

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0181
Valid 04/04/2022

STONE HOUSE
MACCLESFIELD ROAD
LEEK

**DEMOLITION OF EXISTING
GARAGE AND REPLACEMENT
WITH TWO STOREY/SINGLE
STOREY BUILDING TO FORM
DOUBLE GARAGE AND TWO
BED ANNEX. ALTERATIONS
AND SINGLE STOREY
EXTENSION TO FORM FAMILY
ROOM.**

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
The principle of development
The impact on the character and appearance of the area.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is in the open countryside between Leek to the south-east and Rudyard to the north-west and comprises a stone-built detached dwellinghouse, facing south, and with a link extension to connected to an original stone and tile outbuilding and a flat-roofed more modern triple garage block finished in white render and reconstituted stone. It lies in a spacious plot on the west side of A523 Macclesfield Road, which provides the access to the property via a long driveway. The property is surrounded largely by open land although there are a few sporadic dwellings (in spacious plots) to the north and west. The site is in the Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

This is a full householder planning application for extensions to the triple garage and to the rear of the house, either side of the existing rear link addition. The garage extensions comprise the provision of an upper floor over most of the garage building, within a pitched roof addition with raised eaves, a two-storey side extension to the east of the garage (which would be in the form of the continuation of the new roof and upper floor across) a single-storey with pitched roof extension on the other side (to the west) of the garage. This would provide a 2-bed “annex” with the bedrooms on the upper floor and living/kitchen area on the ground floor and a double garage in the west side extension. The whole of the new garage/annex building would be entirely finished in stone. The extensions to the house would be in the form of single-storey extensions on both sides of the modern flat-roofed link extension to provide an enlarge rear kitchen and family room for the house. A dual pitched roof

with side gables would be placed over the whole new rear structure (including flat-roofed link). This would be further internally integrated into the existing pitched roof outbuilding with utility room and WC.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffs Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

SS10 – Other Rural Areas Strategy
H1 – New Housing
DC1 – Design Considerations

NPPF (Revised July 2021)

Sections 5 (Housing), 12 (Design) and 13 (Green Belts).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 25.5.22
Neighbour consultation period ends: 25.5.22
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Green Belt Considerations

The site is in the Green Belt and Policy SS10, the strategy for the countryside, states there will be strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The NPPF in paras 149 and 150 lists the exceptional types of development which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt and which are therefore not harmful to its openness. The enlargement of buildings is listed providing this would not be disproportionate in relation to the original size of the building.

With regard to the garage building, this appears as a separate detached structure and is only weakly connected to an original outbuilding which is only connected to the main house by a short flat-roofed modern link addition. It is not certain if the

garage was a completely detached structure when it was first built. However, if it is deemed to be a detached outbuilding then, by virtue of the proposal more than doubling its height, almost doubling its width and most crucially, more than doubling its overall scale/volume, this would represent a substantially disproportionate enlargement of the garage building and is therefore deemed to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore harmful to its openness.

If the garage, outbuilding, link and two-storey part of the house were all considered to be part of the same building, then the garage building would therefore be deemed to be an enlargement of the overall original building as it was clearly added after the house and outbuilding were built (which were probably built in 1945 or 1946 on the evidence available). Therefore it needs to be considered if the existing garage building, the proposed extensions to the garage building, the link addition and the extensions to the house and link, would result in the disproportionate enlargement of the original building i.e. the two-storey part of the house (which it is accepted via evidence from the applicant was entirely in existence in 1947 when the first Town and Country Planning Act was produced and therefore deemed under the planning legislation as being “original” for the purposes of Green Belt policy). The resultant garage building and the single-storey extensions to the house would add 212.6 sq.m to an original floorspace (house and outbuilding) of 252.6 sq.m. This would result in a 84.2% increase in floorspace which given that this is substantially more than half the size of the original floorspace, represents a disproportionate enlargement.

Floorspace calculations aside, the actual scale/volume of later additions including proposed extensions to the original buildings is clearly disproportionate without volume calculations. The floorspace calculations merely assist with the determination that a disproportionate enlargement has occurred. Furthermore, the enlargement of the garage results in a disproportionate enlargement in terms of the actual form of development given that the existing “building” comprises a clearly dominant two-storey dwelling which is distinct from the other parts of the building which towards the rear decrease sharply in height to the link addition and outbuilding and then further decrease to the flat-roofed triple garage. To raise the height of the garage significantly, to a level just slightly lower than the max height of the dwelling (defined by the the roof ridge), can itself be described as disproportionate in form in relation to the rest of the overall “building” as the step down in height towards the rear is then sharply increased. The resultant garage would not appear as being at all subservient to the main house which should remain as the dominant building and this is also contrary to the Council's adopted Design Guide (Feb 2018). The garage enlargement would appear as a separate two-storey building which visually competes with the house and challenges its dominance.

The proposal therefore is deemed to amount to inappropriate development which by definition is harmful to its openness and the NPPF makes it clear that it should not be allowed unless there are very special circumstances which are considered to outweigh the operation of Green Belt policy and the harm to the openness of the Green Belt. However, there are no apparent very special circumstances.

Size, scale, design and impact on character of dwelling

Policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan sets out that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character of the area.

The adopted Design Guide in respect to alterations and new extensions, states at paragraph 5.2 that:

Alterations need to be undertaken with care. Insensitive changes can easily spoil a building. The key to a sensitive approach is to take note of what is there already before preparing the design and to work with and not against the buildings character. The aim should be to revitalise the building without altering its fundamental character.

Paragraph 5.5 states::

All extension 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. Setting back the new section from the building line and keeping eaves and ridge lower than the parent building will help.

The proposed garage is to be enlarged in order to provide an annex to the house. Annexes are normally small 1 or 2 bed units closely linked to the house to house a relative who would normally be spending time in the house but requires some level of privacy and an annex would normally not have a separate living room and kitchen area and bathroom. An annex should form part of one larger unit of residential accommodation (i.e. one overall dwelling). However, the proposal would result in an "annex" which is more akin to the size of a separate family dwelling. Because the garage building is only weakly linked to the outbuilding and the proposed annex would not be linked integrally to the house (there is no internal door between the outbuilding and proposed annex building), no works would be needed to use the building as a separate unit of accommodation or separate dwelling. Its overall size, and scale would compete with and dominate the portions of the host dwelling. When viewed from the north the scale of development would completely overpower and screen the host dwelling from view.

It is considered a planning condition to restrict occupation for purposes ancillary to the house as one residence, would not be effective in preventing use as a separate dwelling. The resultant annex building would not be an appropriate size, layout and siting in relation to the house (with a fair degree of separation from the existing house) for it to easily be used as a separate dwelling at some stage in the future, even if it is first intended to provide an annex, such is its form. The large scale extension of a building which is not architecturally or in character terms suitable for conversion into a separate dwelling is contrary to policies S10 and H1 of the Local Plan which seek to prevent new market value dwellings in the countryside in order to protect the character and appearance of the countryside and also in recognition that rural areas are not in sustainable locations for such new dwellings. I consider therefore that this application should also be refused for this reason.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal is for substantial extensions which would lead to a disproportionate enlargement of building(s) and this amounts to “inappropriate development” in the Green Belt as stated in NPPF Section 13 and this by definition in the NPPF would harm the openness of the Green Belt. The NPPF states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt should not be allowed unless there are very special circumstances but no such circumstances been put forward by the applicant and none appear to exist. The proposal would also lead to the creation of a large annex building in the form of a separate dwelling and not ancillary to the existing dwelling on site. This not only harms the openness of the Green Belt but is also contrary to Policy SS10, the strategy for the countryside which resists the enlargement and conversion of architecturally and in character terms, unsuitable buildings for use as a dwelling in order to protect the character and appearance of the countryside and resist new dwellings in unsustainable locations. The proposal therefore does not comply with the Council's Local Plan or the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and therefore the application should be refused.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 17.2.23

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Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council