

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0284
Valid 12/06/2024

**CHAPEL OF THE GOOD
SHEPHERD THORNCLIFFE
LANE
THORNCLIFFE
LEEK**

**TWO-STOREY HOUSE
EXTENSION

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Design
- Development in the Open Countryside
- Principle of Development
- Heritage

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises an irregular parcel of land measuring approximately 0.1ha situated in the open countryside to the west of Thorncliffe Lane, located approximately 0.5km north of Thorncliffe village. The site contains the former Chapel of the Good Shepard, and its associated curtilage. This building has been the subject of two separate planning approvals for the change of use of this building to a residential dwelling in 1986.

The site is bounded to the east by Thorncliffe Lane and on all other sides by open agricultural land. There are no residential properties within a significant distance of the site.

PROPOSAL

The proposed development will project 6.5 metres from the gable end of the original building, will be 7.78 metres to the roof ridge, and 3.15 metres to the eaves. The proposal will be 6.95 metres wide.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 -14, 47, 131, 135, 139,

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

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands
- Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD
- Space About Dwellings SPD

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

- SMD/1986/0622. (OLD REFERENCE: 86/00035/OLDDC). DESCRIPTION: Change of use to dwelling. DECISION: APPROVED
- SMD/1986/0679. (OLD REFERENCE: 86/00819/OLD). DESCRIPTION: CONVERSION OF CHAPEL TO FORM DWELLING. DECISION: APPROVED
- SMD/2019/0081. DESCRIPTION: Proposed detached garage. DECISION: APPROVED

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 01/08/2024
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

No representations received.

Town / Parish Comments

No objection.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No representation received.

SMDC Trees

No representation received.

Severn Trent Water

Severn Trent objects to the building over of any sewer or water main. However, in accordance with part H of the Building Regulations, a building over or building close to a public gravity sewer may be allowed subject to certain conditions being fulfilled. To pursue this option the APPLICANT must contact building.over@severntrent.co.uk to discuss.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

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. The application relates to a former Chapel situated in the open countryside that has had permission for a Change of Use to a single dwelling, approved in 1986, and a review of Council Tax records suggest that the conversion works are still under way and the property has not been brought into use as a dwelling. In this regard, a householder application is not an appropriate application to have made, notwithstanding this, the application will be assessed as submitted.

The site is in the open countryside and therefore falls under Policy SS10, which states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside by allowing extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The design of the proposal is discussed below, and is found to not be of an appropriate scale and design that respects the character of the site and the rural area, and therefore the proposal is unacceptable in principle.

Design

SMDC Policy DC1 requires development to be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area; and 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, character and appearance.

Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF outline what is expected of good design and required for the development of high quality, beautiful places, and provides for a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Design Guide SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that extensions should harmonise with the parent building. For a development to be considered appropriate in terms of its size and massing, the Council would universally expect to see extensions subordinate to the dominance of the original building. The proposed extension is not of a good design, and proves contrary to the design guide. The proposal is an incongruous addition to a modest chapel and would detract from the simplistic beauty of the original building. The introduction of a flat roof sandwiched between two mono-pitch roof flanks is unacceptable in design terms, and contrary to the Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands SPD which states that flat roofs are generally unacceptable in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

The Design Principles SPD also sets out very clear guidance for conversions, and states that conversions should be within the shell of the existing building, and extensions are discouraged, and where essential they should be small and unobtrusive. The proposed extension is large and obtrusive, as it builds over original features and details, such as the buttresses and decorative stone mullioned windows, and replaces them with a large floor to ceiling modern window. The extension will also replace a drystone wall as the property boundary and have three ground level windows facing the agricultural land adjacent. This is an incongruous

design choice as site boundaries are important to defining the setting and limits of a development and ensuring it is in keeping with the surrounding area – this is not an appropriate defining boundary effect. For this reason, the proposal does not conform with the design guides. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF states that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. The proposal is unacceptable in terms of design.

The Design and Access statement states that the proposal is required to add an additional two bedrooms to the property. For this reason, no revised plans were requested as it is not considered that this could be achieved via an appropriate external extension, in line with the design guide.

Heritage

Policy DC2 seeks to preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting, and ensure that proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment. The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

Chapter 16 of the NPPF contains the relevant national planning policies relating to Heritage Conservation. Local Authorities must consider the significance of a heritage (designated or non-designated) asset and assess the extent to which the development will impact upon it. In particular paragraph 209 states that “ The effect of an application on the significance of a non designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining an application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect a non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The Conservation officer was not consulted for this application, however the Conservation Officer was consulted on SMD/2019/0081, and confirmed that this property is a non-designated heritage asset. I would concur with this view. The proposal would involve the loss of the majority of the western elevation, and as discussed above would result in the permanent loss of the buttresses, decorative stone mullioned windows, and boundary wall. It is considered that the loss of these features which are inherent to the character and appearance of the former Church, would result in a scale of harm which substantially harms the significance of the non designated heritage asset. The balance lies with the harm to the non designated heritage asset.

As a consequence the proposed development would not sustain or enhance the heritage asset, and will have a detrimental impact on the significance of the non designated heritage asset. The proposal therefore does not comply with Policy DC2 and is unacceptable in terms of heritage.

Amenity

Paragraph 135 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 site is bounded by agricultural land on all sides, and therefore the proposal would not pose any issues in terms of amenity, and is acceptable in this regard.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 108 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 development will add an additional two bedrooms to the property, meaning two spaces (2.4 x 4.8 metres) would be required. The site plan and a site visit show the site can easily provide enough space to accommodate the required parking. The proposal is therefore compliant with Policy T1.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed development is unacceptable in principle as it does not meet the criteria for acceptable development in the Open Countryside, as SS10 allows only for extensions existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The proposed development in this case is detrimental to the existing dwelling. The proposal is unacceptable in design terms as the proposed extension would be an incongruous addition to the original building, and is contrary to the design guide SPD's. The proposal is also unacceptable in terms of heritage as it would have a harmful impact on a non-designated heritage asset. Therefore the scale of the harm to the non-designated heritage asset outweighs any benefits of the scheme. Therefore, the recommendation is for refusal.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE.

Case Officer: Reuben Berriman

Recommendation Date: 07/08/2024

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

