DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0386	**PLOT 2 HURSTONS LANE**	**VARIATION OF CONDITION 2**
Valid 07/08/2023	**ALTON**	**RELATING TO SMD/2021/0062**
		(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- To consider similarity to previous approval
- Design
- Neighbours
- Heritage – Alton Conservation Area
- Street scene character and appearance
- Trees and hedges

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Within the Alton village development boundary and within the Alton Conservation Area the plot is within a small triangle of field previously granted outline and detailed consents.

The plot – and the overall field – is bounded by public road to both the north west and south east. To the east the plot draws to a point at which the two roads intersect. There are existing red brick semis across the road on the NW side and rural field land across the road on the SE side. The west boundary is another development plot (plot 1) with detailed consents from 2016 and 5th December 2018 and this is now built and occupied.

Three public footpaths cross the fields to the east and converge at a point on Hurstons Lane opposite the plot.

PROPOSAL

Detached modern brick and tile dwelling facing SE on to Hurstons Lane with vehicular access off Hurstons Lane. The three sets of plan drawings submitted are revisions of those approved under SMD/2021/0062.

The integral garage of the approved scheme is converted to living accommodation and the door is replaced with a window.

Two front dormers in the approved scheme were to be in brick – these are now proposed in vertical hanging tiles to match the roof tiles.

Some revisions to fenestration in the north westerly elevation are proposed. A row of three roof lights has been reduced to two and a French doors becomes a

conventional window. Again a dormer which was to be brick is now proposed in vertical tiles.

A summary heritage statement accompanies the application.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)
SS1 Development Principles
SS8 Larger Villages Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
H1 New Housing Development
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE 2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019
Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;
Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 11 – Making effective use of land; 12 – Achieving well designed places; 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):
- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:
- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2016/0036 – outline planning permission some matters reserved – approved
SMD/2017/0603 – erection of detached dwelling – approved
SMD/2018/0245 – erection of detached dwelling – approved
SMD/2021/0062 – renewal of extant permission for erection of detached dwelling approved under application reference SMD/2018/0245
SMD/2021/0635 - erection of 2no. detached dwellings and detached garage – refused – dismissed at appeal

Adjacent plot (plot 1) to the SW:
SMD/2016/0308 – single dwelling – approved
SMD/2018/0488 – **n**ew dwelling and garage – approved 4th Dec 2018 – implemented

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 21.09.2023
Neighbour consultation period ends: 06.09.2023
Press Advert: 20.09.2023

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Alton Parish Council again strongly object to this application which is a variation on SMD/2021/0062. Removing the garage and making the living space even larger.

The council's objections to the original planning application still stand. They were that this site is outside the village development boundary, it obscures historical views of Alton from one of the ancient routes into the village and that Alton does not need more large houses such as this.

It is the parish council's opinion that when this application is considered by the planning committee it should be refused on the grounds outlined below.

Over 50 new builds have been approved in the village recently, mostly large houses such as this. No small cheaper houses for first time buyers or housing suitable for the elderly have been built for many years. This type of housing is not what is required in Alton.

You have also now met your housing quota and do not need to approve developments regardless of many negative concerns.

Alton lost its bus service since this application was first approved. Policy C1 of the new Local Plan states that you cannot approve developments where the transport infrastructure is not available to meet the requirements of the development.

Policy DC3 of the new Local Plan states that you should resist any development that would lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or setting of the settlement.

Policy SO2 states that the development should help to mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. SMDC have committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2035 and so far, it has been noted that very little headway has been made to achieve this goal. The development shows no initiatives in its design to help mitigate climate change and it goes against everything that Policy SO2 was designed to address.

Furthermore, the residents of this development will be solely reliant on the motor vehicle to travel out of Alton for work, education and leisure activities. By granting permission for developments such as this you will not meet your target or your commitment.

SMDC Conservation

Proposal noted – no new comments provided.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Consulted – no comments received.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Whilst the Parish Council concerns are noted, the principle of the development has been established by the granting of the earlier consent SMD/2018/0245 and its renewal under SMD/2021/0062 (9th April 2021).

Design

The design revisions proposed with this application are relatively minor when compared to the approved details.

The previously approved plans are:

1496 – 01H Elevations
1496 – 02H Floor and roof plans; site red edge location
1496 – 07D Proposed site plan at 1:200

The now proposed plans are:

1496 – 01J Elevations
1496 – 02J Plans
1496 – AL33 Proposed site plan

The conversion of the garage allows the property to become a five bedroom dwelling – albeit one of the first floor buildings is labelled study. It was previously going to be a four bedroom dwelling and the additional potential bedroom to make five does not increase the parking guidance requirement of three spaces. Although a garage is now lost from the proposal the forecourt space of in excess of 60m2 and a width across the front of 14m can readily be seen as accommodating the parking and turning of three vehicles.

The proposed use of hanging tiles rather than brick for the dormers is arguably a diminution of the design quality but the tiles may be judged sufficiently in-keeping to remain acceptable.

Two further minor design changes include the omission of a projecting brick plinth and the possible use of Terca Autumn Russet brick rather than Ivanhoe Cottage as previously proposed and approved. The design remains acceptable.

Amenity

The relationship of the dwelling in terms of such matters as interfacing windows with neighbours was the subject of detailed and careful consideration in the approval of SMD/2018/0245.

The original amenity assessment is reproduced here in full:

As with the previous approval the proposed revised scheme would have sufficient garden amenity space. The main consideration is the orientation in relation to and the separation from the existing houses on The Hurstons to the NW and in particular Nos.3 and 4. It is considered that no issues are presented in relation to nos. 4, 5 and 6. The rear of the proposal property obliquely faces No.3 The Hurstons at an angle some 40 degrees away from being directly facing. There is a proposed ground floor principal window in the form of a French Doors arrangement serving living space badged as dining area in the proposal property. This has a separation of some 19m from the front elevation of No.3. which in turn has ground and first floor presumed principal windows facing. The 19m separation distance is less than the 22m recommended in the Council's Space About Dwellings Guidance. Given that the windows are however not directly facing and that it is just the one window in contention it is found on balance acceptable.

A further assessment needs to be made in respect of the guideline minimum proximity for facing buildings. This calls for the height of the facing building to be below a 25 degree line drawn in the vertical plane from the mid point of any facing principle window. This has been assessed in relation to the closest property No.5 and it is found based on the 17m separation of the proposed ridge of height of 7.8m to be approximately just comfortably under the 25 degree line by about 1m and therefore within the guideline. This is an assessment which would be affected by site levels but by reference to drawing 1496-07A is acceptable.

There are approved details for a dwelling on plot 1 to the SW but the side elevation (B in the relevant approved drawing 12A) has a first floor bathroom window and at ground floor, secondary slit windows serving a living room to which the main window faces the front.

A particular point has been raised about levels. As with the approved scheme finished floor level is given as 166.5 and the roof ridge line would be at c.173.00 which closely corresponds with information submitted for the roof line for the existing dwelling next door but one to the SW 'Sycamores' at 172.9. Existing ground levels for the adjacent undeveloped plot 1 (for which levels details have still to be submitted and cleared) are generally comparable at c. 165 to 166 with the proposal plot which are within the same range.

With no changes to the built area, position or dimensions, the minor changes to fenestration do not lead to any new issues and the scheme remains acceptable.

Highway Safety

As noted under design (above) the available off-street space can readily be seen to accommodate sufficient parking and turning.

Other Matters

The Parish Council has raised a series of objections – the removal of the garage and the changes to living space have been considered in this report under Design. Other objections of a more fundamental nature have to be considered against the fact of the existing valid consent for in effect the same building and therefore cannot be used against the scheme now subject only to minor changes.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Approve subject to conditions

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 10.10.2023

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council