

PLANNING STATEMENT

**THE MOUNT
IPSTONES**

JULY 2023

Site Address:

The Mount, Church Lane, Ipstones, Staffordshire, ST10 2LF

Applicant:

Mrs. H. Leese

Proposal:

Change of use and alteration of outbuilding to form 1no. holiday cottage

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 4th July 2024

Job Reference: RDP/2024/059

Report Prepared By:

Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:

Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
28 Ferndale Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7DJ
Email: rob78duncan@gmail.com
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mrs. H. Leese to seek full planning permission for the change of use and alteration of an existing domestic outbuilding located within the curtilage of The Mount, Church Lane, Ipstones, to form 1no. holiday cottage.
- 1.2 The existing building is used as an annex, whose accommodation comprises of a living room, kitchen, bedroom with ensuite, office and porch. It has a gross internal floor area of 54.6 square metres and stands to a ridge height of 4.15 metres.
- 1.3 The application proposes the change of use of that outbuilding to form a holiday cottage whose accommodation will comprise of an open plan lounge / kitchen area, two bedrooms and a shower room.
- 1.4 Associated with the change of use are some modest alterations to the external appearance of the building, including the blocking up of existing openings on the southern elevation, and the introduction of new openings into the east, west and north elevations, including a front door and porch canopy to the latter.
- 1.5 Externally it is proposed to subdivide the existing curtilage of The Mount to provide an area of amenity space for use by occupiers of the holiday cottage, with a new parking area provided alongside, surfaced in permeable materials, with space for the parking of two vehicles.
- 1.6 The holiday cottage will be accessed via the existing shared access serving The Mount and the nearby Vicarage, which connects with Church Lane to the southwest of the site. No works are proposed to that means of vehicular access.

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site lies within the rural area and comprise a large detached dwellinghouse and adjacent domestic outbuilding that are set within a substantial area of residential curtilage.
- 2.2 The nearest neighbouring properties are Old Hall Farm which lies circa 84 metres to the west of the outbuilding, and The Vicarage which lies circa 130 metres to the south/southwest. The land immediately surrounding the site on all sides comprises open fields.
- 2.3 An existing access track connects the site with Church Lane to the southwest, and which also serves the nearby Vicarage, as well Old Hall Farm, Stable Cottage and Delves Cottage to the west, and a cluster of terraced properties (nos. 34 – 48 Stocks Green) to the southwest. Public Footpath Ipstones 22 runs alongside that vehicular access.
- 2.4 The site occupies a sustainable location that is within walking and cycling distance of the services, facilities and public transport connections available within the village, with the village centre being located some 500 metres away along Church Lane.
- 2.5 There are no listed buildings within close proximity of the site, nor does the site lie within the Ipstones Conservation Area. The site as a whole is located within the Churnet Valley Master Plan Area. A band of trees is noted to enclose the northern and western perimeters of the site, and which is protected by a Tree Preservation Order (CR007A001).

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan having regard to any relevant material considerations. 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 (amongst others):

- Quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers
- Development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings

3.3 Policy SS10 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 goes on to state that these objectives will be achieved by, amongst others,

- Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD

- Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E4).

3.4 Policy SS11 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Churnet Valley Strategy' and states that within this area particular support will be given to the following forms of development and measures:

- Short stay and long stay visitor accommodation;
- The expansion of existing tourist attractions and facilities and the provision of compatible new tourist attractions and facilities;
- Measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character and heritage assets of the Churnet Valley;
- Measures to remediate and restore derelict land, buildings and features including the appropriate redevelopment of sites;
- Actions to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the valley, including the maintenance, buffering and connection of designated sites and actions to mitigate climate change.
- Measures that support and integrate the heritage transport infrastructure of the valley, sympathetically with enhancing and developing links to strategic footpaths, cycle and horse riding routes.
- Measures to improve connectivity and accessibility to and within the Churnet Valley by sustainable transport means having regard to the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

3.5 Policy SS11 goes on to state that any development should be of a scale and nature and of a high standard of design which conserves and enhances the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area. Strong sustainable development and environmental management principles should also be demonstrated. The consideration of landscape character will be paramount in all development proposals in order to protect and conserve locally distinctive qualities and sense of place and to maximise opportunities for restoring, strengthening and enhancing distinctive landscape features.

3.6 Policy E4 of the Local Plan relates to 'Tourism and Cultural Development' and states that new tourism and cultural development which complements the distinctive character and quality of the District will be supported having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5 to SS10. In addition:

1. New tourist, visitor and cultural accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering either:

A) good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or

B) in locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or

C) in areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.

3.7 Policy E4 goes on to state that new accommodation, attractions and facilities should support the provision and expansion of tourist, visitor and cultural facilities in the rural areas where needs are not met by existing facilities, and

that all development shall be of an appropriate quality, scale and character compatible with the local area, protect the residential amenity of the area, enhance the heritage, landscape and biodiversity of the area and shall not harm interests of acknowledged importance

3.8 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 (amongst other requirements):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;
- 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;
- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;

3.9 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 ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development and providing parking in line with Appendix 2 to the Local Plan.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of boosting the rural economy, ensuring highway safety and securing a net gain to biodiversity. The content of this document has been taken into account in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Tourism Strategy (2022-2027)

- 4.2 The adopted Tourism Strategy places an emphasis on raising the profile of the Staffordshire Moorlands so that it becomes a stronger destination as a place for both day visits and longer holidays, improving the current offer and unlocking the District's potential and boost the local economy. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Churnet Valley Master Plan (2014)

- 4.3 The Churnet Valley Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document sets out guidance aimed at promoting and enhancing the Churnet Valley as a tourist destination within the Moorlands. 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 application site is located within the rural area and within the Churnet Valley Master Plan area wherein it is proposed to change the use of an existing domestic outbuilding on the site to form a small-scale, two-bedroomed holiday cottage.
- 5.2 Policies SS10, SS11 and E4 of the Local Plan all give support to small-scale tourism developments within the rural areas, with the latter policy stating that new tourist and visitor accommodation should be developed in locations that offer either:
- A) Good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling; or*
 - B) In locations in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available; or*
 - C) In areas specifically identified for tourism development in the Churnet Valley Masterplan or other relevant documents.*
- 5.3 The application benefits from close proximity to the centre of Ipstones village which is defined as a 'larger village' within the Local Plan wherein a range of local services and facilities, including public houses, are available. There are also public transport connections available on High Street, which lie approximately 600 metres distant from the site – well within the 2km recognised threshold for walking. The site also lies in close proximity to the existing public footpath network in the local area, offering access to the village

centre and to the wider surrounding countryside – the latter being one of the main attractions of the Moorlands.

5.4 Facilitating more overnight stays is a key objective of the Local Authority's adopted Tourism Strategy, which identifies a lack of accommodation investment and a dominance of day visitors as being a weaknesses of the tourism economy in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The Tourism Strategy goes on to set out a series of aims and objectives aimed at growing the tourism economy, including the following:

- *Get visitors to stay longer in the area by developing itineraries that combine Alton Towers with other experiences especially 'Activities' and 'Attractions', moving from a day visit to an overnight, or a 1 night to a 2 night visit.*
- *Encourage accommodation development – small scale, quality, catered & self-catered that keeps visitors in the local area.*
- *Expand, improve and encourage the development of accommodation to attract visitors to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions.*
- *Encourage accommodation development in the towns/villages, at existing sites where services are already in place.*

5.5 The submitted proposal firmly accords with these aims and objectives, and will provide one small-scale unit of self-catered accommodation, in a sustainable location that is within easy reach of existing services and facilities, and which will help to support additional overnight stays within the District. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS10, SS11 and E4 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.6 The application proposes some modest changes to the external appearance of the building, but none of those are considered to be harmful to its character and appearance or that of the wider surrounding area. It is proposed to block up some existing openings in the southern elevation of the building, principally to provide privacy for occupiers of the proposed holiday cottage and existing dwelling, which lie in close proximity to one another. Some new openings are also proposed on the north, east and west elevations, but these are all modest in size and the proposed fenestration is in keeping with the existing characteristics of the building.
- 5.7 Owing to the discreet location of the building to the north of the existing dwelling and away from principal views within the locality, the proposed external alterations will not result in any material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.8 The proposed new parking area will likewise not give rise to harm to the character of the area, and could be undertaken as Permitted Development in any event. The subdivision of the plot to provide a private area of amenity space for users of the cottage will likewise not cause any material harm to the character of the area. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies DC1, SS1 and SS11 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Residential Amenity

- 5.9 The proposed holiday cottage, by virtue of its modest size, will not attract large groups and is primarily aimed at couples / small families. The comings and goings of guests using the holiday accommodation will not cause any harm to neighbouring amenity, with the nearest neighbouring occupiers to the development lying some 80+ metres to the west of the site, and another circa

130 metres to the south. No conflict with policy DC1 of the Local Plan will therefore arise as a consequence of the development.

Highway Safety

- 5.10 The application site benefits from an existing means of vehicular access off Church Lane, which will also be used to serve the holiday cottage. The application proposes the formation of a new parking area within the site, with space for two vehicles, which is ample for a development of this nature.
- 5.11 A large area of hardstanding will remain to the frontage of The Mount for continued provision of parking for the occupiers of that property. There is also ample manoeuvring space within the site to ensure that vehicles can exit the site in a forward gear.
- 5.12 The access track where it meets Church Lane benefits from good visibility in both directions, and as a consequence it is submitted that no severe residual impacts to highway safety will arise as a result of the development. The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan.

Other Considerations

- 5.13 The proposed is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements as the works encompassed within the application will not result in the loss of more than 25 square metres of habitat. A net gain to biodiversity can nevertheless still be occurred through the provision of new bird boxes on the site which the applicant is agreeable to installing. Such enhancements can be secured via planning condition and in doing so the proposal will meet the requirements of paragraph of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed change of use of the existing outbuilding to a holiday cottage constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The site has good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, including local village services.
- The proposal will facilitate longer stays in the area and associated participation and experience of other tourism activities, in accordance with the recently published Tourism Strategy for the District.
- The alterations to the outbuilding and site layout will not result in any material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- The proposed development will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.
- The proposal will not give rise to severe residual impacts to highway safety within the locality.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, SS11, E4, DC1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Churnet Valley Master Plan.