

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0002
Valid 03/01/2024

17 HIGH STREET
ALTON

PROPOSED EXTENSION AND
ALTERATIONS

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact to the Conservation area
- Design and visual impact
- Neighbouring amenity
- Highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site relates to an end-terrace property within the Conservation area of Alton. The property itself is a white rendered and tiled-pitched roofed terrace which fronts onto High Street. Access to the rear can be taken via a narrow path off Church Bank, north of the site. To the rear of the property, there is a dilapidated conservatory; the conservatory has a plastic sheeted roof and all-glazed. There is a large outbuilding that is connected to the conservatory via a small toilet.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration the property is located within the Alton Village Development Boundary and Conservation Area. Whilst the building is of some age it is not Listed however, it is adjacent to the White Hart Inn, a public house that is Grade 2 listed.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for a replacement extension and to block up two windows on the first floor and create a patio door on the first floor with a Juliet balcony. The extension will have a flat roof, roof lantern and have brick facework that will match the existing dwelling. The extension will extend out 5m, extend the full width of the main dwelling and have a height of 3.5m from the ridge. The existing outbuilding and connecting toilet will be removed.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffs Moorlands Local Plan (adopted September 2020)

SS9 Larger Villages Area Strategy

DC1 Design Considerations

DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 127

Section 9

Supplementary Planning Document

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide Supplementary

Planning Guidance

Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 26/02/24

Neighbour consultation period ends: 26/02/24

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

Neighbours

Four representatives (objection)

- Inappropriate as it extends past the present building line and is significantly higher than other buildings around it. The extension plan also shows a roof light which has an industrial look to it, which is also inappropriate.
- The property will be used only for holiday accommodation, the High street already has an excess of holiday accommodation, making parking for residents a nightmare
- Inappropriate height and length of rear extension, resulting in the blocking of our outlook onto St Peters Church and our community gardens, where we have our allotment.
- The proposed rear extension will utterly devastate our current outlook onto our garden and St Peters Church
- The industrial modern style design extension is not in keeping with a conservation area with numerous neighbouring listed buildings.
- First floor Juliet balcony will significantly reduce neighbours privacy
- The proposed upper window balcony would mean a lack of privacy for close neighbours.
- The holiday lets are going to kill off the community of Alton, leaving less and less opportunities for future generations.

Alton Parish Comments

No objection

Conservation officer

Objection. The extension needs to be reduced and sympathetic with host dwelling. Subsequently, supported the scheme following height of the extension being reduced (4/03/24)

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The LPA is required to determine this application in accordance with the Development plan, unless there are material circumstances which indicate otherwise and in determining these applications, it shall have regard to the provisions of the

Development Plan, in so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations.

This site lies within the development boundary of Alton which is identified as a Larger Village in the Local Plan and falls within the Churnet Valley Masterplan Area. Support in principle for extensions is acceptable on the basis it is of suitable scale in relation to the role and function of the villages as set out in the Spatial as set out in Policy SS8.

Impact to Conservation Area and, Design and visual impact

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance. Policy DC2 of the Local Plan seeks to conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. It says that protection of such assets and their setting will be given as set out in the NPPF.

The NPPF also seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Para 194 says that any harm to the significance of a designated asset should require clear and convincing justification. Para 196 says that where harm is judged to be less than substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. In addition to this LPAs have a statutory duty under the 1990 Act to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving Listed buildings or their setting and that of Conservation Areas.

The Conservation officer was consulted to consider the design and harm to a non-listed building in the Conservation area. In her comments she noted that:

The original building is an ornate and primitive dwelling with intricate detailing to the frontage. Overall a well survived dwelling within the conservation area. The dwelling is exposed and open to the rear with fair ranging views and adjacent to a number of listed buildings.

The roof height of the extension should be reduced a bit more/step it down further, enabling the two forms of 'old' and 'new' to be made clearer. Currently the proposed pairing forms of the buildings look to compete, and I am not confident they harmonise. With a reduction in height to the extension, the new portion will be more respectful to the vernacular of the traditionally built dwelling and be read clearer as a later portion against the historic core. See typical side elevation in proposed – there would be very little of the existing and original roofscape left of the host dwelling to be cohesive, and I am concerned that with such a high extension that the character of the building will come to some visual harm.

Following the Conservation officer's comments, the agent amended the roof to upturn objection. The height of the extension reduced from 4.2m to 3.1m- including roof lantern. Visually, the roof lantern would sit lower than the window cill. The Conservation officer considers the amended plan as an improvement.

The reduced extension is significantly better than what was originally submitted and will be an improvement to the shabby extension of poor material that is currently there. Originally, the extension appeared cluttered between the roof ridge of the extension and new formed opening whereas the reduction will make the new and old much more clear and readable. Overall, the extension harmonises with the dwelling which is of its time. The extension would not result in harm to designated or non-designated heritage assets and is in accordance with Policy DC1 and Policy DC2

Referring to the Juliet balcony and first floor patio door, the conservation officer considers this as neither an enhancement or detrimental to the host dwelling. It is a slight improvement as the two first floor windows will be bricked up and an opening will be partly reinstated below the header which appears original to the dwelling. The Juliet balcony is proportionate to the patio door and there appears to be a mixture of fenestrations in design and scale amongst the immediate neighbouring's along High Street. The case officer has considered the neighbours comments and its character within the wider Conservation area. However as noted above and in the absence of objection from the conservation officer, it is not considered sufficiently detrimental to warrant a refusal in this regards.

Neighbouring amenity

Paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF (2019) and policy DC1 seeks to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

The main neighbouring properties that this proposal would impact upon are the neighbouring properties at: 16 High Street (adjoining) and the public house to the side.

There were a number of objections regarding the Juliet balcony, window and scale of the extension that would impede the neighbour's privacy and views of the church/wider area. In addition, there were concerns that the property would serve a holiday let or AirBnB.

Referring to the upper floor Juliet balcony and patio door serving the main bedroom, it is not considered that this would cause significantly greater overlooking than the existing windows. The case officer also recognises that while the patio door could perceive as creating an overbearing impact to adjacent neighbours, the presence of a Juliet balcony would restrict the intent to overlook. The reduction of openings from two to one also plays in its favour and arguably, equally harmful should the applicant kept the two windows and changed the internal layout so that the windows served a bedroom which could be done without consent.

There were initial concerns that the flat roof of the proposed extension could be used as a sitting area on the upper floor should the occupier decided to remove the Juliet Balcony at some point in the future. This would give rise to overlooking into the adjacent neighbour's property. Therefore, for the scheme to be supported, a condition would need to be added ensuring that the Juliet balcony is not used to give access to the roof of the extension and to ensure that it cannot be used as a patio area in the interest of residential amenity.

In terms of commercial use, the case officer has considered the details that have been submitted. No other information has suggested its use for commercial purposes, although use as a short term holiday would not normally require planning consent. Nevertheless, should the dwelling be used beyond its lawful use, this would require consent and would be a matter for enforcement.

Referring to the extension, the neighbour most likely to be impacted is the adjoining neighbour at No.16. The neighbour has a rear extension that setback behind the building line of the applicant's two storey rear projection with the nearest window, serving a kitchen situated closest to No.15. Although there may be a breach of the 45 degree line from this window, the window is already impacted by the existing 2 storey and single storey extensions at the application site. It is considered that the additional 1m of projection of the extension at its furthest point compared to its predecessor will have negligible impact to the neighbour as the extension remains single storey. Therefore it will not appear overbearing and will enhance the privacy between boundaries as the proposed extension will have no side windows. The properties are angled slightly to the north west which will also reduce the extent of any overshadowing impacts.

Concerns were raised regarding the height of the extension and loss of outlook to nearby listed assets and gardens. It is considered that both concerns have been addressed when the agent reduced the height of the extension by 0.9m following the comments made the Conservation officer. The reduction would alleviate the neighbours concerns regarding outlook but arguably, there is no right to a view, including to listed assets.

As for the other side of the extension, the neighbouring property is a pub with no residential occupiers at ground floor. The removal of the outbuilding as part of the scheme will expose the applicant's garden but not worsen the outlook from the pub to the rear of the property. Similar to No.16, it will enhance privacy matters as there are no side windows.

It is for these reasons that the proposed development will comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2019).

Highway Safety

Section 9 of the NPPF states that developments should achieve safe and suitable access to the site for all users. Policy T1 of the Local Plan states that permission will only be granted for development incorporating adequate and satisfactory parking provisions.

The bedroom numbers will remain the same as per existing and therefore, no impact will arise as a result of the proposed works. The concern regarding parking and holiday lets is noted. However, as noted above, there is no indication that the property will be used in this way and planning permission would not be required in any event. The parking requirement for a holiday let would be the same as a permanent dwelling, and arguably lower as families tend to travel on holiday in a single vehicle.

This application is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the NPPF and Policy T1 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSION

The proposed rear extension as amended harmonises with the conservation area and will not result in harm to designated or non-designated heritage assets. Whilst neighbour comments are noted it is not considered that a refusal on amenity or highway grounds could be sustained. Accordingly the proposal is recommended for approval

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve with conditions.**

Case Officer: Lisa Li

Recommendation Date: 27/02/24

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council