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PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING DESIGN & ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

DATE ISSUED:

MARCH 2024

SITE ADDRESS:

HURSTON HOUSE, HURSTONS LANE, ALTON, STOKE ON TRENT, ST10 4AP

APPLICANT:

MR S MASSEY

PROPOSAL:

PARTIALLY RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION FOR TRACTOR AND HAY STORE

JOB NUMBER:

2024-2866

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for a tractor and hay store at Hurston House, Hurston Lane, Alton. The application is partially retrospective with the building already being constructed. Some alterations to the external treatment of the building are proposed as part of this application. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Mr S Massey and is accompanied by a full set of detailed drawings.
- 1.2 This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of the proposal, primarily on the basis that the development would be in accordance with Development Plan policies as it would result in the provision of appropriate sized and suitably located facilities within the open countryside with little, if any landscape impact. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed development would be prejudicial to residential amenity, detrimental to highway safety or harm any established ecological interests.

2. SITE & ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site consists of agricultural land which forms part of a much larger field. It lies to the south east of the applicant's dwelling Hurston House and is accessed by a crushed limestone track which leads from Hurstons Lane, running contiguous with the northern boundary of the application site before terminating with a section of blue brick pavements. A native hedgerow forms the eastern boundary of the site with all other boundaries denoted by timber post and rail fencing. A public footpath runs contiguous with the southern boundary of the site. The land is undulating falling away gradually in a north to south direction. An outdoor riding arena approved under application SMD/2018/0209 has been constructed to the west of the application site. For the purposes of the development plan the application site lies outside any designated settlement boundary within an area of open countryside.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 This is a partially retrospective application which seeks consent for the retention of a tractor and hay store which has already been erected. The application building which has been constructed from horizontal timber boarding with concrete block work below under a dark grey uPVC metal profiled roof has a T shaped floor plan with an overall floor area of 112 sq metres. The main building (tractor store) has its ridge running broadly in a north to south orientation whilst the two bay hay store runs at right angles to this (broadly east to west) at a marginally lower ridge and eaves height. Work has currently ceased on the building which is at an advanced stage and the

only alteration as part of this application would be the provision of a Juniper Green plastisol coated electrically operated metal roller shutter door.

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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.
- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in December 2023. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan.
- 4.3 Whilst the recently revised NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications (para 12). The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the adopted Local Plan (September 2020).
- 4.4 The most relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles), SS10 (Other Rural Area Strategy), DC1 (Design Considerations); DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting); NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Resources); and T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

5. KEY PLANNING ISSUES

- 5.1 The application site lies in the open countryside outside the boundary of any settlement in an area defined by the Local Plan as an "other rural area" where Local Plan Policy SS10 applies. This provides only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas or promotes sustainable tourism.

- 5.2 Hurstons House comprises of a smallholding which extends to some 14 acres which is run as a mixed unit comprising of sheep and horses. Between 25 and 30 sheep graze the land each year and the applicant also has 6 horses which are housed in a stable block which lies within the curtilage of the house to the north of the application site. The application building has been located within the most logical position within the north eastern corner of the field which it serves and adjacent to the existing outdoor riding arena. The tractor shed is required to house a small compact tractor which is used in conjunction with the maintenance of the holding and the grading of the adjacent arena. Whilst the horses and sheep are predominately kept outside on the land some supplementary feeding is required. Given the number of animals on the holding some provision for the storage of this is required on site and none is currently available. All the existing stables are fully utilized and therefore it is necessary for this to be accommodated within this building. The building is therefore a necessary requirement for the effective servicing of the landholding and it is therefore considered to comply with policy SS10 of the Local Plan.
- 5.3 With regards to design Local Plan policy DC1 requires that development should be of a high quality, be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote the maintenance of biodiversity. Local Plan policy DC3 requires that development which would harm the character and local and wider landscape should be resisted and important views as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment should be protected.
- 5.4 The building is reasonably modest in terms of its size and scale and its overall form and design is not dissimilar to a stable block / field shelter that might be placed on and moved around grazing land and which appear occasionally within this type of countryside setting and commonly accepted as part of modern rural landscapes. Whilst the proposed development would be visible especially from the adjacent public footpath which runs contiguous with the southern field boundary of the site it has been set within the corner of an existing field and will be seen against the physical boundaries of the site and in context with the adjacent outdoor riding arena. The location of the building also makes use of the existing access track thereby reducing the potential for any further landscape harm with additional accesses or tracks. Whilst attractive the area in which the proposed outdoor riding arena is located has no special landscape designations and is not identified as a key open space or view within the Authority's Landscape Characters Assessment. On the basis of the above it is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with Policies DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and more general design advice within the NPPF.

Highway Safety

- 5.5 In terms of highway safety the NPPF states that "development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residential cumulative impacts of development are severe". Core Strategy Policy DC1 states that development proposals should provide for safe and satisfactory access whilst also meeting the parking requirement for the necessary car use. The proposed development does not proposed to make any alterations to the existing access or track which currently serves the site. This access has previously been considered to be acceptable to the LPA when assessing the application for the outdoor riding arena and having regard to the modest size and scale of the building and its intended use it is not considered that any adverse highway issues would be raised. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal complies with policies DC1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and the more general guidance contained within the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 5.6 Policy DC1 states that new development should protect residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping. Given its isolated positioning the proposed development is not considered to raise any adverse amenity issues nor be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of any of the surrounding dwellinghouses. It is considered that the proposed development therefore complies with both national and local planning policies in this regard.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and consistent with adopted Development Plan policies. Its size and scale is commensurate with the land holding it serves and it has been sensitively located within the rural landscape. The proposed development will provide safe and secure storage for the existing mixed agricultural / equestrian use of the smallholding and is considered to be appropriate for its rural location. The proposed development will be seen against the backdrop of the existing built and natural features within the site including the adjacent hedgerows, outdoor riding arena and further built development to the north. For these reasons it is considered that the proposed development would comply with the adopted development plan policies and constitutes sustainable development which should be approved without delay.

AMOUNT

The application building would have a footprint of 112 sq metres and an internal floor area of 104 square metres. The hay store which would measure 10.1m x 7.1m would have a floor area of 66.4 square metres whilst the hay store would measure 7.0m x 5.75m with a floor area of 37.1 square metres.

LAYOUT

The orientation and location of the proposal has been determined by the ground contours and the requirement to locate it within the most useful and appropriate location on the holding where it most practical.

LANDSCAPING

The general site layout is to remain unaltered. The proposed development has been located to minimise changes in ground levels. The development is located within an open and agricultural setting and as such no additional landscaping is proposed as part of this application.

APPEARANCE

The application building has already been constructed and substantially completed. Its external appearance is therefore easy to assess. With its timber walls and metal effect tiled roof it appears as a transient building which is appropriate for its rural location. No external lighting is proposed as part of this development.

ACCESS

The application building is for private use in association with the existing established use of the site as a smallholding and will not generate any increase in traffic onto the site and therefore no changes are required or proposed to the existing car parking or circulation areas within the site. The existing access into the site from Hurstons Lane is to remain unaltered.