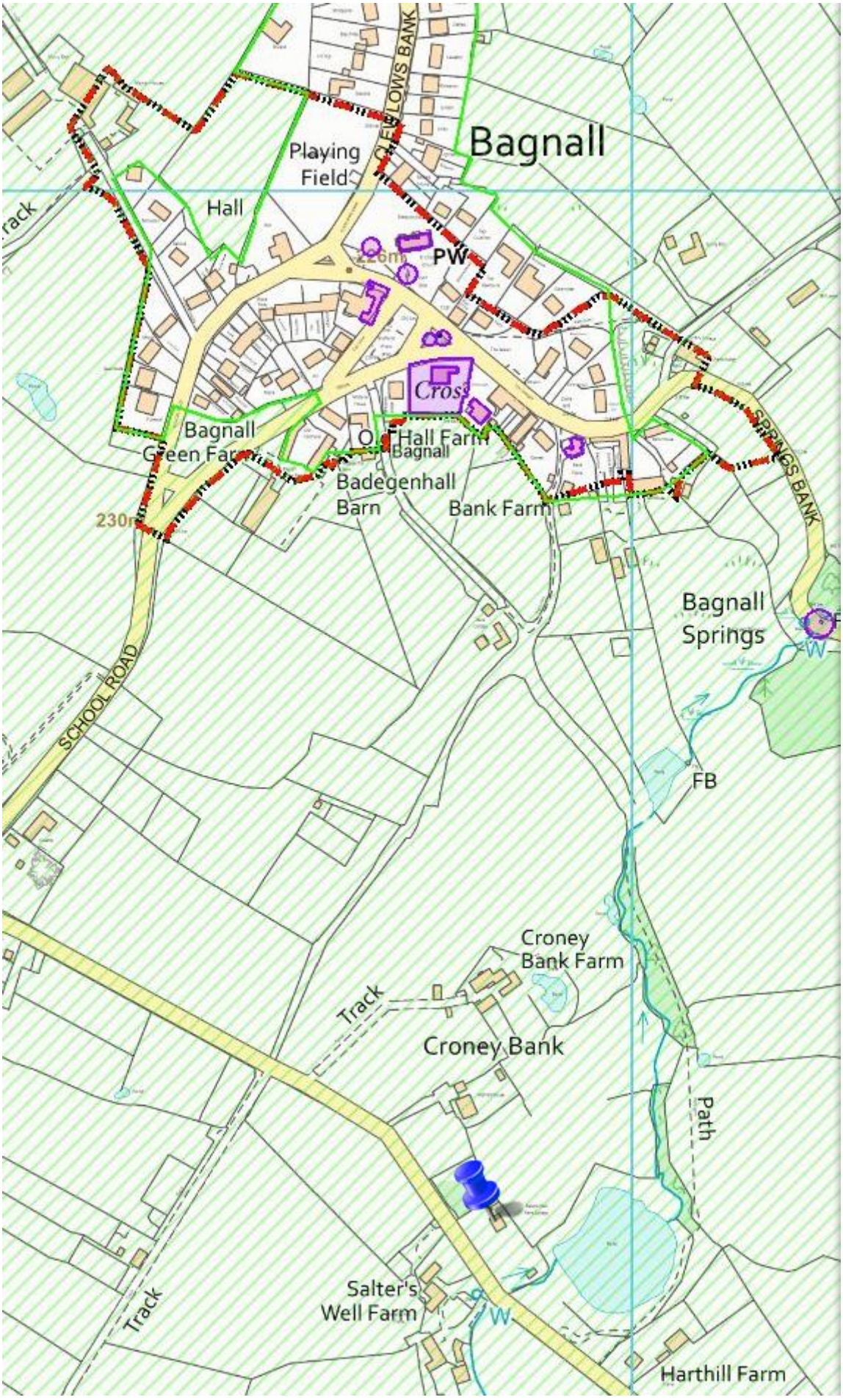


Figure 1: Extract from the SMDC Interactive Map via public access provides evidence to Paragraph 1.2.

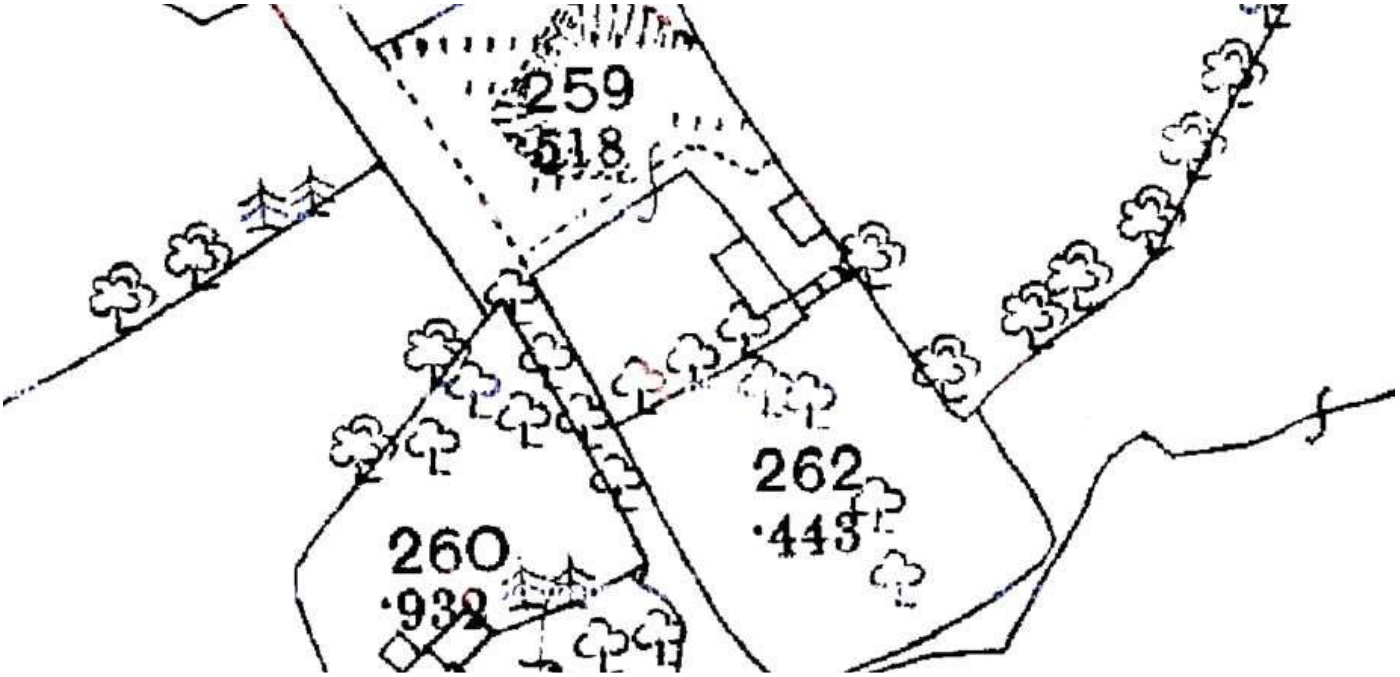


Figure 2: Scanned image of the 1880's OS Series provides evidence to Paragraph 1.3

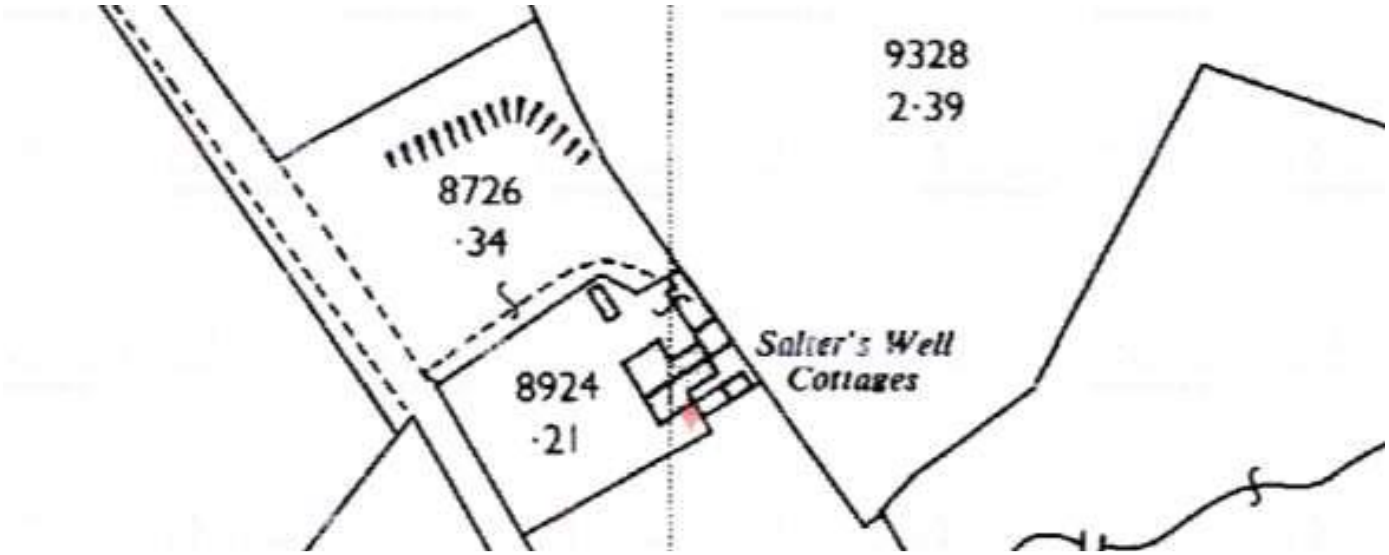


Figure 3: Scanned image of the 1963 OS Series provides evidence to Paragraph 1.3 (this matches the 1899 and 1937 version but is clearer).

2.0 Planning Policy Background & Discussion

2.1 Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

2.2 In Staffordshire Moorlands, 'The Local Plan' was adopted on 9th September 2020 and sets out the council's vision and strategy for the district until 2033.

2.3 National guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) underpin the general strategy for development with which all development plans must be in broad conformity.

2.4 The following policies are relevant to the proposals, and these will be appraised in the following section of this report:

3.1 Local Plan

3.1 The Local Plan sets out how SMDC would like to see the district develop by 2033. Section 5 sets out Spatial Aims and Spatial Objectives.

- Spatial Aim SA1 has the aspiration to create "distinctive, sustainable, self-supporting settlements".
- Spatial Aim SA2 outlines policy should meet "the needs of our communities."
- Spatial Objective SO8 looks to "To promote local distinctiveness by means of good design and the conservation, protection and enhancement of historic, environmental and cultural assets throughout the district."
- Spatial Objective SO9 looks to "To conserve and improve the character and distinctiveness of the countryside and its landscape, heritage, biodiversity and geological resources."

3.2 Policy DC1 relates to 'Design Considerations' policy states the council will support proposals which are "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". This policy also "protects the amenity of the area".

3.3 Policy DC3 relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' policy states the council will resist proposals which have a "prominent intrusion into the countryside".

4.0 National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)

4.1 Chapter 2 of the NPPF relates to 'Achieving sustainable development':

4.2 Paragraph 7 defines 'sustainable development' and states; "the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

4.3 To elaborate on this, a proposal in the Green Belt which reduced the openness or caused loss of the area's status (made the site brownfield) would affect the future generation's ability to enjoy this open land. However, where the development affects an existing property in a manner which is not perceivably different (from the public realm) this would be sustainable development that met the current needs of the applicant without any effect on the openness of the surrounding Green Belt.

4.4 Paragraph 8 describes how forms of 'sustainable development' can have an 'economic objective', 'a social objective' or an 'environmental objective'. The proposals primarily have an 'social objective' by allowing the applicant to adapt their property to meet their individual needs, as result of the modest size of the proposal no environmental harm is caused meaning the objective of environmental protection is also met.

4.5 As result of paragraph 4.3 and 4.4, the proposals are thought to be 'sustainable development'. The NPPF Paragraph 11 states that local authorities should have a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' as the proposals do not conflict any area of the development plan.

4.6 Chapter 12 of the NPPF relates to 'Achieving well-designed places'. Paragraph 126 states that "good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work".

4.7 Chapter 13 of the NPPF relates to **'**Protecting Green Belt land' and Paragraph 147 – 151 relate to 'Proposals affecting the Green Belt'.

4.8 Paragraph 149(c) expects local authorities to "regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt" other than development which complies with the following description (c):

"(c) 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".

4.9 The NPPF was first published on 27th March 2012, therefore the previously approved application SMD/2013/0215 was assessed under these same above policies and found to be acceptable in principle.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 It is expected that the previous planning history for the site is considered when assessing the latest proposals against Green Belt Policy. In 2013 SMDC concluded that "in view of the modest nature of the development, it is not considered to be disproportionate and not inappropriate in Green Belt terms as it would not impact on openness and is an appropriate design."

5.2 The development causes no reduction in amenity for neighbours, no impact on highway safety, and complies with the relevant policies of the Development Plan, the large site also provides more than adequate garden curtilage for the applicant / home occupants.

5.3 As a small traditionally proportioned cottage, it would be short-sighted to simply look at the % increase in floor area or volume and conclude that the proposals are 'disproportionate'. The proposal is a modest single storey projection off areas of the original house. The floor area uplift is just enough to make a functional, habitable room fit for purpose. The views of the extension are 'shielded' from several angles and the clay tiled roof retains a seamless transition from the original house.

5.4 The positive effects on everyday life, physical and mental health for the applicant and home occupants should not be overlooked by SMDC. The proposals whilst small in nature, will have a big change on the availability of height and natural light within the Ground Floor living spaces of 'Rock Cottage'.

5.5 For the reasons rehearsed above, it is respectfully suggested that the proposals are compliant with planning policy and the application should be recommended for **approval** within the statutory time periods.

Yours Faithfully,

Bruce Johnson BSc (1st Hons), PGDip, MSc
on behalf of applicant: Mr & Mrs A. Lyttleton