

Appeal Statement

Erection of a self-build dwelling

**Land to the rear of Shrub Cottage, Denstone Lane,
Alton**

August 2025

Project	Land to the rear of Shrub Cottage, Alton
Client	Mr Simon Ward - IDS Designs
Reference	2537
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years combined experience in both the public and private sector.
- 1.2 The author of this appraisal, Jim Malkin, has worked as a Principal Planning Officer in local government, and more recently as a planning consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and significant experience of the appeals process. He is a Chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 1.3 This statement accompanies an appeal against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to refuse an application for a self-build dwelling on land to the rear of Shrub Cottage, Denstone Lane, Alton.

2 The Appeal Site

- 2.1 As set on in the original Planning Statement, the application site comprises of an area of domestic curtilage to the rear of Shrub Cottage which is located on the edge of the village of Alton. The site is provided with an existing access from the B5032, Denstone Lane. The site is adjoined by agricultural fields, however owing to the domestic use the land it is classed as previously developed.
- 2.2 The site is located on the periphery of the village of Alton which is accessible by cycle or public transport. Alton itself is provided with a wide range of services including shops, public houses, restaurants and a primary school as well as significant employment opportunities associated with Alton Tower theme park. The site is served by a regular bus service linking the town to nearby conurbations.

2.3 The site is to be completed as a self-build dwelling to be occupied by the applicants Mr and Mrs Randall who have been involved in the design and development of the scheme from its inception.

2.4 The site is shown on the below aerial photograph:



3 The Proposed Development

3.1 The application which is subject to this appeal was submitted in full and proposed the erection of a single self-build dwelling to be occupied by the applicants, Mr and Mrs Randall. The dwelling will utilise the existing access from Denstone Lane, and is provided with off street parking and a reasonably sized domestic curtilage.

3.2 This submission is supported by full plans showing the siting and design of the proposed dwelling.

- 3.3 As set out above, the application seeks a self-build dwelling for Mr and Mrs Randall, who currently live in Shrub Cottage, but wish to move into a bespoke dwelling that will constitute their lifetime home.

4 Planning History

- 4.1 The application reference number SMD/2025/0200 which is the subject of this appeal was refused by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council on the 20th June 2025.

5 Reasons for Refusal

- 5.1 The application was refused for two specific reasons, as follows:

1. *The proposed new-build self-build dwelling would not be acceptable in principle, due to its isolated location in the open countryside. The site has no relationship with any of the nearby development boundaries and is not close enough to Alton to reflect the pattern of development in this village. The dwelling would lead to a sporadic pattern of development, creating a prominent intrusion into the countryside. Therefore, this would be contrary to Policies SS10 and H1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020).*
2. *The size and scale of the proposed self-build dwelling would exacerbate the prominent and intrusive impact of the dwelling on the rural character and countryside landscape. The suburban style of dwelling with an excessive amount of glazing would detract from the rural landscape, appearing incongruous and illuminating an area of isolated rural countryside. Therefore, this would be contrary to Policy DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020), the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).*

6 Statement of Case

- 6.1 As set out above, the Council refused the application on two grounds, firstly owing to its location outside of any settlement boundary and its lack of relationship with the village of Alton, and secondly owing to the impact on the rural landscape.
- 6.2 No concerns were raised in relation to highway safety, ecology, drainage or any other specific technical matter. It therefore follows that the Council consider all technical details relating to the scheme to be acceptable.

Planning Policy Context

- 6.3 The reasons for refusal set out a large number of policies that will be provided in full to the Inspector by the Council. This statement will consider the schemes compliance with the relevant policies in the following paragraphs which will consider the reasons for refusal in turn below.

Reason for Refusal 1 – Principle of development / Location outside of Settlement Boundary

- 6.4 The reason for refusal advises that owing to the site's location outside of any designated settlement boundary is such that it would appear as sporadic development, visually intrusive in the countryside.
- 6.5 The original planning statement considered in depth the principle of development and it is not proposed to reiterate the contents of that statement again. However, it is critical to the appeal to understand that the development of the site has significant benefits, and that its location is not intrinsically unsustainable.
- 6.6 The officers report in relation to the application, makes a very small reference to the Councils lack of five-year land supply and also the lack of self-build plots, concluding

that the proposal will make a very modest benefit to both. However modest the benefit, the lack of land supply and the availability of self-build plots is of critical importance to the determination of this appeal. The Council has a catastrophic five-year land supply position at just 2.95 years; this is a significant and demonstrable undersupply.

- 6.7 Therefore in line with Paragraph 11, footnote 8 of the NPPF policies that restrict the delivery of new housing are deemed out of date, and support is given to a new residential development providing that it is deemed sustainable as defined by the NPPF.
- 6.8 As set out in the original planning statement it is clear that the development should be considered sustainable, it is in close proximity to Alton and has access to both public transport and the footpath network which will allow future occupiers to access necessary facilities and services without the need for a private motor car. Whilst there will be obvious economic benefits during construction, and social benefits associated with the supply of housing and self-build housing in particular.
- 6.9 The Council in the determination of this application chose to downplay its dire housing supply position as a material consideration. It is the appellants view that it is a significant factor in the decision-making process.
- 6.10 The limited acknowledgement of the districts dire housing land supply position and the documented lack of self-build provision, as required under Section 2A(2) of the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), in our view seriously undermines the decision. The appeal scheme which will make a small but nonetheless much needed contribution towards the supply of self-build housing, and this is a benefit that outweighs, the harm attributed to the location and visual impact of the development by the Council.

Reason for Refusal 2 – Landscape Impact

- 6.11 The officers report provides further information in relation to the second reason for refusal, advising that *‘the proposal, by virtue of its size, scale and siting does not maintain the character of the existing dwelling and area’*.
- 6.12 The dwelling is of a bespoke design and is of a traditional scale and proportions, it follows the prevailing character of other properties on Denstone Lane in terms of position and height and replaces existing built form in terms of the outbuildings and therefore in our view is contextually appropriate in this location.
- 6.13 As set out above the area is of no particular wider landscape importance, it is not a valued landscape as defined by the NPPF, it will not sit in the setting or context of any important landscape features, or assets of heritage importance.
- 6.14 When viewed from the east and west the existing boundary hedgerows and mature trees provide significant screening from Denstone Lane. From wider views, specifically from Nabb Lane to the south the property will sit in the context of the existing dwelling and the associated farmstead to the east, the development will certainly not dominate the wider landscape from public vantage points.
- 6.15 To the north public views will be afforded of the development from the bridleway from Saltersford Lane, these again are filtered by boundary hedgerows and trees, in addition the new build will be viewed in the context of the host dwelling and wider dispersed development along Denstone Lane.
- 6.16 It is clear that the proposal is closely related to existing residential development and will not result incongruous or inappropriate built form in the landscape, a significant balance of the wider field to the south would not be developed upon, including all land which is at a higher level.

- 6.17 From longer views it is clear that the landscape has the capacity to ‘take’ a single dwelling without harming landscape character.
- 6.18 The reason for refusal seems to raise concerns regarding what the Council consider an excessive amount of glazing and the potential illumination of an area of ‘isolated rural countryside’. The amount of glazing and its impact on the design is clearly subjective, in this instance the design shows the larger areas of glazing to the rear where they will not impact significantly on the integrity of the design of the dwelling, whilst the level of illumination will be no greater than that emitted from the existing dwelling.
- 6.19 Given the Council’s very significant housing shortage (considered earlier in this statement), it is clear that the Council will have to rely on development of land to the fringes of existing settlements, which ultimately will lead to buildings on green sites. It is simply untenable to think that sufficient houses will be built in the district without some expansion at the fringes of towns and villages exactly as is proposed as part of this application.
- 6.20 The micro scale of the development is such that the impacts from wider landscape receptors will be entirely negligible.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The appeal site lies in a sustainable location within walking distance of public transport opportunities and also the footpath network linking the site to Alton.
- 7.2 On the basis of the Councils dire housing land and self-build supply position the provision of a new self-build dwelling in a sustainable location is considered acceptable in principle terms.

- 7.3 The proposed dwelling is considered to be of an appropriate scale, siting and design and will be viewed in the context of existing built form, it therefore has a neutral impact when viewed in the wider landscape context of the area.
- 7.4 As such it is respectfully requested that the appeal is allowed, and planning permission granted for the development.