

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0124
Valid 07/03/2023

HUNTERS VIEW SANDON
ROAD
CRESSWELL

ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING
GARAGE TO INCLUDE
GARAGE CONVERSION WITH
NEW REPLACEMENT ROOF

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Design
- Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The proposed site comprises a detached render, brick and tile dwellinghouse and its associated curtilage, situated in the Checkley ward. Additionally, the proposed site is within an area of greenbelt, where development is more restricted. The site is bound by open countryside land to the North, West and South. The closest neighbour at Rookery Cottage, Sandon Road is situated to the North-East of the site. The Sandon Road highway runs adjacent to the proposed site on the East.

PROPOSAL

The proposed development comprises alterations to the existing garage to create a garage conversion with a new replacement roof. The proposed garage conversion would allow for the addition of two bedrooms and a bathroom. To accommodate for the garage conversion, the garage height would be increased by approximately 0.4 metres, in order to match the height of the host dwelling. The footprint of the existing dwelling would only slightly change, through the infilling of a small section between two projecting walls and overhanging roof to the front of the garage. The extended area would be constructed from materials which would harmonise with the existing dwellinghouse, including render, tiles and white UPVC.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

SS9 Smaller Villages Areas Strategy
SS10 Other Rural Areas 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, 13 –
Protecting Greenbelt Land

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

Part 5 – Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1981/1160 – Building of an extension. Approved.
SMD/1987/0851 – Extension to form double garage. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 11/05/2023
Neighbour consultation period ends: 21/04/2023
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

No public comments have been received.

Town / Parish Comments

No comments have been received

Stafford Borough Council

Due to the distance between the application site and the boundary of Stafford Borough Council's administrative area and the scale and nature of the development Stafford Borough Council raises no objection provided that the proposed development is compliant with the local policy context (Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan) and the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 smaller villages, including Cresswell, only allowing for development of an appropriate nature. 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 and Green Belt 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. The site is located within the Green Belt. Part (6) of Policy SS10 states that the Council will "maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy."

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, highway safety and whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the greenbelt.

Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the greenbelt

The application site is located in the Green Belt whereby policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) and chapter 13 of the NPPF (2019) are applicable. Part (6) of policy SS10 states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

The proposal is for alterations to the existing garage extension, including a garage conversion and a slight increase in the height and footprint. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF (2019) outlines that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets an exception. Paragraph 143 of the NPPF (2019) states that 'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances'. One such exception is (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.

Neither the Local Plan nor the NPPF (2019) provide a definition of what is regarded as being 'disproportionate' for the purposes of Green Belt policy. However, previous policy guidance considered a development resulting in a 30% increase in the size of the original building as being acceptable. This is still considered to be a reasonable "rule of thumb".

The proposed extension combined with the existing extensions would equate to an increase in volume of approximately 67%. This large increase in the volume of the original dwelling is, in my view, in purely volumetric terms a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

Regardless of the fact that the existing extension would be classed as a disproportionate addition, the footprint of the existing dwelling would only slightly increase, filling in a gap between two existing projecting walls and an overhanging area of roof to the front of the garage. Thus, the infilling of this small amount of space would not be considered to have a detrimental impact on the openness of the greenbelt. Furthermore, the 40cm increase in the height of the existing garage would not be considered to have a material impact on the openness of the greenbelt to any significant degree. I note that the increase in the height of the garage is required to meet building regulations. In order to achieve the internal ceiling height due to change in level from main house and garage, it requires the internal floor to be raised which results in a reduction to the internal height. Therefore on balance, it is viewed that the proposed alterations are considered acceptable and that there would be no additional harm to the openness of the Green Belt from the marginal increase now proposed.

It is now necessary to identify whether there is any other harm arising from the proposed development.

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 extensions 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.

The proposed development comprises alterations to the existing garage to create a garage conversion with a new replacement roof. To accommodate for the garage conversion, the garage height would be increased by approximately 0.4 metres, in order to match the height of the host dwelling. The footprint of the existing dwelling would only slightly change, through the infilling of a small section between two projecting walls and overhanging roof to the front of the garage.

For a development to be considered appropriate in terms of its size and massing, the Council would universally expect to see extensions subordinate to the dominance of the original building. As part of the proposed works, the height of the existing garage would be raised by 40cm, so that the existing garage extension would align with the eaves and maximum heights of the parent building. The existing garage extension was deliberately designed to have a subordinate relationship with the host dwelling, to reflect the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide. Thus, increasing the height of the existing garage to match that of the host dwelling would take away that subordinate relationship, which would not be in line with the Design Guide SPD.

However, in order to meet building regulations, the eaves height would need to be increased to ensure enough internal height in the garage conversion. In order to achieve the internal ceiling height due to change in level from main house and garage, it requires the internal floor to be raised which results in a reduction to the internal height. If the eaves height were to be raised and the ridge height were to be maintained as it currently is, it would mean that the pitch angle of the roof would be visually at odds with the host dwelling. Therefore, in this instance, the raising of the ridge height is considered acceptable.

Materials used in the construction of the proposed garage alterations would match those used in part of the construction of the existing dwelling, as well as from surrounding dwellings in the area. The surrounding street scene is comprised of a varied selection of house types and materials, demonstrating how there is no specific character to the area. Render, tiles and white UPVC would be used in the construction of the proposed garage alterations. Therefore, the materials which would be used are considered appropriate in relation to the existing dwellinghouse, as well as the surrounding street scene.

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 closest neighbours at Rookery Cottage, Sandon Road are situated to the North-East of the site. Thus, assessment of amenity impact will be required on the neighbouring dwellinghouse to the side of the site.

It is apparent that the light amenity of the neighbours at Rookery Cottage, Sandon Road would not be adversely impacted by the proposed garage alterations. Although the height of the existing garage would be slightly increased to accommodate for the garage conversion, this neighbour would be a substantial enough distance from the site to mitigate any loss of light (approximately 98 metres).

There would be no side windows incorporated into the side elevation of the proposed garage conversion which would face the neighbours at Rookery Cottage. Therefore, the aforementioned neighbours' privacy would not be impacted at all.

Overall it is considered that the residential amenity of the surrounding neighbours would not be adversely affected.

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 conversion would increase the number of bedrooms of the dwelling from one to three. Despite the increase in the number of bedrooms, the Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards state that for any dwelling with up to three bedrooms, 2 parking spaces are required. Therefore, no additional off-highway parking space would be required for the number of people inhabiting the dwellinghouse. Furthermore, the driveway to the front of the dwelling already easily accommodates this amount of off road parking. The development proposals therefore comply with Policy T1.

Thus, the proposed alterations 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. Although the addition of the proposed extended area combined with the existing extensions would exceed the 30% guideline for cumulative householder extensions, it has been established that the proposed extension in itself would have such a negligible additional impact that it would not be inappropriate development and would not cause additional harm to the openness of the green belt. Therefore, the proposed garage conversion is recommended for approval, subject to compliance with all conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Hannah Hollins

Recommendation Date: 11/05/2023

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council