

# **PLANNING STATEMENT**

**GRAVEL BANK FARM  
CAVERSWALL**

**MARCH 2024**

**Site Address:**

Gravel Bank Farm, Caverswall Common Lane, Caverswall, ST11 9EU

**Applicant:**

Mr. J. Bettaney

**Proposal:**

Re-development of previously developed site for the erection of 3no.  
bungalows (reserved matters pursuant to outline application  
SMD/2022/0344)

**Planning Statement:**

**Date Issued:** 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Job Reference:** RDP/2024/032

**Report Prepared By:**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. J. Bettaney to submit a Reserved Matters application for the erection of 3no. bungalows on land at Gravel Bank Farm, Caverswall Common Lane, Caverswall. The application has been submitted pursuant to outline application SMD/2022/0344 which granted outline consent for the erection of up to 4no. bungalows on the site.
- 1.2 All matters were reserved for subsequent approval at the outline stage, so this reserved matters application seeks approval of matters of scale, siting, appearance, landscaping and means of access, as per the requirements of Condition 3 of the outline consent (SMD/2022/0344).
- 1.3 Plot 1 will comprise of a rectangular shaped building, occupying a gross internal floor area of 94.5m<sup>2</sup>, and whose accommodation will comprise of a lounge, kitchen, utility, three bedrooms and a bathroom. Plot 1 will also be served by a detached single garage. Plots 2 and 3 will comprise of a 'T' shaped building occupying a gross internal floor area of 94.5m<sup>2</sup>, and whose accommodation will comprise of a lounge, kitchen, utility, three bedrooms and a bathroom. Both plots will also benefit from a detached double garage. All three of the dwellings are to comprise of single storey bungalows not exceeding 5.3 metres in height, in accordance with the requirements of Conditions 9 and 19 of the outline consent (SMD/2022/0344).
- 1.4 All of the bungalows are to be constructed from facing brickwork with a pitched grey tiled roof atop, and will have a large area of private amenity space to its rear, with a minimum of two off-street parking spaces also provided to serve each dwelling. Vehicular access to the site will be direct off Caverswall Common Lane via a new access that will be shared with the farmhouse.

## **2 Site & Surroundings**

- 2.1 The application site is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and lies on the northern side of Caverswall Common Lane. The site area extends to approximately 0.45 hectares. The site constitutes a range of single storey glass houses and polytunnels associated with the retail garden centre that previously operated from this site, and has been accepted by the Local Authority to constitute a previously developed site.
- 2.2 Adjacent to the western boundary of the site, which comprises mature vegetation, lies a polytunnel structure previously used for retail purposes. Adjacent to this polytunnel lies a large, rectangular shaped glasshouse that was previously utilised for retail purposes, and which occupies a footprint of 481 square metres.
- 2.3 There is a small gap to the east of the glasshouse, adjacent to which lies a further polytunnel that has previously been used for retail purposes. A further, much large glass house is located to the east of that, and which occupies a footprint of 834 square metres, and which has also been used for retail purposes. Beyond this glasshouse and lying a further distance to the east is a portal framed building used for the storage of goods associated with the retail garden centre.
- 2.4 The existing farmhouse lies to the immediate south east of the site, with the whole site being served by a single access point of Caverswall Common Lane midway along the southern site boundary. The remainder of the southern site boundary is enclosed by mature vegetation. The nearest residential properties lie approximately 40 metres to the south on the opposite side of Caverswall Common Lane.

### 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, 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 emissions.

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan 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. The policy states that the Council and its partners will achieve this through a number of actions, including:

- Giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape

3.4 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that:

- 1) Development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in Policy H3, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies.
- 2) In line with Government legislation the Council will maintain and update a register of those interested in acquiring self-build / custom-build housing plots across the District. Where a demand exists, residential developments of 10 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more will make an appropriate contribution towards this need in agreement with the Council. This will be negotiated on a case by case basis.
- 3) All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision.

3.5 Policy H1 goes on to state that:

- a) Housing for special groups, particularly for older people and others as identified in the SHMA or successor document should be of a scale and in a location, which is appropriate to its needs.
- b) Housing proposals of 10 dwellings (or 0.5ha) or more will be required to provide a mix of housing in terms of size, type and tenure on the site unless viability or other circumstances exist. The final mix will be negotiated with the developer based on housing needs as informed by the SHMA or

successor document and other relevant factors such as available supply and market demand.

- c) 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.
- d) 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.
- e) 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.

3.6 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

- 1. be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;

2. 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;
3. create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design;
4. incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development;
5. protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;
6. promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate;
7. provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;
8. require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links;

9. Ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;
10. ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community;
11. be served by high speed broadband (>30mbps) unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with Next Generation Access Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In all circumstances during construction of the site sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate ease of installation at a future date.

3.7 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 (amongst other requirements):

- 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.
- Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.

## **4 Other Material Considerations**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

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

### **SMD/2022/0344 – Gravel Bank Farm, Caverswall**

- 4.2 The above application granted outline planning permission for the erection of up to 4no. bungalows on the application site and constitutes the outline consent to which this Reserved Matters application relates. That application had been recommended for refusal by the Planning Officer, but was subsequently granted consent by the Planning Applications Committee.

### **SMDC Design Guide SPD**

- 4.3 The adopted Design Guide SPD sets out guidance aimed at securing the delivery of high quality design within the Staffordshire Moorlands. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

### **SMDC Space About Dwellings SPG**

- 4.4 The adopted Space About Dwellings SPG sets out a series of minimum standards that new development should seek to achieve in the interests of delivering a high standard of residential amenity. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

## **5 Planning Assessment**

### **Principle of Development**

- 5.1 The principle of development was established via the original outline application on the site (SMD/2022/0344) which granted consent for the erection of up to 4no. bungalows on the site.
- 5.2 The proposal has consequently already been found to be acceptable in terms of its compliance with Green Belt policy (subject to adherence to the restrictions set out in the planning conditions imposed on the outline consent) and in terms of the sustainability of the location of the site.
- 5.3 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are therefore those which comprise the reserved matters, namely scale, siting, appearance, landscaping and means of access. These are discussed in turn below.

### **Scale**

- 5.4 Condition 9 of the outline consent (SMD/2022/0344) restricts the height of the proposed dwellings to no more than 5.4 metres in height. The reason for the imposition of the condition being to protect the openness of the Green Belt and the character and appearance of the area. Condition 19 of the outline consent furthermore restricts the proposed dwellings to single storey bungalows, again in the interest of safeguarding the character and appearance of the area.
- 5.5 The proposed dwellings will each comprise of single storey bungalows, in accordance with the restrictions set out in Condition 19 of SMD/2022/0344) and will also not exceed the maximum height parameter of 5.4 metres as per the requirements of Condition 9. The proposed scale of the development is

consequently considered to be acceptable, and meets the requirements of policies SS1, H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

### **Siting**

- 5.6 During the determination of the outline application, the Local Authority placed an emphasis of consolidating the proposed built development towards the far westernmost end of the site where the ground levels are at their lowest. The Planning Committee disagreed and felt a more spacious layout was preferable.
- 5.7 The submitted proposal seeks to strike a balance between those competing views, with the dwellings predominantly focused at the western end of the site, but with the easternmost dwelling occupying a more set-back position within the site, behind frontage landscaping and set down behind an existing raised embankment so as to minimise its visual impact.
- 5.8 Each bungalow will sit within a good sized plot, framed by frontage landscaping and be separated from one another by hedgerows and other vegetation. Each property will be served by a detached garage in order to provide undercover parking provision and an area for general domestic storage.
- 5.9 Each dwelling will benefit from an area of private amenity space that exceeds the recommended minimum standard set out within the adopted Space About Dwellings Standards. The gross internal floor space of the dwellings furthermore exceeds the minimum required standard set out within the Nationally Described Space Standards. Future occupiers of the dwellings will therefore benefit from a good level of residential amenity.
- 5.10 A strong degree of natural landscaping is proposed (discussed in more detail below) in order to soften the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area and to anchor the bungalows into the landscape. Their

diminutive height means they will not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

- 5.11 As with the arguments presented at the outline stage, the proposed development will also improve the appearance of the site, by removing the existing untidy buildings from the site, and thereby enhancing the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The layout of the development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan and guidance set out within the Space About Dwellings SPG.

### **Appearance**

- 5.12 The proposed bungalows adopt a simple form of design that takes its cues from the adopted Design Guide SPD. The buildings will have a low, horizontal, ground hugging form, with strongly defined eaves and dominant ridge lines, emphasised by gable ends. A high solid-to-void ratio is to be provided, with windows being of a size typical of other properties within the surrounding area.
- 5.13 The roofs of the bungalows will span the shorter side and have a pitch that is in keeping with those of surrounding built development. Window frames will furthermore be recessed by a minimum of 50mm to avoid a flat appearance to the elevations and to emphasise the solidity of the walls. The bungalows will also be constructed from a palette of materials (Red/Orange Facing Brickwork & Grey Roof Tiles) that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.14 A mixture of tarmac and sandstone pavements will complement the proposed landscaping of the site, giving the resultant development a high quality aesthetic that will contribute positively to the local area. The proposed appearance of the development is consequently held to meet the

requirements of policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the adopted Design Guide SPD.

### **Landscaping**

- 5.15 The proposed site plan incorporates details of the proposed landscaping of the site, which includes the provision of new boundary hedgerows and tree planting to the south of Plot 1, with a further hedgerow to subdivide it from Plot 2 beyond. An area of frontage landscaping is also proposed.
- 5.16 A new hedgerow will also enclose the northernmost boundary of the site, enclosing the rear boundary of Plots 2 and 3, with an additional hedgerow proposed along the eastern / southeastern site boundary to enclose Plot 3. Plots 2 and 3 will also have area of frontage landscaping to soften their visual impact and give the development a high quality finish.
- 5.17 The existing mature tree to the south of Plot 3 is to be retained to give the site some maturity, which, along with the other new planting that is being proposed, will filter and soften views of the development from Caverswall Common Lane and anchor the development into its surroundings. The proposed landscaping of the site is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

### **Means of Access**

- 5.18 As per the details shown in the outline application, it is proposed to create a new vehicular access point to the immediate east of the existing access point serving the site to provide access to the three bungalows and the existing farmhouse to the east. That access will benefit from improved visibility compared to the existing access, given that it will be located further away from the bend in the road to the west, and will be wide enough for two vehicles to pass one another.

- 5.19 Within the site it is proposed to provide a minimum of two off-street parking space for each of the bungalows, thereby ensuring that the Local Authority's minimum car parking standards are met. The Local Authority raised no objections to the proposed access solution in the determination of the outline application, and consequently the means of access is held to meet the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF.

## 6 Conclusion

6.1 It is concluded that the proposed development is acceptable in planning terms having regard to the following conclusions:

- The scale of the proposed bungalows is in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and accords with the restrictions on height and scale imposed by conditions on the outline consent.
- The siting of the development will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, and will provide a good standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.
- The appearance of the development will achieve a high quality form of built development on the site that will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- The landscaping of the site will help to soften the impact of the development when viewed from the public highway and anchor the development into its surroundings.
- The proposed means of access will not result in any severe residual impacts to highway safety, and adequate off-street parking is proposed to meet the adopted Car Parking Standards.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, H1, DC1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020), and guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, the adopted Design Guide SPD, and the Space About Dwellings SPG.