DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0424 **Valid 25/06/2021**	**PRESCOT HOUSE** **CHEADLE ROAD** **ALTON**	**PROPOSED EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING GARAGE TO FORM ANNEXE** **(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Design
- Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The proposed site comprises a detached brick and tile garage outbuilding within the curtilage of Prescot House, situated in the Alton Ward. The site is within the Churnet Valley Masterplan Boundary, where the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan seeks to concentrate development. The proposed site is enclosed by a large area of open countryside and is on land of a higher ground level to nearby dwellinghouses in the area. Resultingly, the site is visually more prominent amongst the street scene. The Cheadle Road highway runs adjacent to the proposed site on the West.

PROPOSAL

The proposed development comprises a proposed extension and alterations to the existing garage outbuilding. The proposed works consist of the addition of an additional storey on top of the existing garage including a dormer window, as well as a raised platform and a set of steps to access the first storey of the garage. The proposed extension would allow for a larger amount of space in the outbuilding to create a garden room / studio. The proposed first storey extension would have a depth of 5.42 metres and have a width of approximately 6.03 metres. The maximum height would be approximately 5.17 metres and the maximum eaves height would be 3.14 metres (measured from the highest natural ground level). It would be constructed from materials including brick, plain clay tiles and white uPVC.

Since the initial submission revised plans have been received which have resulted in the overall the height of the garage extending 0.8m above the existing ridge height. This compares to the original plans which showed a ridge hight increase of 1.7m.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS9 Smaller Villages Area Strategy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14
Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

Part 5 – Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1986/0842 – Construction of vehicular access. Approved.
SMD/1991/0070 – Erection of double garage. Approved.
SMD/1992/0190 – Porch and conservatory extensions. Approved.
SMD/1999/0950 – First floor domestic extension. Approved.

00/00031/BOC – First floor extension – Planning Approval ref SM99. Closed.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 18/04/2023
Neighbour consultation period ends: 05/08/2021
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

No public comments were received.

Town / Parish Comments

Alton Parish Council objected to the initial plans based on their view that the proposed garage extension and additions would be excessively large and out of keeping with the surrounding area.

Severn Trent Water

Severn Trent have commented that the proposal has minimal impact on the public sewerage system and can advise that they have no objections to the proposals and do not require a drainage condition to be applied.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan the Council expects all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect and where possible enhance the environment. A more limited focus on future growth is to be directed to the outskirts of larger village settlements, including Alton. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The application site is located in the Open Countryside whereby Policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that 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.

Part (3) of policy SS10 seeks to protect the quality and character of the area and requires all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape. It says that the Council will meet housing requirements and specific needs by (inter alia): Allowing 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.

Policy SS11 explains that the Churnet Valley is identified as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration, whereby any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area.

The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable as it will comply with policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020), subject to conformity with other relevant national and local planning policies. The main issues which need to be considered as part of the assessment of the proposed works include design, amenity and highway safety.

Design

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place. The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that alterations should be cohesive and harmonise with the parent building. A garage / outbuilding should respect and congruously work with the main building's fundamental character in terms of its size and massing rather than going against it.

The proposed development comprises a proposed extension and alterations to the existing garage outbuilding. The proposed works consist of the addition of an additional storey on top of the existing garage including a dormer window, as well as a raised platform and a set of steps to access the first storey of the garage at the rear. The proposed first storey extension would have a depth of 5.42 metres and have a width of approximately 6.03 metres. The maximum height would be approximately 5.17 metres and the maximum eaves height would be 3.14 metres (measured from the highest natural ground level).

For a development to be considered appropriate in terms of its size and massing, the Council would universally expect to see extensions which are subordinate to the dominance of the host dwelling. The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD states that garage alterations / extensions need to be designed and built in sympathy with the property which they serve. Any outbuildings within the curtilage of a dwelling should have a subordinate relationship with the host dwellinghouse.

The dwellinghouse and garage are both visible from the highway / amongst the street scene, therefore the design of the proposed works needs to be sensitive to the surrounding area. Initially, the proposed first storey extension to the garage had a height of approximately 6.04 metres. Thus, the substantial increase in the height of the building, as well as the raised platform extension to the rear of the building would have resulted in the outbuilding beginning to compete with the proportions of the main dwelling, rather than remaining subordinate. The addition of a first storey to the existing garage outbuilding would partially block the view of the parent dwelling, thus becoming very visually prominent within the surrounding area. The apex of the existing garage is already visible from the street scene, therefore raising the height of the outbuilding to this extent would make it look to be the same height as the eaves of the host dwelling from the street scene. Consequently, it was not appropriate development in accordance with the Council's Design SPD, as the visually dominant nature of the works was not considered to be suitable amongst the surrounding setting.

Revised plans have since been submitted, reducing the height of the first storey garage extension to approximately 5.17 metres. This reduction in the height of the extension would be a more appropriate size and scale, reducing its visual prominence on the surrounding street scene. Furthermore, the proportions of the garage outbuilding would compete less with the host dwelling, in line with the Design Guide SPD.

The dormer window on the side elevation of the garage which would face the host dwelling is considered acceptable, as it would not be visually prominent amongst the street scene. However, the initially proposed dormer window on the South-East facing elevation, revision 2B of the first storey extension was considered to be out of character next to the single gable house. The South-East facing dormer would have been very visible from the wider public domain, drawing the eye to the garage outbuilding as opposed to the parent dwelling. Since this concern was raised, the South-East facing gable has been removed and replaced with two roof lights. Thus, the proposal is now considered acceptable visually.

Initially, materials used in the construction of the proposed extension would not have matched those used in the construction of the existing dwelling or the existing garage outbuilding, neither would they have matched the materials used within the construction of surrounding dwellings in the area. A prominent feature amongst the street scene is the brick used in the construction of the dwellinghouses. Timber cladding, plain clay tiles and white uPVC were proposed to be used in the construction of the proposed first story extension.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD states that materials used in the construction of garage extensions / alterations should generally match those of the parent building. Timber cladding would not be an appropriate material for the construction of the extension to the garage, as it would completely differ from the red brick used in the construction of the existing building and host dwelling. The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD states that:

"There is no tradition of external timber boarding in Staffordshire Moorlands…. Vertical boarding has been used more recently on large agricultural sheds as an alternative to metal sheeting but such buildings are regarded as exceptions, as the development is seen in the context of traditional buildings or open landscape."

Additionally, the Design Guide SPD states that "*new materials need to respect the building and its setting"*. Thus, as the host dwelling and existing garage are constructed from red brick, timber cladding would visually be out of character, as there is no tradition of timber being used in a domestic setting. Therefore, the materials were not considered acceptable in relation to the existing dwellinghouse, as well as the surrounding street scene.

Since this issue was raised, the applicant has proposed that they will use brick in the construction of the proposed first storey garage extension. The proposed brick would match the brick used in the construction of the existing garage. Therefore, the proposed materials would now match the existing materials and harmonise with the surrounding street scene, not detracting from the distinctive character of the area which has been largely retained.

The proposal, by virtue of its size, scale and siting maintains the character of the existing dwelling and area. The proposal would therefore accord with the provisions of local plan policy DC1 and section 12 of the NPPF in this regard.

Amenity

Paragraph 130 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

The application site is bound by open countryside, therefore no direct neighbour amenity issues could be raised as a result of the proposed works. Furthermore, I note that a substantial amount of foliage creates the boundary treatment of the site, thus there is a relatively good amount of screening in place.

Although there are no dwellings with curtilages which adjoin the application site, the site is on considerably higher ground than nearby dwellinghouses are, making the site relatively visible and prominent within the street scene. Although the building would have an increased visual prominence on the street scene, it would not detrimentally impact or intrude on visual amenity.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 104 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development does not lead to an increase in on street parking.

The proposed garage extension and alterations would not compromise the number of available parking spaces within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse, in compliance with Policy T1. No additional parking spaces will be required for the number of people inhabiting the dwellinghouse, as there would be no additional bedrooms as a result of the development.

Thus, the proposed extension would have no impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy T1.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above, the application is recommended for approval. Due to the application having no adverse effect upon neighbour or street scene

amenity and no overall impact on the highway, it is deemed acceptable under planning policy. Initially, the design of the proposed garage extension did not compliment the character of the host dwelling, the existing garage outbuilding or the surrounding street scene in terms of its size, massing and proposed materials. Revised plans have since been submitted to address these issues and the proposed garage extension and alterations are now considered acceptable. Therefore, the proposed garage extension and alterations are recommended for approval, subject to all conditions raised.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Hannah Hollins
Recommendation Date: 18/04/2023

18/04/2023

X

Jane Colley

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council