



PLANNING BY DESIGN

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

Design and Access Statement:

Garage conversion into a living space

at:

Shay Cottage, Foxt, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 2HN

On Behalf of Thomas Brindley

Drafted by **Planning By Design**

Date: 21 July 2025 REV A

1. Application

Planning By Design (**The agent**) has been instructed to act on behalf of Thomas Brindley (**the applicant**) to submit a planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (the Local Planning Authority) for a Garage conversion into a living space at: Shay Cottage, Foxt, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 2HN (**the site**).

In support of this application, the following Design and Access Statement has been constructed to demonstrate the suitability of this site for this proposal and evaluate its accordance with national and local planning policy along with supplementary design guidance.

2. Site Location

The application site consists of a detached, two-storey, stone-built dwelling situated in the picturesque rural hamlet of Foxt. Sitting on a substantial private plot, Shay Cottage extends in total to approximately 5.88 acres (2.38 ha). The cottage, gardens, triple garage and annexe sit within 1 acre and the adjoining mature woodlands (Ancient Woodland) extend to approximately 4.88 acres (1.98 ha).

The cottage consists of three double bedrooms, while the fourth bedroom lies in the self-contained annexe adjacent to the triple garage.

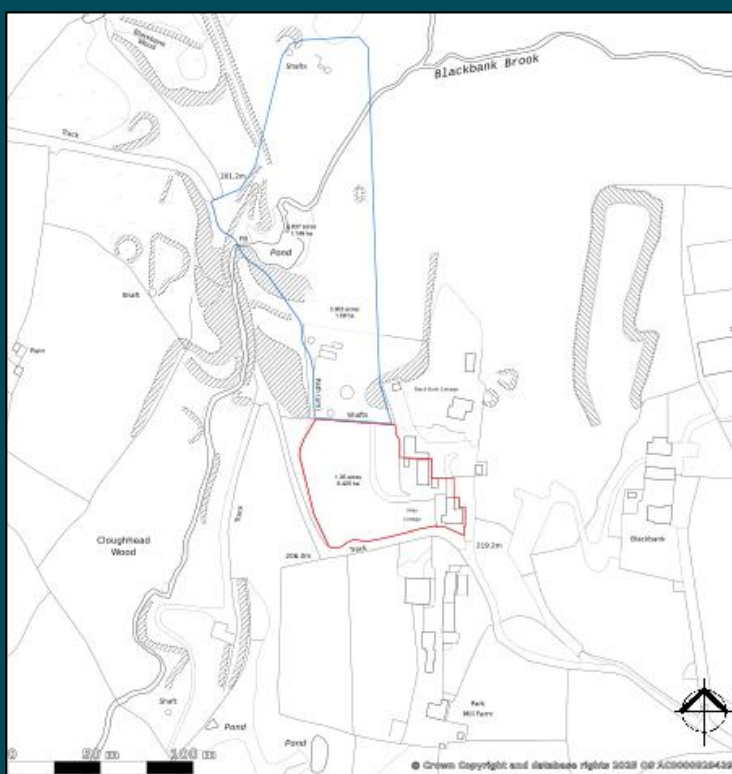


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

The garages are currently used as storage for an extensive range of machinery for personal use.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the open countryside but is not within the Green Belt. The site does not form part of any Conservation Area and there are no Listed buildings/structures or protected trees which need to be considered.

3. The Proposal

The proposal seeks to convert an existing triple garage, which is attached to the annexe. The garage is used as a tractor garage/workshop/office/store as approved under the SMD/2005/0787 application. The garage is intended to be used as additional living space.

The annex will not change as a result of this development proposal and there will be minimal external changes to the garage.

Externally, existing garage doors are proposed to be replaced with timber framed bifold doors and windows to match existing. There is a log burner proposed in the living area which will have an external solid fuel stove.

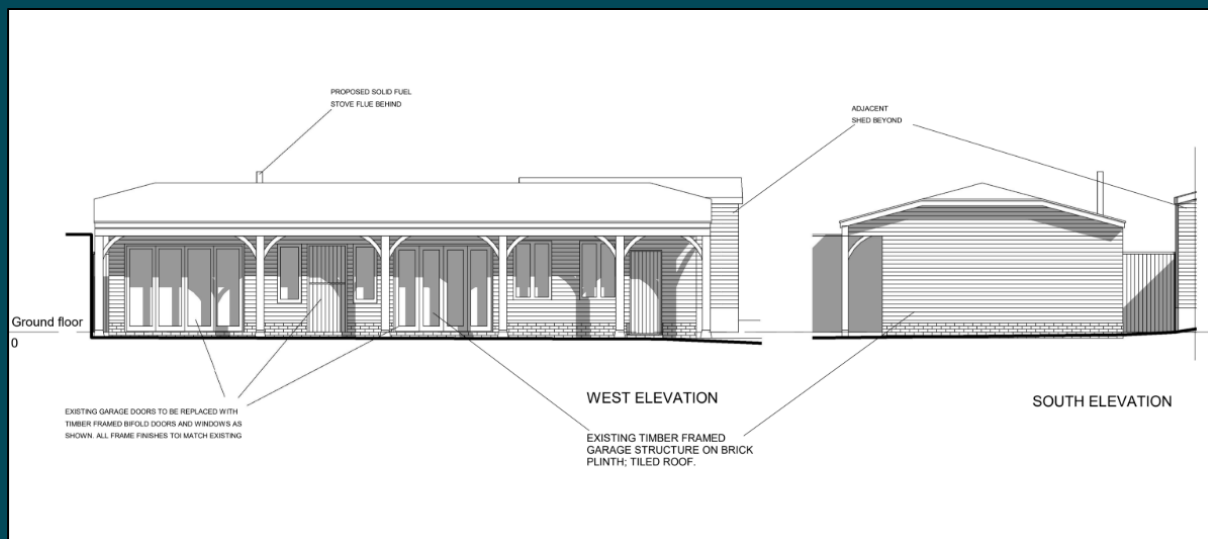


Figure 2: Proposed South and West Elevation

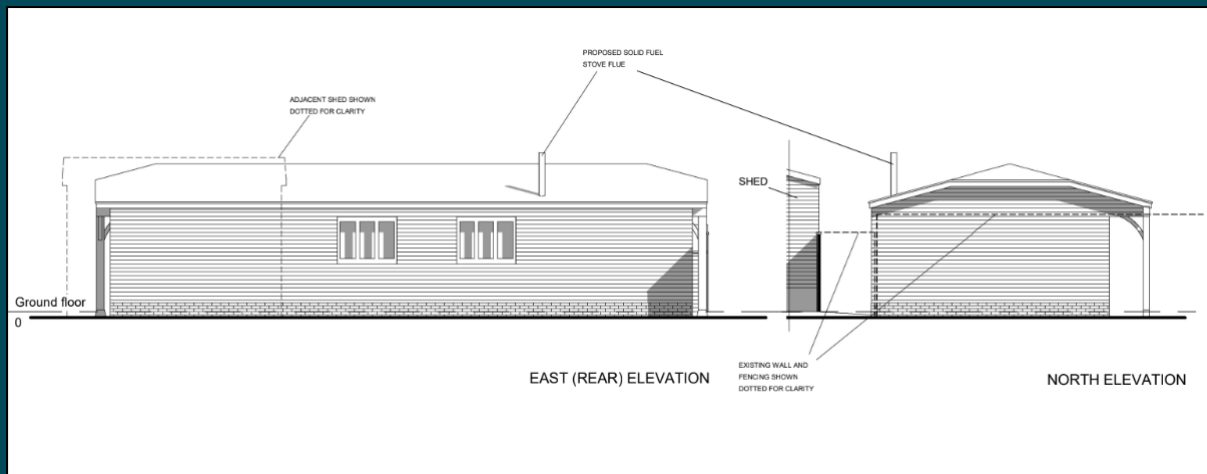


Figure 3: Proposed East and North Elevation

Internally, the wall to the kitchen area in the annex that meets the car garage will be taken out to the extend the kitchen into the garage. The wall between the car garage and tractor garage will be taken down as well to create a one open plan big space. There are 2 raised mexxanine areas which would be stabilised to they could be used as a storage/chill areas.

The second mezzanine, above the trap door/middle garage area, will be accessed via a ladder, so no stairs required.

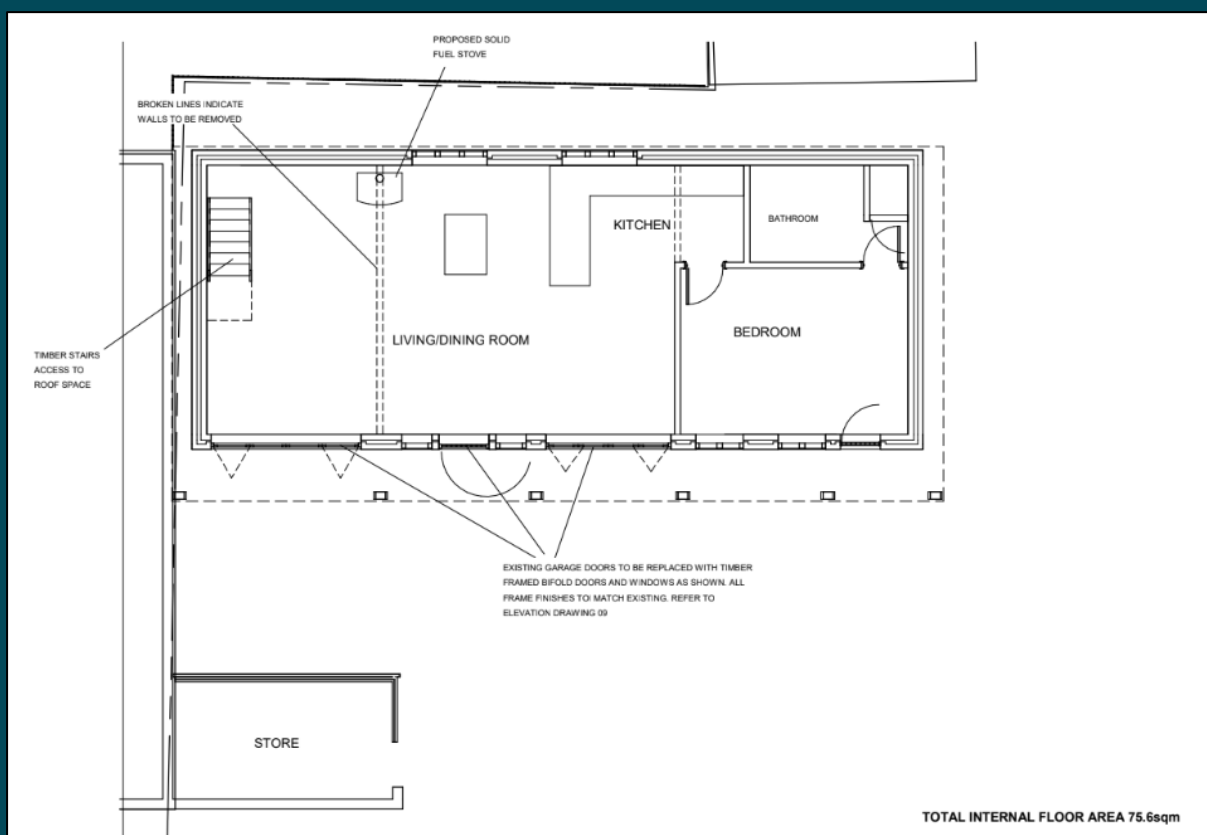


Figure 4: Proposed Floor Plan

4. Planning History

A review of the Council's planning records reveals the following planning applications for the application site:

- SMD/2005/0631 - Erection of a garden room – Approved
- SMD/2005/0053 - Two storey and single storey extensions – Refused
- SMD/2005/0787 - Replacement of existing garage/workshop with new tractor garage/workshop/office/store incorporating extension to residential curtilage – APPROVED - DECISION DATE:27/07/2005
- SMD/2006/0438 - Two storey side extension – Refused

5. Planning Policy

The following planning policy and guidance documents are recognised as material considerations for the assessment of this application

- National Planning Policy Framework 2024;
- National Planning Practice Guidance;
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sep 2020)
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Design Guide (February 2018)
- Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands

The following section will evaluate the proposals in accordance with the relevant policies and supplementary design guidance of the Council to demonstrate why the proposal should be considered as acceptable in principle and in strict accordance with the Council's development criteria.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)

The new National Planning Policy Framework was revised in 2024 and the following paragraphs are considered to be relevant.

Paragraph 39 confirms that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed developments in a positive and creative way. They should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 48 confirms that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the Development Plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. This

paragraph also states that decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales, unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

Paragraph 56 advises that Local Planning Authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions.

Paragraph 58 advises that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided.

Paragraph 124 advises that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions

Paragraph 129 highlights that Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- a) The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- b) Local market conditions and viability;
- c) The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- d) The desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- e) The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning should aim to ensure that developments function effectively and contribute to the overall quality of an area. Development must respond to local character and history, reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials and should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and landscaping.

High quality places

Paragraph 135 states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Development should:

- a) Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) Be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) Optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- f) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

- Policy SS 1 Development Principles
- Policy SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- PolicyDC1 Design Considerations
- PolicyDC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting

6. Assessment

The key planning considerations for this development proposal:

- Principle of development
- Design and Character of the Area
- Impact on the Residential Amenity
- Highway/Parking Impact

Principle of Development

Policy SS 1 Development Principles 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.

The proposal seeks to convert an existing garage into a living space, a development that is generally acceptable in principle within an established residential curtilage. The site is located

in the open countryside; however, the existing garage is situated within residential curtilage. Therefore, the principle of garage conversion on this location is acceptable, subject to other policy requirements.

The proposal does not introduce any new residential units or intensify the use of the site in a way that would be inappropriate in a residential setting. The site benefits from a large garden area which expands to the nearby Ancient Woodland. However, the proposed development does not fall under the area of Ancient Woodland. The garage was mainly used as a storage space and is now proposed to be converted into additional living space, which corresponds with the annexe use next to it. Given the surrounding context of residential properties, the scheme represents a sustainable form of development that is compatible with the established character of the area.

Design and Character

Policy SS10 of the Local Plan for the other rural areas states that it will allow extensions or additional domestic outbuildings 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 Council will assess schemes having regard to the original dwelling, in cases where a cumulative change has occurred.

Policy DC1 states that all new development should be well-designed and reinforce local distinctiveness. It should be of high value and designed to respect the site and its surroundings through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Design Guide SPD continues that the guiding principle of the conversion is that the character of the original building, and its setting should be respected and retained.

Design Principles for developments in Staffordshire Moorlands also states that the provision of new windows and openings should relate closely to the position, size and appearance of the existing openings.

The proposed conversion retains the existing garage's external footprint, ensuring minimal impact on the character of the property and the surrounding area. There will be a modest external change in terms of replacing garage doors with bifold doors and windows to match the existing ones. New windows and bifold doors are carefully selected to relate closely to the existing position and appearance as per Design Principles document. Since the majority of the works will be internal, there will be no detrimental impact on the character of the area, and the proposed development will not disturb the local distinctiveness.

Given the above, the proposal is considered to comply with the Policy SS10 and DC1 of the Local Plan, Design Guide SPD and Design Principles for Staffordshire Moorlands.

Residential Amenity

Policy DC1 states that development proposals should protect the amenity of the area, including the 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.

The proposed garage conversion will have minimal impact on neighbouring properties. The external footprint remains unchanged, ensuring that there is no increased sense of enclosure, overshadowing, or overbearing effect on adjacent properties.

The position of new openings and fenestration will be towards the rear garden, where there are no residential properties. The adjacent Black Bank Cottage is distanced away from the garage and will not be impacted as a result of this proposal.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable on the amenity grounds.

Highway/Parking Impact

Local Plan Appendix 2 – Parking guidance states that residential dwellings with 4 or more bedrooms should have 3 off-street parking spaces (2.4x4.8m). The existing garage was not used for parking vehicles, so there will be no loss of parking spaces. The off-street parking can be provided within the residential curtilage, in the area close to the existing annexe. The driveway appears to be of a decent size to accommodate 3 off-street parking spaces as per Parking Guidance.

In addition, the existing dwelling has 3 bedrooms and one in the annex, so the conversion of a garage will create a larger annex area and there will be no additional occupiers on this site. Hence, no additional requirements for the parking spaces.

7. Conclusion

Given the site location and the modest conversion works, the proposal is considered to comply with the national and local planning policies and would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area, residential amenity and highways.

For the above reasons, we see no reason for the Council to withhold our request for planning permission and kindly request that the Council make a reasonable decision on this submission in line with the developmental objectives and timescales of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Should the Planning Authority have any further questions in relation to this proposal or feel that certain conditions would be necessary to accommodate this proposal, Planning By Design would welcome conversation on any of these matters.