

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0267
Valid 16/06/2025

THE OLD POST OFFICE
TOWN END LANE
SWINSCOE

EXTENSIONS TO DWELLING.
(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

The principle of the proposal

The impact on the character and appearance of the area

The impact on residential amenity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies on the edge of Swinscoe, a small village or hamlet that lies on the south-west side of A52 main road. The site comprises an old two-storey detached cottage with a single-storey side projection (with a first floor room in the roofspace). The rear elevation faces A52 (Swinscoe Hill) to the north-east and with the front facing the south-west where there are small fields or paddocks within the site. The access is to the side of the dwelling off Townend Lane, to the south-east, a narrow dead end country lane off A52. There are sporadic dwellings and buildings on the opposite side of Townend Lane, further to the south-east but the rest of the site is surrounded by open land to the north-west, south-west and to the other side of the A52 to the north-east.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for extensions to the dwelling but when first submitted also included the change of use of the small fields in front of the house to a camping and caravan site. This was removed from the planning application and so the application now seeks approval solely for the proposed house extensions, with the plans amended on 8.8.25 to remove the campsite but the original extensions applied for being unaltered. The extensions comprise a further single-storey side addition to the existing side addition on the south-east side of the house, facing the access off Townend Lane. However, the roof ridge would be lower than the existing side addition roof. A small existing rear lean-to would be continued across the back wall of the proposed extension. The extension would provide two bedrooms and an enlarged bathroom, part of an enlarged annex contained within the existing side addition which currently comprises a kitchen, bedroom above in the roofspace and a small shower room in the lean-to. The new “annex” would, unlike as current, be integrated with the rest of the house via the creation of new opening from the current annex kitchen into one of the living rooms of the main house. The existing annex front door would be blocked off but a new front door built into the front wall of the new extension. The new annex would therefore be accessed either via the new external entrance or internally via the ground floor rooms of the main house.

The site plan shows the enlargement of the current parking area to the side of the cottage to provide three new replacement parking spaces to the south of the proposed extension (which would be built on part of the current parking area).

A revised Design & Access Statement was submitted.

An amended Location Plan and Block Plan were received on 19.9.25 which reduce the red line boundary of the application site so that it encloses only the residential curtilage and excludes the paddocks and fields within the property which are outside of the residential curtilage. These are outlined in a blue edge boundary as required for any land adjoining the application site within the same ownership.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- NE2 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2025)

Section 12 (Design).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None relevant.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 7.8.25
Neighbour consultation period ends: 7.8.25
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

Thirteen letters of objection were received regarding the proposed camping and caravan site but no objections were raised to the proposed house extensions.

Parish Council Comments

Blore with Swinsoe: Objection raised to the caravan and camp site but no objections to the house extensions.

Local Highways Authority

A refusal was recommended on the basis of the impact of the proposed camping/caravan site on the roads, but there is no objection to the proposed house extensions and new parking area for the house.

Environmental Health

A refusal was recommended in relation to the camping/caravan site part of the proposal.

Tree Officer

The Officer responded solely on the impacts of the house extensions in relation to mature trees close to the proposed footprint. No objection was raised subject to a tree protection condition. The comments are as follows:

- The proposed extension at the south-eastern end of the existing dwelling would slightly encroach into the nominal Root Protection Area of a large mature Sycamore tree to the east at the Townend Lane boundary. No tree report has been submitted with the application. The tree appears to be in good condition and in conjunction with other trees makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the application site and its immediate surroundings.
- However, the extent of encroachment is less than 7.5% of the total RPA, and furthermore would be totally contained within a long-established tarmac surfaced vehicle standing area within the property curtilage. This hard standing runs up to the existing building. It is likely that the long term ground compaction of surfacing and its use by vehicles, together with the building itself immediately beyond has over an extended period of time discouraged or restricted significant feeder root growth in this direction. Therefore it is considered unlikely that construction of the proposed extension would lead to significant harmful impact on the tree's root system to the extent that its condition or stability would be notably affected.
- There would appear to be a need to carry out a minor crown lift pruning to the western side of the tree in order to physically accommodate part of the new roofspace, in particular, involving removal of one or two smaller diameter lower/pendulous branches. Such work would not be detrimental to the shape, appearance or condition of the tree and indeed would create a slightly more balanced crown given that the eastern side is already higher over the road.

On balance, it is considered that in the specific circumstances there are not substantive grounds to object to or refuse the application on grounds of impact on trees, and therefore I have no objection to this application.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The original application was for a camping and caravan site along with the proposed house extensions. This attracted objections from local residents, the local highways authority and Environmental Health and the applicants removed this from the application. Only the house extensions are to be determined under the amended application.

Policy SS10, the strategy for the countryside, allows the extension of dwellings in rural areas providing they are appropriate to the area in scale and do not harm the character and amenities of the countryside. The existing house is already very wide and has a lower side addition, which would be further extended. However, the new extension would still be small in relation to the size of the existing house and would also be lower than the existing side projection, resulting in a stepping down of the roof ridges towards the side boundary. I consider this would respect the scale, form and height of the existing dwelling and it would appear subservient to the main house and existing side addition, combined. It would follow the general shape and form of the house (including the gable sided dual pitched roof form) as a continuation towards the side boundary. The materials would match the existing, those being coursed ragstone and dark grey roof slates. The fenestration shape and style would also respect the traditional windows and doors of the existing dwelling.

The extension would encroach within the root zone of a large, mature and healthy sycamore tree a short distance to the north of the access off Townend Lane. However, it is not a significant infringement and as the area to be extended into comprises a hard-standing which will have already affected the roots, the new foundations are unlikely to lead to any further harm to the tree. Any pruning work above that may be required to accommodate the roof, would also not lead to any harm.

Due to the proposed size, siting, form and design of the extension, which respects the original house and would not harm the large trees which characterise the area, the overall character and appearance of the rural area would also not be harmed and therefore policies SS10 and DC1 would be complied with.

Although this is an extension to the existing annex attached to the house, the proposal would result in a much larger annex with three bedrooms. Although the proposal includes the internal integration of the annex into the main house, via the removal of part of the wall separating the house from the annex and a greater connection between the two, a condition can be added requiring the use of the enlarged annex to be entirely ancillary to the main house and to not be used as a separate dwelling or unit of accommodation, in the interests of the character and amenities of the rural area.

The extension due to its scale, height and siting along with window positioning would also not lead to any loss of privacy or light provision affecting the neighbours due mainly to the separation distances between the proposed extension and the nearest residential properties. Policy DC1 would also therefore be complied with in this respect.

As the current parking area for the house would be lost, this would be extended southwards to provide three new parking spaces. This would be in part of the garden area of the house and is well screened from the roads by trees and hedges. The new hardstanding would not harm any significant trees. The three spaces are in line with the Council parking standards which require three parking spaces for any development providing four or more bedrooms (in this case two new bedrooms would be added to the current five-bedroom house). There is also sufficient space

for vehicles to turn and enter Townend Lane in forward gear. It is considered the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety and no objection is raised by the local highways authority to the proposed house extensions and new parking area.

There is an existing new access (off the A52) and parking area to the other side of the house but this does not appear to be authorised and is also outside of the residential curtilage.

CONCLUSION

The amended proposal, comprising solely extensions to the house, would not harm the visual or residential amenities of the area or highway safety, with the safeguard of conditions and would comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 19.9.25

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council