

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0809
Valid 08/12/2021

10 MILL HOUSE
STALLINGTON ROAD
BLYTHE BRIDGE

ERECTION OF REPLACEMENT
DWELLING AND DETACHED
GARAGE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Amenity
- Highways
- Environmental Health
- Protected species
- Drainage
- Heritage

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site consists of a large parcel of land within which sits a large, detached dwelling and a brick and tile outbuilding. The dwelling has a red brick and render exterior with a pitched and tiled roof, save for the small flat roof extension on the southern facing elevation. There is existing vehicular access and external parking space. Garden areas are generously sized and located mainly to the front and rear of the house. The dwelling occupies a roadside location, set back behind a stone wall, hedgerow and mature trees.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the Blythe Bridge Development Boundary. The site does not form part of any Conservation Area, there are no Listed buildings/structures, protected trees or flood zones to consider. The dwelling is not shown to be within a coal development risk zone.

PROPOSAL

The application is for a replacement dwelling and the construction of a detached, double garage and store. At ground floor level the new dwelling would have a large, open hall which includes a staircase to the upper floor, a lounge, shower room, utility, open-plan kitchen/dining/sitting area, WC, cloakroom, porch and a room labelled as a library. At first floor level there would be four bedrooms, all with ensuite. Vehicular access to the site is existing, the detached garage and external parking/turning area would be to the south of the site. There would be gardens to the front and rear. Notably the new dwelling would be repositioned in the plot, it would be set further back from the front boundary, the northern part of the property being pushed back into the site resulting in the principal elevation running generally in-line with the roadside boundary.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

SS1	Development principles
SS8	Larger Villages Areas Strategy
H1	New Housing Development
DC1	Design Considerations
DC2	The Historic Environment
NE1	Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
T1	Development and Sustainable Transport
Appendix 2	Parking Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands
2. Space About Dwellings

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections:

- 2: Achieving sustainable development
- 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 6: Building a strong, competitive economy
- 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- 12: Achieving well-designed places
- 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice. Expired.

Neighbour consultation period. Expired.

Public Comments: No representations received during the statutory consultation period.

Forsbrook Parish Council: No representations received during the statutory consultation period.

Environmental Health: No objections subject to conditions and informative notes.

Staffordshire County Council Highways: No objections subject to condition.

Severn Trent Water: No objections and no drainage conditions required. Informative notes to be added to the decision notice in the event of the application being approved.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust: Conditions recommended.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Blythe Bridge Development Boundary and is identified within the Local Plan as a Larger Village within policy SS8. Policy SS8 supports housing development. There are no 'in principle' objections to the application, therefore matters to consider include design, visual impact, amenity, highways, Environmental Health, protected species/wildlife, drainage and any potential heritage impact.

Design and visual impact

Although a replacement dwelling, the proposed new building would retain some design characteristics/features of the original property. Facing brickwork and tiles would match those of the existing house, chimney pots and stone cills would be re-used where possible. The elongated front elevation would be replicated, as would the triple dormer/pitch arrangement above the upper floor, roadside facing windows. The rear elevation would retain a triple pitched/gable arrangement. The detached garage and store building would have a simple pitched roof. Although the garage would have an 'L' shaped footprint, there would be a single, dominant roof line and a secondary/subordinate pitched roof off-shoot. There are no concerns with the design of the dwelling or garage. The proportions of the new dwelling work well, in terms of solid to void ratio (windows and doors), size of the roof in relation to the height of the walls and window/door sizing and positioning.

There will be wider visual impact from this development. The building will easily be seen from the road, the footpaths, to passers-by and those arriving/departing from the school across the road. Trees and the boundary wall will interrupt views from the public domain but will not screen the new building. Given that the proposal is for a well-designed building, replacing something with a similar appearance, it is concluded that there would not be any adverse visual impact and no harm to street scene character.

Amenity

There are no neighbour amenity issues with the application. The nearest neighbouring dwelling is to the north (6 Stallington Road). The plans show that there would be a separation distance of approximately 16m between the new build dwelling and number 6. Furthermore there would be no principal windows within the new northern (number 6 facing) elevation. The application does not raise any overbearing or overlooking concerns.

In respect of amenity for the future occupants of the new dwelling, there are no concerns. This is a substantially sized plot of land with no neighbouring windows overlooking the site to an unsatisfactory degree. The amount of amenity space at the rear of the house would be

reduced due to the new house being positioned further back into the plot. As a result the area at the front of the dwelling would increase in size but in any case, the site (once developed) would not lack in amenity space, far exceeding the standards referred to within the Space About Dwellings SPG.

Highways

The plans show a parking and turning area large enough to accommodate three vehicles, in addition to a detached, double garage. The existing vehicular access is to be retained. The Highways officer comments that visibility at the access (when exiting the site) is severely restricted. However, he notes that this is a replacement dwelling application, that use of the site will not change and overall trip generation will not increase. County Highways recommend conditional approval.

Environmental Health

The Council's Environmental Health officers have assessed the application and have no objections to it subject to conditions and informative notes. Conditions include seeking construction and demolition details, restricting hours of working, contamination, soil testing and lighting.

Protected species

The application is accompanied by a Tree Constraints plan, Tree Survey, Bat Activity report and Pre-Liminary Ecological Appraisal. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust initially responded to say they had insufficient capacity to assess the application but advised that the council check that 1) the ecology information was adequate, 2) all surveys covered all parts and aspects of the proposal/site and beyond where applicable and 3) any further surveys required should be submitted. Additional surveys/information were submitted. Upon receipt of further information the council asked Staffs Wildlife Trust to look at the information. The latest consultation response from SWT stated that further information was required, however looking at what SWT are requesting, the details can be dealt with by conditions and in any case the council must consider the three tests under the Habitat Regulations as follows;

1. The activity must be for a certain purpose - for example, for scientific research or in the case of development, 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment '
2. There must be no satisfactory alternative that will cause less harm to the species
3. The activity must not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

The council considers that the 3 tests are met as follows;

Test 1 There are environmental benefits through the development of a sustainable, modern and energy efficient home which improves the current circumstances of a dwelling which appears to be structurally poor. The existing dwelling is an older property which would require much maintenance to bring it to modern standards (if at all possible). The scheme for replacement takes the opportunity to construct a property conforming to current Building Regulations standards whilst also providing the internal layout suitable for modern-day, family living. The internal layout of the exiting dwelling is quite disjointed, with many separate and often fairly small rooms/storage areas. The rebuilding works would create employment opportunities and potentially generate purchasing/sales opportunities within the local area

through the acquisition of building materials/internal furnishings, further contributing the requirements of test 1.

Test 2 It is clear there is no alternative activity as the application is specifically to demolish and rebuild the existing dwelling.

Test 3 – Staffordshire Wildlife Trust consider test 3 to be met if bat impact mitigation can be demonstrated.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust recommend a number of conditions which include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following;

- Bat box locations and timing of mitigation provision
- Landscaping plan including biodiversity net gain features
- Drainage scheme including Suds
- Bat sensitive lighting plan should external lighting be proposed
- Bird nesting features details

Drainage

Severn Trent water confirm they have no objections to the application and that no drainage conditions are required. Informative notes to be added to the decision notice in the event of planning permission being granted to advise the applicant/developer of the possibility of public sewers crossing the site.

Heritage

The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement confirming that (as its name suggests), was historically associated with the nearby water corn mill to the south/south-west. The Heritage report comments that the house 'appears never to have been of any special merit, and was heavily altered on two major occasions in the 20th century, i.e. around 1910 and again around 1960. The alterations were so extensive that clues to the earlier development of the building are sparse, and fabric older than the 20th century is in the minority.' The report goes on to conclude that 'the building is of minimal interest, below the threshold of eligibility to be regarded as a heritage asset' and that 'there is no strong visual connection between the house and the mill which would give either building "added value" as part of a historic group.'

As the Heritage report also states 'The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) defines a heritage asset as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Historic England's advice on non-designated heritage assets⁶ says that they may be identified on account of their age, rarity, architectural and artistic value, group value, archaeological interest, historic associations, or landmark value. The mill house does not qualify under any of those headings. It does not, therefore, merit consideration in planning decisions because of any heritage interest.'

Officers conclude that there are no grounds to refuse this application based on heritage impact, neither in regards to the building in its own right, nor any impact upon setting.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

That for the reasons highlighted within the report, the application is approved subject to conditions and informative notes.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION :

Approve subject to conditions.

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 24/1/2023.

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council