

DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0609
Valid 18/12/2023

LAND OFF MONKHOUSE
CHEADLE

PROPOSED DETACHED
DWELLING

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Amenity
- Highways
- Environmental Health
- Coal area

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site is a broadly rectangular-shaped piece of land to the rear of number 4 Friar's Close Cheadle. The land drops steeply in level as it extends towards the Friar's Close residential development and currently comprises mainly grassland/planting. There are widespread views over surrounding residential development and wider Cheadle area.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the Cheadle Town development boundary (on the edge of) and is within a low-risk, coal development area and the Churnet Valley Masterplan area. The site is not within the Cheadle Conservation Area but a small part of the southern boundary abuts it.

PROPOSAL

This is a Full planning application for the erection of a detached, two-storey dwelling. The submitted plans show a proposed property with a rectangular shaped footprint. Internally the ground floor accommodation would consist of open-plan kitchen/living area, utility room and two bedrooms which would share a WC via a Jack and Jill arrangement. At first floor there would be a master bedroom with dressing room and ensuite. The dwelling would have a blue/grey tiled pitched roof, white render and red/brown facing brickwork walls. Excavation and fill would be required due to the land level change. The front (southern facing elevation) would be extensively glazed. Anthracite windows and doors would also be inserted into the remaining three elevations. External amenity space would be located to the north and east, off-road parking would be on the southern side of the dwelling and accessed via the Monkhouse road. The site plan indicates new conifer hedge planting to much of the proposed domestic curtilage.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

SS1	Development Principles
SS2	Settlement Hierarchy
SS7	Cheadle Area Strategy
SS11	Churnet Valley Strategy
SD1	Sustainable Use of Resources
SD2	Renewable/Low-Carbon Energy
SD3	Sustainability Measures in Development
SD4	Pollution and Water Quality
H1	New Housing Development
DC1	Design Considerations
DC2	The Historic Environment
DC3	Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1	Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2	Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1	Development and Sustainable Transport
Appendix 2	Parking Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Design Principles for Development
2. Space About Dwellings

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide

Churnet Valley Masterplan

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections:

2. Achieving sustainable development
5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
6. Building a strong, competitive economy
9. Promoting sustainable transport
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

81/09812/OLDDC Details of semi-detached bungalow. Approved

SMD/2015/0580 Proposed two storey front extension with garage below and alterations to elevations. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice. Expired.

Neighbour consultation period. Expired.

Public Comments: 12 letters of objection and concern, comments can be summarised as follows:

- Increase the risk of more landslips and will be dangerous
- Concern that heavy machinery and deep foundations could have impact upon surrounding property foundations and landslides
- If building commences what will be put in place to ensure no landslips in future
- Adding traffic to the area
- No existing turning areas – refuse lorries and large delivery vans do not come to the top section of Monkhouse
- Very limited street parking
- No option to park on the roadway. 24 hours access is required to the Severn Trent overground reservoir and also number 19 Monkhouse
- Large proportion of the Monkhouse is a private road, the application should be rejected without unanimous approval by the co-owners of the private road
- Restricted access for residents, deliveries and emergency services
- Access to the Cheadle water works site had to be via Hall Orchard, not the Monkhouse
- Can the access run alongside the applicants property and not Monkhouse?
- If this is a private road will the applicant/developer be liable for any road damage.
- Create dust and noise
- Noise impact upon surrounding residents
- More building is not needed
- Destruction of habitats
- Impact upon privacy as new build would be high up and look down on surrounding houses
- Overlooking of gardens, living rooms and bedrooms
- Would reduce surrounding property values
- Impact upon skyline and will be visible from Friar's Close, a bungalow would help to address these concerns
- Floor plan appears to contradict the site plan.
- No windows should overlook 5 Friar's Close
- No reference to energy efficiency
- No reference to planting heights
- Development is disrespectful to residents on Monkhouse and Friar's Close

- Potential for natural drainage to be redirected. onto the roadway, new development and adjoining properties.
- 2 well-established trees will need to be removed which will have detrimental effect on soil stability
- Extensive groundwork and infilling will be required which will negatively affect nearby properties
- Accommodation layout seems to lend itself to a holiday let – only WC is in the ensuite.
- Where will rain drain away from Monkhouse
- Not enough space around the house

Cheadle Town Council: Cheadle Town Council offer an objection to this Application on the basis that there are real concerns in respect of gradient levels and earth movement particularly, given historical landslides have occurred in the general location, and also visual aspects that may affect other residences in the area.

Trees (SMDC): The following comments are made by reference to the case officer site visit photos on the application file, Statmap air photos and Google air photos/streetview images – but without the benefit of a site visit.

There are/were no protected trees on/adjacent to the site. It appears that previously present tree cover on the application site (as apparent on Statmap air photos 2018-2021, but not apparent on Google streetview images from September 2023) has since been removed, probably pre-application. The only relevant trees of any maturity/stature are located perhaps a few metres beyond (west of) the western-most corner of the application site (although there appears to be no physical boundary demarcation here) at the top of a steep bank rising up from the site towards the access roadway leading into the Severn Trent borehole pumping station. As best I can make out, these appear to be self-set multi-stemmed Sycamore of unremarkable quality, although in combination with other trees further to the north they contribute to a tree-clad skyline along the ridge above Cheadle town centre. There is no tree report submitted with the application. Stem diameter sizes are difficult to quantify from the various photos available and therefore Root Protection Area (RPA) is in turn difficult to estimate (the more so given the multi-stemmed form) but I would suspect that the north-west corner of the proposed new dwelling and its constructed/retained supporting platform are likely to slightly encroach into the outer edge of the Sycamore's RPA. However, given the tree stem base level at around 3.5m higher than ground level at the closest part of the site, impact on roots is anticipated to be relatively minor in terms of extent and consequence. There may also be a need to carry out a minor amount of lower/lateral crown pruning on the eastern side of the tree in order to accommodate the proposed dwelling and its construction; subject to adjacent landowner/tree owner permission this may be most appropriately achieved by removal, back to their base, of 2 or 3 of the outer secondary stems which lean towards/over the application site boundary, but this would not have any significant adverse impact on the overall contribution of the tree to the wooded skyline.

Based on information available, I have no objection to this application. Given the proximity of the proposed dwelling to the western boundary of the application site, there would in practice be no space, and no real benefit, to implement temporary tree

protection barriers etc. No tree protection conditions are reasonably required. New hedging is indicated on the layout plan, annotated as conifer hedging to subdivide the existing rear garden of 4 Friars Close; however, mixed native hedging would be more appropriate for the Monkhouse boundary to secure some biodiversity gain. There is little if any sensible room to accommodate new trees. Nevertheless hedging details should be secured by a development landscaping scheme.

Conservation Officer (SMDC): Objection. I would not be able to support this based on the design, scale and materiality. It is not appropriate and I don't believe it would be faithful to our policy with regard to design.

Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions. The proposed development is in close vicinity to residential properties so care should be taken during the construction phase to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties, conditions are advised to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Waste Services (SMDC): No issues regarding waste collections.

Severn Trent Water: No objections subject to condition and advisory notes.

Staffordshire County Council Highways: Recommendation Summary: Conditional. Site Visit Conducted on: 08-Jan-2024

Personal Injury Records:

Current records show that there were not any Personal Injury Collisions on Monkhouse (adopted section of road) from 31st December 2015 to 31st December 2020. Staffordshire County Council do not hold Personal Injury Collision records on the private road section of Monkhouse.

Background:

The site is located on a private section of Monkhouse approximately 75 metres northeast of the adopted section of Monkhouse. Monkhouse is a single-track road serving several residential properties, the unadopted section has no footways or streetlights, however, the adopted section has a footway and streetlights. There is a restriction on parking along Monkhouse from its junction with Prince George Street.

Staffordshire County Council records show a public right of way known as Cheadle 36 connects to and runs along Monkhouse.

Shops, transport links and other services are available on High Street, within Cheadle town centre which is approximately 0.1 mile south of the site.

Proposal:

Proposed detached dwelling.

Comments on Information submitted:

The proposal is for the construction of a 3-bedroom dwelling within land to the rear of 4 Friars Close. Access to the site will be off the private section of Monkhouse. Drg. No. 2347/01 shows parking provision for 2 vehicles scaled measurements show an area of 6.9m wide by 7m long which is sufficient parking for a property of this size and

in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards which state: Detached/Semi-detached property of up to 3 bedrooms - 2 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m) for residents and visitors within the curtilage of the dwelling.

It is considered the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the highway. I therefore have no objection to the proposal (application number SMD/2023/0609) subject to the following being conditioned:

The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the parking area has been provided in accordance with the approved plan Drg. No. 2347/01. The parking area shall thereafter be retained unobstructed as a parking area for the life of the development.

REASONS:-

To comply with NPPF; to comply with SMDC Core Strategy Policy DC1 and T1; in the interests of highway safety.

Note to Planning Officer;

The red outline plan does not connect with the public highway. Monkhouse at the location of the site is private/unadopted road. The developer should ensure they have appropriate rights and permissions to carry out the work.

The condition of the retaining structure to Monkhouse should be checked by a structural engineer and any necessary works carried out.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The Local Planning Authority is required to determine applications in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there are material circumstances which indicate otherwise

Chapter 2 of The National Planning Policy Framework, outlines the Government's aims of achieving sustainable development within the planning system via economic, social and environmental objectives. The NPPF is clear with regards to the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development.' Paragraph 11 states that for decision-taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission 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.

At present the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing, as of 1st April 2023 it was 3.58 years and therefore the presumption in favour of development is triggered as the application was submitted just before the date of the changes brought about within the revised NPPF (December 2023).

The application site is located within the Development Boundary of Cheadle where, in accordance with Local plan policy SS7, there is support in principle for residential developments. Local Plan policy H1 also offers residential development support within the towns, subject to compliance with wider planning policies.

Design and visual impact

Local Plan policy DC1 requires that all developments shall be well-designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the character and heritage of an area. Development should be of a high quality, adding to the value of a local area, incorporating creativity, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity.

There is no uniform appearance to the dwellings within the immediate area. Friars Close comprises detached dwellings of varying sizes and design, built with a mix of brick and render. A dwelling close to the application site on Friars Close has a very similar two-storey, glazed arrangement within a gable end so this is not a completely new feature in the area, although it is highly unlikely that the frontages of both properties will be seen in the context of each other. However, the remaining three sides of the proposed dwelling are not considered to be well-designed in terms of their visual impact. The solid to void ratio very much leans towards solid walls which results in very large expanses of uninterrupted render finish and elevations with no real identity and character. The steeply sloping land levels means that lower level brickwork of up to approximately 3m high will be visible, again adding towards the expanses of unbroken hard surfacing. To an extent it would appear that windows have been positioned/designed in an attempt to reduce neighbour amenity impact (which will be discussed later in the report), but it has resulted in a visually poor exterior. It is noted that the Council's Conservation officer has objected to the scheme, citing design, scale and materiality.

The proposed property would have a significant visual impact upon its surroundings. The elevated land levels would mean that the new property would be seen from many vantage points from the surrounding dwellings to areas further afield, the extensive use of render would make the building all the more visually prominent and would tower above the Friar's Close dwellings. Whilst some hedgerow planting at the new boundary is proposed, it would not prevent the building from being viewed in its entirety and being viewed as an overly dominant feature within this elevated area.

Visual impact includes impact upon trees. There are no tree preservation orders within the site and the area does not form part of the Conservation Area, therefore there are no protected trees. The Council's Arboricultural officer has assessed the application

and confirms no objection to it and that no tree protection conditions are required. A landscaping condition is requested.

Amenity

There are two aspects of amenity which need to be considered, the amenity provision for potential future occupants of the proposed dwelling and the amenity impact of the new build upon the occupants of surrounding residential properties. Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Space About Dwellings' is also considered.

The dwelling appears to have been designed to allow natural light into all of the main habitable rooms and two parking spaces are provided. The natural light provision is acceptable and the area given for two parking spaces complies with Local Plan policy standards for a three bedroom dwelling. However, the land level changes, combined with the shape of the site, the dwelling footprint size and area to be taken for parking, means that any future occupant would not have sufficient, useable, external amenity space. Cross sections shown on the submitted plans clearly show the steepness of the land on the eastern side of the plot. There is no area within the plot which could provide meaningful, useable external amenity space which would comply with the Space About Dwellings standards.

There is significant concern over the impact that the development would have upon the amenity of surrounding residents. The 'Consultations' section of this report show the extent of concern and objection from many residents. Number 19 Monkhouse has views towards the application site. The fact that the land within the application site would have to be levelled, means that the new dwelling would overlook 19 Monkhouse to an unacceptable and intrusive degree. The development could reasonably be classed as a back-land development (rear of 19 Monkhouse and 4 Friar's Close) and as such there would be disturbance by additional vehicles passing number 19 to get to the application site. The provision of a new parking area in this location would result in a more intrusive form of development not only by engine noise but also because of the angle in which vehicles would access/exit the parking area, vehicle lights (particularly headlights) would shine in the direction of number 19 Monkhouse and its windows. This arrangement would adversely impact upon the living conditions of the neighbour. This conflicts with Local Plan Policy DC1 which amongst other matters concerns itself with the protection of residential amenity and noise impact.

There would also be significant residential amenity harm upon occupants of a number of the Friar's Close dwellings. The Friar's Close dwellings have principal windows within their rear elevations in addition to their private amenity spaces. The raised level of the application site would result in a building which would be dominating, imposing and overbearing to the extent of it being unacceptable whilst also creating a sense of enclosure and likely overshadowing. In addition to overbearing harm, there would also be visual harm resulting from the brick and render walls and tiled roof. Site visit photographs within the application file demonstrate just how close and overbearing the proposed dwelling would be.

The land level change (between the application site and Friar's Close dwellings) means that the garden level of the new property and likely the parking area would be intrusive to a number of the Friar's Close occupants. Being raised, and obviously open-

air, there would likely result an intrusive form of development by the likelihood of noise and comings and goings which could not be satisfactorily controlled by planning conditions. Whilst the plans do indicate some new hedgerow planting, it cannot be guaranteed that any boundary treatment would remain in situ however even if it were, the presence of raised amenity space, from the perspective of Friar's Close occupants, would be intrusive.

The dwelling appears to have been designed so that smaller/narrower windows are within the elevations facing the Friar's Close properties. However, the openings will be raised (due to the lower wall brickwork) and will not erase the feeling/perception of being overlooked.

Highways

The proposal includes off-road parking space for two vehicles, accessed off an unadopted section of Monkhouse. Two parking spaces for a three bedroom property is acceptable and complies with the adopted Local Plan parking standards. The County Highways officer does not raise any objections to the scheme, simply requesting a condition which secures the parking spaces prior to first occupation of the dwelling. The Highways officer also provides notes to clarify that the developer should ensure they have appropriate rights and permissions to carry out the work as the red edge outline does not connect with the public highway. Furthermore, the Highways officer also makes reference to the suitability of the retaining structure which should involve a structural engineer.

Environmental Health

No objections are raised from the Environmental Health officer who notes that as the proposed development is in close vicinity to residential properties, care should be taken during the construction phase to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties. Recommended conditions include restriction over times/days when noisy construction works can be undertaken, Construction and demolition, unexpected contamination, soil importation and lighting.

A number of residents have made reference to landslips within the area and have concerns that this may occur again if the application is approved and development undertaken. Environmental Health have commented that this is a Building Control function.

Coal area

The application site is within a low-risk coal development area. Latest advice contained on the Gov.uk website is that 'If you are submitting a planning application in a Development Low Risk Area then there is no statutory requirement to submit a CMRA to the LPA' however 'the proposed development still lies within a coal mining area and could contain unrecorded hazards.' The advice is that if any coal mining feature is encountered it must be immediately reported to the Coal Authority.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above within the report, it is recommended that the application is refused on amenity grounds for both future occupants of the proposed

dwelling and for occupants of surrounding residential properties. Furthermore, due to its, design scale and materiality the proposed dwelling fails to achieve a high standard of design and would fail to enhance the character and appearance of the area and would detract from it contrary to policy DC1 of the Local Plan and advice within the NPPF. The Presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph number 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework is acknowledged, as the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing. However, the report has demonstrated that the number of concerns and the significance of the harms identified would demonstrably outweigh the benefits that a single dwelling could bring. Whilst the plot of land is within the Cheadle Town development boundary, its location and constraints make this an unsuitable piece of land for a new build dwelling.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Refuse

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 01.03.2024

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council