

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

**LAND OFF SHAY LANE
IPSTONES**

DECEMBER 2023

Site Address:

Land off Shay Lane, Ipstones, ST10 2LY

Applicant:

Ms. N. White & Ms. J. Douch

Proposal:

Erection of detached dwelling

Planning & Heritage Statement:

Date Issued: 4th December 2023

Job Reference: RDP/2023/106

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Ms. N. White and Ms. J. Douch to seek full planning permission for the erection of a detached, single storey dwelling on land south of Shay Lane, Ipstones.
- 1.2 The application represents a resubmission following the refusal of application SMD/2023/0130 which had also proposed the erection of a detached dwelling on the site, but which incorporated a much larger area of curtilage, with vehicular access taken off Shay Lane towards the northeast corner of the site via an existing field gate. A new passing place had also been proposed along Shay Lane.
- 1.3 That application was refused for the following reason:
- 1. The application site lies within the open countryside outside of the Ipstones settlement boundary. The site encroaches at an angle into the countryside and does not relate well, visually or spatially, to the existing pattern of residential development within the village. The proposed development of a single dwelling, associated landscaping, parking and turning areas (including vehicular passing place on Shay Lane) would lead to a sporadic pattern of development and prominent intrusion into the countryside which has a high landscape value and is identified as sensitive to the impacts of development and land use change. This is considered to be significant and demonstrable harm, which outweighs the limited benefit of the provision of a single dwelling at a time of housing undersupply. The application is therefore contrary to policies SS10, H1, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and sections 2 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.*

1.4 This revised application seeks to constructively address the previous reason for refusal and incorporates a number of significant revisions, which are summarised below:

- Relocation of site access to northwest corner, sharing the existing vehicular access that currently serves an existing stable block and domestic outbuilding that is used for the parking of vehicles and storage.
- Removal of previously proposed vehicular access in northeast corner of the site and associated parking in its entirety.
- Removal of previously proposed passing place along Shay Lane.
- Substantial reduction in the area of amenity space to be provided to the north and east of the dwellinghouse.

1.5 The applicants have lived in the village for over 9 years and contribute to the community in many ways, including volunteering at local events and fundraising activities. They are keen to develop their small holding activities for greater self-sufficiency. As with the previous application, the proposed dwelling aims to create a low-impact, sustainable home, with low energy consumption and use of renewable sources of energy. Alongside the dwelling they intend to create a productive garden for vegetable and fruit growing, with additional planting to be undertaken to promote wildlife.

1.6 As with the previous proposal, the proposed dwelling, which is unchanged in terms of its scale, massing, design and layout within the site, will be of a contemporary design, incorporating undercroft accommodation and brise-soleil features, and will be located within an existing hollow in the landscape, on the southern side of Shay Lane. Its single storey form and broadly curved

design has been deliberately adopted in order to follow the curvature of the existing hollow within which the dwelling will sit.

- 1.7 The dwelling will have a gross internal floor area of 178.38 square metres and will stand to a ridge height of 5.1 metres. It is to be constructed from natural stone with a timber frame, and a Staffordshire tiled roof above. The accommodation within the dwelling will comprise of a kitchen, utility room, dining room, living room, sun room, hall and boot room, w.c /shower room, plant room, along with three bedrooms and a bathroom. An area of private amenity space is to be provided to the south of the dwelling.
- 1.8 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the suite of planning drawings that accompany the application, along with the following additional documents:
- Design & Access Statement (CTD Architects)
 - Energy & Sustainability Statement (CTD Architects)
 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Apex Ecology)
 - Coal Mining Risk Assessment (Sladen Associates)

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site is located within the rural area on the eastern fringe of Ipstones village and extends to approximately 0.20 hectares. The site is located partially within the Ipstones Conservation Area. There are no statutorily listed buildings located in close proximity to the site.
- 2.2 The site slopes away from Shay Lane in a broadly southerly direction, and in the centre of the site there is a natural hollow in the landscape and an existing area of hardstanding, whereupon it is proposed to construct the new dwelling. The northern / northeastern and eastern site boundaries are enclosed by an open field.
- 2.3 Beyond the field immediately to the north of the dwelling lies a low drystone wall and indigenous hedgerow, interspersed with occasional hedgerow trees, which separates the field from the carriageway of Shay Lane. Shay Lane is also designated as a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) - Ipstones 54.
- 2.4 The southern boundary of the site is enclosed by a post and rail fence, beyond which the landscape slopes steeply downwards towards an existing brook, which is flanked on either side by mature trees / woodland. Open fields extend beyond that woodland to the south.
- 2.5 The landscape also drops down towards the western end of the site where there is located an existing area of hardstanding and stable block and domestic outbuilding. The western site boundary comprises of a band of mature trees, beyond which lies no.79 Brookfields Road (Brooklands). The existing vehicular access connects with Shay Lane in the far northwest corner of the site.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan 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, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community
- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce

- 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

3.3 Policy SS8 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Larger Villages Area Strategy' and states that these settlements shall provide retain and enhance their role as rural service centres, providing for the bulk of the housing requirement of the rural areas and also for employment needs of a scale and type appropriate to each settlement having regard to infrastructure capacity and character. The Council and its partners will achieve this through a number of actions, including:

- Increasing the range of available and affordable house types, including for first time buyers and families
- Giving consideration to limited infilling on the edge of settlement boundaries, subject to the criteria set out in Policy H1

3.4 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan 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. This will be achieved via a number of actions, including:

- Restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with policy H1.

3.5 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Housing Provision' and states that outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the spatial strategy will be supported provided that:

- The development will adjoin the boundary of a larger village and be well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses
- The development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

3.6 Policy H1 also requires that all housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area. Higher densities will generally be appropriate in locations which are more accessible by public transport, and which have good access to services. All new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in

accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis subject to considerations such as viability and design. The policy also requires that all new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.

3.7 Policy SD3 of the Local Plan 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 the following ways:

1. Supporting developers who propose exceeding the thermal efficiency or water conservation standards required by law for new buildings or extensions, at the time of the application. In the case of larger developments such as housing estates the Council will support measures such as 'communal' renewables, or District Heating installations.
2. The Council will support measures by landowners/developers designed to contribute to existing or emerging District Heating networks (for example by connecting 'exporters', with receptors, of heat).
3. The Council will support measures designed to improve the sustainability of existing buildings (such as improved thermal insulation, water conservation, or the installation of micro-renewables).

3.8 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development should 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 SPD. It goes on to state that new development should (amongst others):

- 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
- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping, as well as noise, odour and light pollution.
- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.

3.9 Policy DC2 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Historic Environment' and states that:

1. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.
2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.

3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.
 4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.
 5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.
 6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.
 7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.
- 3.10 Policy DC3 of the Local Plan 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.

3.11 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to “Biodiversity and Geological Resources” and states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by (amongst other measures):

- Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) there is no appropriate alternative site available; and

- b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
 - c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
 - d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.
- Expecting all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

3.12 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

2. Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.
3. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.
4. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of significantly boosting the supply of housing, the delivery of rural housing, securing high quality design, safeguarding highway safety and ensuring a net gain to biodiversity. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Guide SPD & Design Principles for Development SPG

- 4.2 The adopted Design Guide SPD and its associated Design Principles for Development SPG provide advice aimed at securing the delivery of high-quality built development within the District. The content of the SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Statement of Housing Land Supply (to April 2022)

- 4.3 The Statement of Housing Land Supply sets out the Local Authority's performance in terms of the delivery of new housing and confirms a housing land supply equivalent to 3.71 years against a requirement of 5 years plus buffer. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment

- 4.4 This document assessed the different landscape character types throughout Staffordshire and identifies the site as lying within the Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe character area. The document identifies the key characteristics of this landscape type along with a number of incongruous landscape features. The content of the SPG has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application site is located within the rural area, and abuts up to the adopted settlement boundary of Ipstones village. Policies SS8 and SS10 of the Local Plan make provision for new housing development in such locations where it meets the requirements of policy H1.
- 5.2 Policy H1 confirms that limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the spatial strategy will be supported where it adjoins the boundary of a larger village and is well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses, and where it does not lead to a prominent intrusion or give rise to significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the countryside.
- 5.3 In determining the previous application on the site, the Local Authority concluded that the proposal did not abut up to the settlement boundary of Ipstones and that the development did not relate well to the existing pattern of residential development in the village, and would also cause harm to the landscape would ensue. It was consequently concluded that the proposal did not meet the provisions of policy H1 of the Local Plan.
- 5.4 In this revised application the western boundary of the application site abuts directly up to the defined settlement boundary of Ipstones, with its vehicular access point off Shay Lane located within it. Development in the immediate surrounding area comprises of loose knit pattern of detached buildings, set within varying sized plots with the nearest neighbouring property (Brook Cottage) aligned with its long axis running east / west, akin to that proposed in this application.

- 5.5 The submitted proposal reflects that established pattern of development and its single storey form and positioning within the plot has been carefully considered so that the building works positively with the existing levels and counters within the site, hunkering down into an existing hollow in the landscape. In doing so the development will minimise its visual impact on the surrounding area and not result in a prominent intrusion or significant adverse harm to the character and appearance of the countryside (discussed in more detail below). As a consequence, we submit that the proposal is held to meet the requirements of policies SS8, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Landscape Impact

- 5.6 The application site is located within the Dissected Sandstone Highland Fringe character area, whose characteristic landscape features are defined by the Planning For Landscape Change SPG as comprising a pronounced rounded landform dissected by small stream valleys, upland pasture farming, conifer plantations and small wooded valleys, field pattern of both stone walls and hedges, stone buildings and an open highland edge.
- 5.7 In determining the previous application a number of concerns were raised in respect of the impact of the development on the landscape, including the domestication of such a large parcel of land, the large footprint of the dwelling, surrounding patio and footpath areas, the resultant domesticated landscape, and the lengthy footpath connecting the dwelling with the parking area and driveway, which was held to adversely contribute to a change in the countryside character. Concerns were also raised about the proposed passing place that was to be created, commenting that this would “have a huge, adverse visual impact upon the narrow, rural, country lane”.
- 5.8 Whilst the footprint and overall scale and massing of the dwelling is unaltered from the previous application, a number of substantial revisions have been

made to the wider site layout in order to address the concerns raised by the Local Authority. The large parcels of land that had previously been proposed as garden to the northwest, north and east of the dwelling have been omitted in favour of a much reduced area of domestic curtilage that is consolidated to the south of the proposed dwelling.

5.9 All of the previously proposed pathways, new parking area and access drive have also been omitted, with vehicular access now to be taken via the existing access in the far northwest corner of the site, which is already established, and to which no changes are proposed. The application also removes the originally proposed passing place, thereby avoiding the “huge, adverse impact” that the Local Authority had identified. The revised proposal will consequently have a substantially lesser impact on the landscape than the previously refused application.

5.10 In terms of the impact of the dwelling itself on the landscape, it is noted that the Local Authority’s Trees and Woodlands Officer had commented that:

*“The proposed development would introduce a domestic/residential character to the site/immediate surroundings encroaching beyond the existing edge of settlement, and in this regard would be incongruous to a certain degree, **although actual visual impact of the dwelling itself would be relatively limited** and it is noted that **the site already has a semi-domesticated character** due to features such as ornamental/garden planting, lawn-like mown grass, a summerhouse, benches and picnic table etc. **Visual impact of the proposed dwelling would be relatively limited due to its single storey form, its siting in hollow below road level behind the hedge, and being generally not visible from longer views from open countryside to north south and east**”. (our emphasis)*

- 5.11 We consequently submit that the revisions to the site layout, coupled with the aforementioned conclusions on the impact of the dwelling itself, collectively serve to address the concerns about landscape impact raised in the previous application.
- 5.12 The applicant is furthermore agreeable to undertaking off-site planting on the remaining land that they own in order to provide some additional screening / softening of the development to limit any impact of the roofscape of the dwelling in views along Shay Lane. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS8, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Without Prejudice

- 5.13 If the Local Authority were to conclude that the revised scheme remains in conflict with policies SS8, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan, we submit that other material considerations exist to outweigh that conflict.
- 5.14 Such considerations stem from the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies (paragraph 74 of the NPPF refers).
- 5.15 The Local Authority's most recent Housing Land Supply Statement, covering the period up to April 2022, confirms a housing land supply within the Moorlands of 3.71 years. As a consequence, the relevant provisions of policies SS9, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan have to be considered out-of-date, and thus afforded lesser weight in the determination of the application.

5.16 The NPPF dictates that in such circumstances planning applications must be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with planning permission granted unless:

- (i) the application of policies in this 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 this Framework taken as a whole (our emphasis)*

5.17 The site does not affect any areas of assets of particular importance (discussed in the heritage section below) and as such derives no conflict with paragraph 11(b)(i) of the NPPF. The submitted proposal furthermore derives a number of material benefits that will not be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by any adverse impacts.

5.18 Economic benefits will arise as a consequence of the development, both during the construction phase itself, and following completion of the development. The Local Authority's 'Quantifying the Economic Impact of Development' Report confirms that each new house constructed in the District generates 4.3 jobs within construction or the associated supply chain. In addition, the report confirms that for each new dwelling constructed within the District, there will be a minimum initial one-off spend (in addition to the construction of the dwelling) of £5,000, with a subsequent annual spend of £9.388 per year. Such economic benefits weigh in favour of the proposed development.

5.19 The proposal will also derive social benefits by making a valuable contribution towards meeting the Local Authority's shortfall in housing land supply, whilst

also freeing up a quality, conventional family home nearby (Brook Cottage) for use by a family. The Local Authority has a long history of under-delivery of housing, and whilst it was temporarily able to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing following the adoption of its Local Plan in September 2020, that lasted for only 7 months. The Housing Land Supply Statement for the period up to 30th March 2021 served to confirm that the housing land supply had dropped to 4.21 years, and for the period up to 30th March 2022 it had dropped further to 3.71 years.

- 5.20 Policy SS3 of the Local Plan confirms a requirement to deliver 320 dwellings per annum to meet its housing requirements. The Local Authority however has conclusively failed to deliver such levels of development, having a shortfall for *every year of the plan period* (2014 – Date), as shown by the table in Figure 1 overleaf. The total shortfall in housing against Local Plan requirements now stands at 1,118 dwellings, which by resultant effect, has increased the annualised housing requirement to *443 dwellings per year* in order to meet the housing requirements set out in the Local Plan.

Figure 1 – SMDC Housing Delivery For Plan Period to Date (Source: SMDC)

Year	Completions outside the Peak District National Park (net)	Peak Park Completions within Staffordshire Moorlands (net)	Adopted Local Plan Target	Shortfall Against Relevant Target
2014/15	278	4	320	-38
2015/16	99	6	320	-215
2016/17	128	17	320	-175
2017/18	142	11	320	-167
2018/19	165	3	320	-152
2019/20	203	5	320	-112
2020/21	201	0	320	-119
2021/22	177	3	320	-140
Total	1,393	49	2,560	-1,118

- 5.21 The table in Figure 1 demonstrates that *at no point* over the plan period to date has the Local Authority been able to meet the original annualised housing requirement of 320 dwellings per annum. The Council therefore stands little prospect of hitting the increased annualised requirement of 443 dwellings per annum. The delivery of one dwelling on this site, whilst representing a small quantum of development, nevertheless represents a valuable contribution to housing delivery requirements which currently falls woefully short of where they should be. Such social benefits consequently carry significant weight in favour of the proposed development.
- 5.22 Environmental benefits will also arise as a consequence of erecting a dwelling in a sustainable location on the fringe of one of the larger villages where a range of day-to-day services are available, along with public transport connections to the wider area. The proposal will furthermore not result in the creation of an isolated home in the countryside, thus according with the requirements of paragraph 80 of the NPPF.
- 5.23 The proposed dwelling will also be constructed with a high level of thermal efficiency, with the dwelling orientated to be south facing to optimise solar gain. Renewable energy generation is also to be incorporated in the form of an air source heat pump and photovoltaic panels. The accompanying Energy and Sustainability Statement sets out these measures in more detail.
- 5.24 Paragraph 54 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that new development should be planned for in ways that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Paragraph 158 of the NPPF adds that local planning 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)

5.25 These provisions are reflected within policy SD3 of the Local Plan. The sustainable location of this site, coupled with the high thermal efficiency and low carbon approach to the construction of the development, amount to environmental benefits that lend significant weight in favour of the proposed development.

5.26 Having regard to the conclusions set out within the following sections of this Statement, it is submitted that no adverse impacts would arise to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the aforementioned benefits, and that consequently planning permission should be granted in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Design & Layout

5.27 The adopted Design Guide SPD and associated Design Principles for Development SPG identify a number of key design parameters that new development should seek to achieve in the interests of delivering high quality design that respects the character and appearance of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The guidance includes, *inter-alia*, the following requirements:

- ***Buildings should sit comfortably in the landscape – best achieved by emulating the horizontal, ground-hugging form of traditional buildings with their strong eaves and ridge lines:*** The proposed dwelling adopts a single storey, ground hugging form of design that works with the existing contours within the site to assimilate the building into its surroundings. The dwelling will furthermore have a strongly defined eaves line and ridge line in accordance with the adopted design guidance.

- ***A new dwelling should respect the scale of those surrounding it.*** Within the surrounding area there a wide variety of scales of development, including single storey buildings and two storey buildings. The single storey form of the proposed dwelling is very much in keeping with that varied character.
- ***Limiting the number of openings to achieve a high solid to void ratio.*** The proposed dwelling exhibits a high solid to void ratio, particularly on its most visually conspicuous elevations, that being the northern and eastern elevations. The south elevation has more glazing, but this is recessed behind brise-soleil / adjustable solar shading screens which serves to lessen its impact.
- ***Arranging the openings harmoniously, often in a formal, symmetrical manner:*** The proposed development adopts a contemporary style of design, but nevertheless presents a degree of rhythm to its elevations, in particular the north facing elevation that faces towards Brookfields Road.
- ***Sited to maximise solar gain and increasing proportion of glazing on south facing elevations;*** The dwelling very much meets this requirement and has solar gain at the heart of its design (see accompanying Energy and Sustainability Statement).
- ***The roof form should be simple with a dominant roof line and, where appropriate to the locality or the building, emphasised by gables:*** The proposed dwelling will have a dominant ridge line that is emphasised by gables.
- ***The roof should span the shorter side where practicable:*** The proposed roof of the dwelling will span the shorter side.

- ***Flat roofs should be avoided:*** No flat roofs are proposed on the proposed dwelling.
- ***The roof pitch and materials should match those of the locality:*** The proposed roof pitch is consistent with the vernacular of the Moorlands and will facilitate the use of Staffordshire Blue plain clay tiles. The proposed dwelling is to be constructed from natural stone with oak framing and adjustable brise-soleil.
- ***Window frames should be recessed by a minimum of 50mm to avoid a flat appearance to the elevation and to emphasise the solidity of the walls:*** The proposed windows are to be recessed within the elevations by 50mm to accord with this requirement. Such detailing can be secured by way of an appropriately worded condition

5.28 The above assessment demonstrates that the proposed development responds positively to the Local Authority's adopted design guidance and encompasses a form of development that will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. No concerns were raised with the detailed design of the proposed dwelling in the assessment of the previous application.

5.29 A much reduced area of private amenity space is provided, which will be consolidated to the south of the building away from public view. The land to the north and east of the dwelling will be retained in agricultural use. Owing to the removal of the previously proposed vehicular access and passing place, the development will also see the existing boundary hedgerow along Shay Lane retained unaltered. The design and layout of the development will therefore be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in accordance with policies SS1, SD3 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

- 5.30 There are no immediate neighbouring residential occupiers to this site, and the siting of the dwelling in the position shown will not give rise to any conflicts with the Local Authority's space about dwellings standards. No harm to neighbouring residential amenity will therefore ensue. The Local Authority concluded likewise in its assessment of the previous application.
- 5.31 The proposed dwelling will be provided with its own area of private amenity space to the south of the dwelling that exceeds the recommended minimum standard and will also provide adequate floorspace to exceed the minimum floor space requirements set out within the DCLG Technical Housing Standards. Future occupiers of the dwelling will therefore benefit from an acceptable level of residential amenity. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies DC1 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.32 The previously refused application had proposed the formation of a wider, improved vehicular access in the far northeast corner of the wider site, along with the formation of a passing place along Shay Lane. This revised proposal omits those works entirely, with vehicular access to the site to be taken via the existing access in the far northwest corner of the site which serves an existing stable block and domestic outbuilding, as well as providing vehicular access to the main developable area of the site itself. This was the favoured access solution of the Local Highway Authority during previous pre-application discussions.
- 5.33 The proposed access feeds out onto Shay Lane in the northwest corner of the site, which is not heavily frequented by traffic. Some improvements to visibility on egress could also be achieved by cutting back or lowering the

existing boundary hedgerow. Adequate off-street parking will also be provided along with turning space so that vehicles can exit the site in a forward gear.

- 5.34 Benefits to highway safety will also accrue as a consequence of providing two off-street parking spaces to serve Brook Cottage which does not currently have any such parking provision. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies T1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Ecology

- 5.35 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Apex Ecology which has assessed the site for habitats of importance. No evidence of protected species is identified, and no further surveys are recommended.
- 5.36 A series of recommendations are set out, including measures to control the ingress of invasive bracken and Himalayan balsam, restoration of existing hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows, along with the creation of a wildlife pond.
- 5.37 The applicants have a genuine intention to enhance the environment with this proposal, and the site provides ample opportunity to secure a net gain to biodiversity which can be secured via planning condition. In doing so the proposed development will meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Impact

- 5.38 The application site lies partially within the Ipstones Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was established in 1977 with the boundary amended in 1993. The Ipstones Conservation Area Appraisal confirms that the village lies at the southwestern end of the Pennines where deeply dissected foothills form a series of long north-south trending ridges. The Conservation Area focuses

on the main north to south route through the village which was formerly a toll road, and the northern part of Brookfield Road, formerly known as Back Lane.

- 5.39 The application site does not affect any of the important views or parts of the Conservation Area identified as being of particular importance within the Conservation Area Appraisal. The layout of the development, and the discreet positioning and scale of the dwelling, also means views within and out of the Conservation Area will be unchanged. The application proposes no alterations to the existing access and areas of hardstanding that already exist, and as a result the development will not result in any loss of significance to this heritage asset. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policy DC2 of the Local Plan.

Coal Mining

- 5.40 The application site is identified as being within a 'High Risk Area' for past coal mining activities and there is a known presence of a former mine shaft on land to the east of the application site. The previous application had shown that mine shaft to be located in close proximity to proposed parking / turning areas and associated pathways. Those elements have since been removed, leaving the mine shaft within the surrounding agricultural land. Since the area of the mineshaft now lies outside of the application site, and no works are proposed in its general vicinity, no coal mining mitigation works are considered to be necessary as a consequence of this application.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The site directly adjoins the boundary of a larger village and is well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses and will not lead to a prominent intrusion or give rise to significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the countryside.
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged by this proposal, and no adverse impacts will arise to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development.
- Substantial revisions have been made to the site layout compared to the previously refused application resulting in a substantially lesser degree of impact on the landscape.
- The scale, massing, design and layout of the development is in keeping with the surrounding area and meets the requirements of the adopted Design Guide SPD.
- The proposed development will have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity and will provide a satisfactory level of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings.
- The proposed development will not result in any severe residual impacts to highway safety in the locality and will provide adequate off-street parking to meet the needs of future occupiers.

- The proposed development will secure a net gain to biodiversity.
- The proposal will not have any impact on the significance of the Conservation Area as a heritage asset.
- The proposal does not give rise to any concerns or risks arising from former coal mining activities.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS8, H1, SD3, H1, DC1, DC2, DC3, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, the SMDC Design Guide SPD and Design Principles for New Development SPG.