

Planning Statement

Partial retrospective application for cladding of outbuilding
and installation of replacement windows
Elastone House, Elastone Road, Winkhill
For Mr. & Mrs. Clarke

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hewitt & Carr Services has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Clarke to submit a planning application for the provision of replacement cladding and the insertion of replacement windows to an existing domestic outbuilding at Ellastone House, Ellastone Road, Winkhill. The application is part-retrospective.
- 1.2. The application represents a re-submission following the refusal of application SMD/2021/0846 which had also proposed the provision of replacement cladding to the building, but was refused for the following reason:
 1. The development is considered to result in a form of development that is considered to be a prominent intrusion in the countryside due to the use of inappropriate materials and domestic additions and therefore the development is considered to be contrary to SS10 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorland Local Plan and Section 13 of the NPPF as well as the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD.
- 1.3. During the determination of that previous application the Local Authority had held the building to comprise an agricultural building. However, since that application was determined, a lawful development certificate has subsequently been granted to confirm that the lawful use of the existing buildings is domestic storage and workshop purposes (LPA Reference: SMD/2023/0236).
- 1.4. As with the previously refused application, the proposal encompasses provision of replacement cladding to the existing building, comprising of insulated box profile metal sheets finished in a slate blue colour to the elevations and box profile metal sheeting to the roof, finished in an anthracite grey colour.
- 1.5. This revised application also proposes the replacement of the two existing white UPVC windows in the southern elevation of the building with two anthracite grey UPVC windows. It is also proposed to paint an existing white UPVC doorway on the north elevation to give it an anthracite grey finish to match the new windows.
- 1.6. This Planning Statement sets out the case for planning permission to be granted for the development having regard to local and national planning policies.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site comprises an existing 'L' shaped domestic outbuilding that is located to the southwest of the applicant's existing property, Ellastone House, and east of the Ellastone Road which lies approximately 40 metres distant of the western elevation of the building.
- 2.2. The outbuilding is single storey in nature and has a gross internal floor area of 175 square metres. It is constructed from blockwork and has recently been externally clad with insulated blue slate profiled metal sheeting to its walls and insulated profiled anthracite grey sheeting to its roof. It has two white UPVC windows in its southern elevation.
- 2.3. To the immediate south of the building lies an area of gravel hardstanding that is enclosed by post and rail fencing. The hardstanding is served by an existing access that connects with the main vehicular access to Ellastone House a short distance to the northwest of the building. Open fields extend to the west, east and south of the building, with the landscape rising up in a broadly south-westerly direction and sloping away gently in a westerly direction.
- 2.4. The site is not within a Conservation Area, nor are there any statutorily listed buildings located within close proximity of the site. The site is located within the rural area, as defined by the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan having regard to any material planning considerations. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are of relevance to the determination of this application:
- 3.2. Policy SS1 relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering (amongst other matters):
- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment
 - development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings.
 - development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.
 - support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.
- 3.3. Policy SS10 relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which 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. The policy goes on to state that extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings will be allowed 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 policy also states that the Council will give priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
- 3.4. Policy SD3 relates to 'Sustainability Measures in Development and states that the Council will support further carbon-saving or water-saving measures in both new and existing developments, in a number of ways, including:
- Supporting measures designed to improve the sustainability of existing buildings (such as improved thermal insulation, water conservation, or the installation of micro-renewables).

- 3.5. Policy DC1 relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):
- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area
 - be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance
 - incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development
- 3.6. Policy DC3 relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:
1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;
 2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;
 3. Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds;
 4. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;
 5. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of securing high quality design. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Lawful Development Certificate SMD/2023/0236 – Ellastone House

- 4.2. The above lawful development certificate application served to confirm that the lawful use of the existing outbuilding is that of domestic storage and a workshop. Reference is made to this application within the Planning Assessment as a material consideration.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 5.1. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan allows for alterations to buildings within the rural area, requiring development to conserve and enhance the quality of the countryside. In determining the previous application on the site, the Local Authority concluded that:

"As the development relates to an existing building the principle of altering the building is acceptable subject to an assessment of its design and materials"

- 5.2. There has been no material change in circumstance since that previous application was determined, and consequently the principle of development remains acceptable.

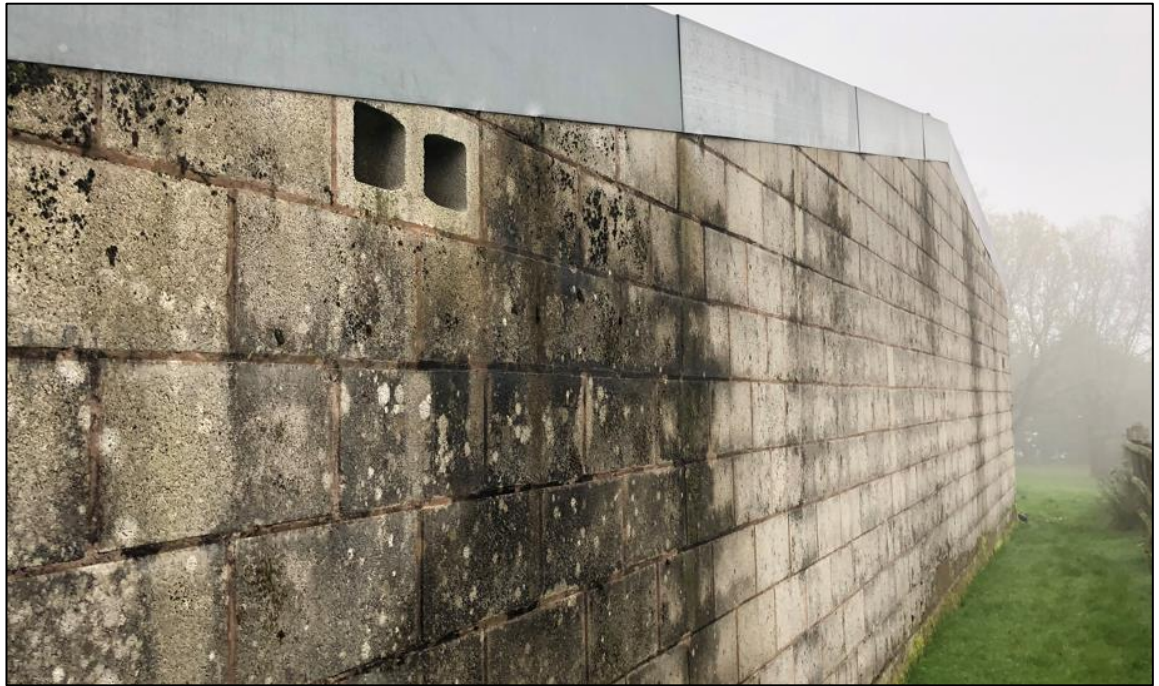
Design & Landscape Impact

- 5.3. Policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan seek to secure the delivery of high quality design in new development, with policy DC3 placing an emphasis on protecting, and where possible, enhancing the local landscape.
- 5.4. In determining the previous application site on the site, the Local Authority cited concerns that the original building on the site was constructed with a mixture of stone and pale coloured stone/brick. Such comments were erroneous. The actual material of construction comprised of concrete blockwork, a point which is evidenced in the images shown in Figures 1 and 2 below. The original palette of materials did not therefore comprise of traditional materials.

Figure 1 – Photograph of Original Materials



Figure 2 – Photograph of Original Materials



- 5.5. The Local Authority contended that the neutral tones of the original building preserved the character of the landscape, as the building was held to blend in with its surroundings and was not prominent or intrusive to the landscape. In reaching that conclusion the Local Authority cited the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment 2009 which states that within the Gritstone Highland Fringe (of which this site forms part), the colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.
- 5.6. The Local Authority concluded that the colour of the proposed cladding to the walls and roof has resulted in the building dominating the landscape as the colours are a stark contrast to the neutral environment it sits within. The building was also noted to be situated on land that is fairly open with no natural screening, resulting in the building representing a prominent intrusion in the countryside.
- 5.7. We disagree with those conclusions and observe that within a short distance of this site, along the Ellastone Road, there are a wide variety of colours of cladding evident. These include the provision of blue cladding on agricultural buildings at Little Paradise Farm, close to Peak Wildlife Park (see images in Figures 3 and 4 overleaf). The proposed colour of the cladding is therefore not alien to this part of the countryside having regard to the wide variety of external finishes that are observable. Its dark muted colours are very much in keeping with the character and appearance of the wider area.

Figure 3 – Cladding at Little Paradise Farm



Figure 4 – Cladding at Little Paradise Farm



- 5.8. We also disagree with the assertion that the external materials appear prominent and harmful within the landscape. It is not disputed that this building can be clearly seen within the landscape, owing to the open land that extends to its south. There are clear views of the building on approach along the Ellastone Road. We nevertheless submit that the building does not appear incongruous or

harmful within its surroundings, and draw attention is drawn in this regard to the photograph in Figure 5 which shows the view of the building from the Ellastone Road.

Figure 5 – View of Outbuilding from Ellastone Road



- 5.9. On approach to the site along the Ellastone Road from the south, the outbuilding is seen against a backdrop of tall, mature vegetation, and in the context of the main two storey dwellinghouse beyond. The materials have a muted appearance that assimilates positively against that backdrop and does not appear visually dominant, contrasting or incongruous. The colour of the cladding also broadly reflects the colour of the roof of the neighbouring dwellinghouse. We consequently submit that the cladding installed represents an appropriate and acceptable external finish that does not detract from the character and appearance of the landscape.
- 5.10. There is nevertheless a recognition that the originally installed white UPVC windows have a stark, contrasting appearance compared to the more muted elevations within which they are located. To remedy this situation, the applicant proposes that these windows will be replaced with anthracite grey UPVC windows so as to remove that contrast of colours. In doing so the resultant building will have a much more muted appearance than it currently does.
- 5.11. In assessing the previous application concern was raised that the insertion of those windows introduced a domestic style addition to a building that Council considered to be agricultural in use. In the intervening period it has been demonstrated by way of a lawful development certificate SMD/2023/0236 that the lawful use of the building is that of ancillary residential use. The windows are not alien to a domestic outbuilding such as this and consequently the original concerns in this regard have been resolved. The development is consequently

held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan.

Other Considerations

- 5.12. Policy SD3 of the Local Plan confirms that the Local Authority will support carbon saving measures in existing development, including supporting measures to improve the sustainability of existing buildings, such as improved thermal insulation. These provisions are reflected within paragraph 158 of the National Planning Policy Framework which confirms that local authorities should:

*“not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and **recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions**” (our emphasis)*

- 5.13. The cladding installed / to be installed on the building is insulated and provides the building with improved thermal insulation compared to its original, uninsulated concrete blockwork construction. The building has been confirmed to be in lawful use for ancillary domestic purposes, including as a workshop (SMD/2023/0236) and the insulated cladding will therefore assisting in reducing heat loss from this domestic outbuilding, in accordance with the objectives of policy SD3 of the Local Plan and guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework. Such benefits weight in favour of planning permission being granted.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The proposed development constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:
- The proposed alteration of the building is acceptable in principle within the rural area, as previously confirmed by the Local Authority.
 - The proposed cladding and replacement windows will give the building a muted appearance that will not detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area and landscape.
 - The proposed cladding will serve to improve the thermal efficiency of the building and thereby contribute towards reducing carbon emissions.
- 6.2. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, SD3, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.