

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0018
Valid 17/01/2024

1
THE MOUNT HIGH STREET
ALTON

SINGLE STORY REAR
EXTENSION

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Heritage and Design
- Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site comprises a semi-detached dwelling and its associated curtilage, situated in the Alton ward. The site is within the Alton Development Boundary, where development is encouraged. Also, the site is within the Churnet Valley Masterplan Boundary, where rural regeneration of an appropriate nature is encouraged. The site is within the Alton Conservation Area and the Alton Article 4 area. The site is surrounded by neighbouring dwellings comprising a section of High Street and backs onto a dwelling on Hurstons Lane. No. 2 The Mount, High Street, is located to the East of the site and Ingledene, High Street is situated to the West. The rear curtilage of Vyse House, High Street wraps around the rear curtilage of the site to the South. Additionally, the rear curtilage of Providence House, Hurstons Lane adjoins the rear curtilage of the site to the South. The High Street highway runs adjacent to the site to the North.

It is noted that a number of properties within the street scene have been extended and altered; however the established character of the street has been retained.

PROPOSAL

The proposed development consists of a single story rear extension, to replace the existing single story flat roof extension and conservatory. The proposed extension would have a simple pitched roof, to complement that of the host dwelling. It would have a depth of approximately 4.4 metres and a width of 5.34 metres measured externally. The maximum height of the proposed rear extension would be approximately 4.0 metres and the maximum eaves height would be 2.94 metres. The proposed rear extension would be constructed from materials which would harmonise with the host dwelling, including render and slate.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles

1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

SS8 Larger Villages Areas Strategy

SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy

DC1 Design Considerations

DC2 The Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14

Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places, 16 -
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

Part 5 – Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

N/A

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 25/03/2024

Neighbour consultation period ends: 23/02/2024

Press Advert: 31/01/2024

Public Comments

No neighbour comments have been received.

Town / Parish Comments

Alton Parish Council do not object to the proposed development.

Conservation Officer

Initial Comments

“Objection.

The heritage statement is weak and does not assess the Conservation Area in a manner proportionate to its significance as per NPPF wording at 200. Further, it does

not note that Grade II Listed The White Hart Inn is directly opposite, and due to the orientation and siting of the dwelling the scheme has an open and exposed frontage and lines of intervisibility around this setting.

The form and orientation of this town house is impressive and attractive, with good survival condition and in a quiet siting within its plot. The latter of which sees the dwelling sat fairly aloft in the vicinity, with the original footprint legible and sizeable gable facing west down and into the core of the village along what is appraised as a gateway location into the high street and centre.

The proposal sees a new structure to replace the existing conservatory. It appears to be set back from the corner of the gable though in a material palette to make it appear much more obvious than the existing conditions. It also appears to contain a porch addition to its front with a pier which on this exposed gable I am not confident would be a suitable design feature and would become quite obtrusive. The link to this sees the new extension to elongate the form of the building as it set back further than the existing conditions. I therefore recommend that any finishing and facing materials must ensure it is more subservient.

Other points to note at this time are the inclusions of skylights above the windows on this west elevation. It looks to be visually jarring to have the two elements so close together, I don't see any need for this and I therefore encourage the omission of the skylights or the moving of them to the other side pitch of the new roof so they are not seen from the public domain.

I encourage revisions of the heritage statement in order for it to satisfy the NPPF, and an appropriate assessment in regard to the setting of the conservation area and listed building in order to inform my appraisals. I also feel it would be conducive to omit the porch and pier from the scheme and simply have a more simple and modest entry to this extension that does not compete with the character of the host dwelling."

Final Comments

"I have reviewed the amendments and they seem to be acceptable. The up to date photograph helps more envisage the new building will be set quite far back. It will be neutral in terms of heritage harm.

We will need to condition finishing, facing materials and joinery so I am happy to proceed."

Staffordshire County Council Highways

"The proposal is to construct a single storey extension to the rear of the property. The extension will provide a kitchen the existing kitchen will become a utility.

The proposal does not have a detrimental impact on the highway I have no objection (application number SMD/2024/0018)."

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the 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 the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan the Council expects all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect and where possible enhance the environment. A concentrated focus on future growth is to be directed to larger settlements, including Alton. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In compliance with Policy SS8, new development should be directed to the most sustainable locations. The site lies within Alton, which constitutes a larger village within the Staffordshire Moorlands. The Larger Villages Areas Strategy is based around areas where a focus of new development will be directed, with the aim of ensuring that all development enhances the character and appearance of the settlement.

The proposed site is within the Development Boundary, thus the proposed works are acceptable in principle, subject to conformity with other relevant national and local planning policies. The main issues which need to be considered as part of the assessment of the proposed works are heritage, design, amenity and highway safety.

Heritage and Design

As regards the Conservation Area, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 places a statutory duty on the LPA in assessing planning applications in respect to any land or buildings in a Conservation Area to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. In reaching its decision the LPA has to demonstrate that the Section 72 Duty has been applied and discharged. Section 72 (and Footnote 6 of para.11 of the NPPF) creates a strong presumption in favour of the preservation of Conservation Areas and their setting.

Policy DC2 states that the Council will safeguard and where possible, enhance the historic environment by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance; promoting development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area; and preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through appropriate reuse and sensitive development.

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place. The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that extensions should harmonise with the parent building. An extension should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing.

The Conservation Area designation does not prevent domestic developments, but the proposals require careful consideration of their potential impact upon the historic environment. The proposed works consist of a single storey rear extension, to replace an existing single storey extension and conservatory. The dwelling is a two-storey, semi-detached property which is not a Listed dwelling and is not a designated heritage asset. The site sits on an embankment at a considerably higher ground level than the adjacent highway, meaning that it is very visible in the context of the streetscape.

It is not considered that the proposed single storey rear extension would have a detrimental impact on the host dwelling or surrounding conservation area. There would be some change to character and appearance of the dwelling following the erection of the proposed extension; albeit the change would be an improvement to the design of the dwelling. By replacing the existing flat roof extension and conservatory with a pitched roof extension and using high quality materials to match the parent dwelling, it is judged that no harm or loss would occur to heritage as a result of this proposal.

The Conservation Officer of the Council raised concern regarding the initially proposed porch addition to its front with a pier on the exposed gable, as well as the inclusions of skylights above the windows on the West elevation. These proposed additions are not considered to be suitable design features and would become quite obtrusive. The rooflights being in such close proximity to the windows on the West elevation is considered to appear visually jarring and unnecessary. Since this issue was raised, a revised plan has been submitted, omitting the porch and pier from the scheme. This results in a more simple and modest entry to this extension which does not compete with the character of the host dwelling. The roof lights have been relocated to the rear elevation of the proposed extension, meaning that they are less visible amongst the wider public domain.

Following assessment of revised plans and a revised Heritage Statement, other issues raised by the Conservation Officer were solved. Initially, the Conservation Officer raised the issue that *"the link to this sees the new extension to elongate the*

form of the building as it set back further than the existing conditions” and that “it appears to be set back from the corner of the gable though in a material palette to make it appear much more obvious than the existing conditions.” Following assessment of the revised plans submitted, the Conservation Officer made the comment that the up to date photograph helps more envisage that the new building will be set quite far back and believes that it will be neutral in terms of heritage harm. Furthermore, although the initially submitted Heritage Statement was considered vague, the revised Heritage Statement is considered to better assess the impact of the proposed extension on the surrounding area, including the Grade II Listed public house ‘The White Hart Inn’, which is directly opposite.

The proposed rear extension would be single storey, therefore the eaves and maximum heights of the extension would be set down from the parent building. Thus, it would be considered appropriate development in accordance with the Council’s Design SPD. I note that the rear extension would clearly be set back from the principal elevation of the dwellinghouse, again reiterating its subordinate nature to the parent dwelling. The proposed rear extension would replace an existing flat roof rear extension and conservatory. The Council are not usually supportive of flat roof extensions, particularly in sensitive areas such as conservation areas or visible locations. Thus, the pitched roof on the replacement rear extension is considered to be a design improvement to the existing dwelling, as it is more complementary to the simple pitched roof of the host dwelling.

Materials used in the construction of the proposed extension would match those used in the construction of the existing dwelling, as well as from surrounding dwellings in the area. Render and slate tiles would be used in the construction of the proposed extension. Thus, the proposed materials would match the existing materials and harmonise with the surrounding street scene, not detracting from the character of the original estate.

The proposal, by virtue of its size, scale and siting maintains the character of the existing dwelling and wider conservation area. The proposal would therefore accord with the provisions of local plan policies DC1, DC2 and section 12 of the NPPF in this regard.

Amenity

Paragraph 130 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

The application site is bound by No. 2 The Mount, High Street to the East and Ingledene, High Street to the West. The rear curtilage of Vyse House, High Street wraps around the rear curtilage of the site to the South. Additionally, the rear curtilage of Providence House, Hurstons Lane adjoins the rear curtilage of the site to the South.

The proposed extension would run alongside an existing rear extension on the neighbouring dwellinghouse at No. 2 The Mount. Therefore, it is evident that there would be no breach of the 45 degree rule from the corner of the proposed extension to the closest rear or side neighbouring fenestration. Thus, it is clear that the light amenity of No. 2 The Mount would not be detrimentally impacted.

Ingledene, High Street sits on a substantially lower ground level than the site, therefore this neighbours' light amenity could be negatively impacted by the proposed extension. The East to West sunlight trajectory could lead to the proposed extension casting a shadow over the neighbours at Ingledene during the afternoon hours. This being said, the proposed extension would not breach the 45 degree rule to this neighbours' closest fenestration, due to the approximately 7.1 metre distance between them. Furthermore, the substantial amount of common boundary treatment between the site and this neighbour in the form of brick and stone walling, close boarded fencing and hedging would aid in mitigating loss of light which could occur for the neighbours at Ingledene.

Although the curtilage of Vyse House, High Street adjoins the rear curtilage of the site, Vyse House itself sits 2 dwellings down the road from the site. Thus, it is clear that their light amenity would not be impacted by the proposed extension.

The extension would not impact the amenity of the neighbouring dwelling at Providence House. The approximately 30 metre distance between the rear elevation of the extension and the rear elevation of this neighbouring dwelling would eradicate any loss of light from occurring. I note that the rear garden belonging to the site slopes upwards, so the common boundary between the site and Providence House sits on a substantially higher ground level than the dwelling and proposed extension. Thus, the fencing and brick walling comprising the common boundary treatment would largely screen the extension from this neighbour.

There would be no fenestration on the side elevation of the proposed extension which would look onto the neighbours at No. 2 The Mount. Therefore, the proposed extension would not impact their privacy at all. Although there would be fenestration in the form of a window on the side elevation and two roof lights on the side roof plane of the proposed extension which would face the neighbour at Ingledene, detrimental privacy impact would not occur. This fenestration would be largely screened by the boundary treatment comprising the common side boundary, meaning that privacy amenity would not be compromised. I note that there would be a reduction in the fenestration which would face onto the neighbours at Ingledene due to the loss of the conservatory, thus their privacy amenity would in fact be more protected. Although a new window would be located on the rear elevation of the extension, the approximately 30 metre separation distance between the site and the rear elevation of the neighbouring dwelling at Providence House would eradicate any loss of privacy.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 104 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and

other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development does not lead to an increase in on street parking.

The proposed extension would not increase the number of bedrooms of the dwelling. Thus, it is clear that the correct number of parking spaces will remain in place for the number of people inhabiting the dwellinghouse. As the proposed development would be to the rear of the dwelling, the available parking for the dwelling would not be compromised, in compliance with Policy T1.

Thus, the proposed extension would have no impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy T1.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above, the application is recommended for approval. Due to the application having no adverse effect upon the character of the host dwelling, wider area, neighbour amenity and no overall impact on the highway safety, it is deemed acceptable under planning policy. Although some issues were initially raised by the Conservation Officer of the Council in terms of the design of the proposed extension, revised plans were submitted and these issues were resolved. Therefore, the proposed development is recommended for approval, subject to compliance with all conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Hannah Varley
Recommendation Date: 25/03/2024

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council