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Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Moorlands House
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ST13 6HQ

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Dear Sir

Land at Brookside Farm, School Lane, Horton, Leek, ST13 8PX

Proposed demolition of stables and the construction of a two-bedroom bungalow.

Introduction

1. This Statement is submitted on behalf of Mr & Mrs Shepherd in support of a Permission in Principle (PIP) application for the demolition of a stable block and the construction of a single bungalow on land at Brookside Farm, Horton, Leek, ST13 8PX.

2. The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides guidance on what matters are within the scope of a decision on whether to grant a Permission in Principle (PIP). The scope is limited to location, land use and amount of development only. Other matters, including design, ecology and highways, are considered at Technical Details Stage 2 and are not issues relevant for this Stage 1 PIP application. The key consideration for this Stage 1 PIP application is Green Belt planning policy and this is considered in detail below. There are no site specific or other policy constraints which would prevent planning permission from being granted in accordance with the guidance in Paragraph 11 of the Framework. All detailed matters would be addressed with the subsequent Stage 2 Technical Details application. Documents submitted with this Stage 1 PIP submission include:

- ✓ Application Forms.
- ✓ Drawing 1673/1 - Existing Site Plan and Elevations.
- ✓ Drawing 1673/5 - Location and Block Plan.
- ✓ AE01 – Photographs.

Site Location

3. The application site is located to the north of School Lane and is situated to the west side of the dwelling and outbuildings at Brookside Farm. The site is occupied by a substantial timber stable with yard to its front. Photographs of the site are submitted at AE01. The site is approximately 0.5km from Horton Village Hall and is within open countryside in the Green Belt.

The Proposal.

4. The proposal seeks PIP for the demolition of the stables and the construction of a single bungalow. The existing building has a floor area of 75.9m² and a volume of 251m³. It is envisaged that the proposed bungalow would be very similar in size and this would be confirmed and agreed at Stage 2 (Technical Details Submission).

Relevant Planning Policy

5. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2024) sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The relevant sections of the Framework are referred to below under the heading of Planning Considerations.

6. The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan was adopted on 9th September 2020 and sets out the council's vision and strategy for the District until 2033. It also refers to the proposed locations for development and policies which will be used in determining planning applications. The Local Plan covers the Staffordshire Moorlands area except for the part that lies within the Peak District National Park Authority. Relevant policies include: -

SS1 – Development Principles.

SS2 – Settlement Hierarchy.

SS10 – Other Rural Areas Strategy.

T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport

Policy SS1 seeks to ensure that the development and use of land makes a positive contribution to the social, economic, and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. Particular reference is made to a well-designed and well-maintained environment with development being undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas.

Policy SS2 sets out the settlement hierarchy for the district and requires that all development will need to be of a scale and nature appropriate to the character and role of each area within its hierarchy. The hierarchy refers to Towns; Rural Area Larger Villages; Rural Area Smaller Villages and the Other Rural Areas.

Policy SS10 - 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 confirms that the Council will sustain the rural economy by enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified. The policy seeks to enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape. It also states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

Planning Considerations

Green Belt and Previously Developed Land

7. Section 13 of the Framework sets out National Green Belt Policy and Policy SS10 of the Local Plan requires application to be determined in line with the requirements of the Framework.

8. Paragraph 154(g) of the Framework states that the following will be considered to be 'appropriate development' within the Green Belt:

"... limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt."

9. There are two considerations for the purposes of paragraph 154(g). Firstly, whether the site comprises brownfield land and secondly whether a single dwelling would be likely to result in 'substantial harm' to the openness of the Green Belt.

10. In terms of the first test, the application site comprises a stable building and yard and it satisfies the definition of previously developed land set out in Annex 2 of the Framework. This states that previously developed land is:

"Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape."

11. The stables are lawful by virtue of the planning permission granted in 2008 by application reference SMD/2007/1091. The building and its curtilage are not used for agricultural purposes and they are in the open countryside. This means that the site is not, therefore, excluded from the definition of previously developed land.

12. The application site comprises brownfield land for the purposes of paragraph 154(g) of the Framework. In terms of the openness test, the threshold at paragraph 154(g) is purposefully high and there is no reason why the erection of a small, single bungalow at the site could be described as resulting in 'substantial' harm i.e. the highest form of impact. This would be confirmed and dealt with at the Technical Details Stage. As per established case law and paragraph 64-001 of the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), there are 2 aspects of openness; the quantitative aspect and the qualitative aspect.

13. In terms of the quantitative aspect of openness, we would ensure that the bungalow would be of a similar size to the stable block it would replace. The final size, design and massing of the single storey dwelling would be agreed with the Stage 2 Technical Details application. The Framework is

clearly permissive of the redevelopment of previously developed land and there is already a built form present at the site.

14. In terms of qualitative impacts, the impact would be limited at most given the following points:

- ✓ The site comprises the existing stable block with yard to the front and already has a developed character and appearance.
- ✓ The site lies immediately to the west of the dwelling and outbuildings at Brookside Farm and there is a dwelling on the opposite side of School Lane
- ✓ The plot does not extend beyond the established boundaries of the site and there is the opportunity to enhance an improve boundary landscaping, particularly to School Lane.

15. We, therefore, conclude that there would be no impact on the openness of the Green Belt as a result of the proposed development. In any event, the impact cannot be considered 'substantial' by any measure when taking into account the quantitative and qualitative aspects of openness. The proposal would not comprise inappropriate development within the Green Belt and paragraph 154(g) of the Framework is satisfied. There is, therefore, a presumption in favour of allowing this Stage 1 PIP application.

Green Belt and Grey Belt Land

16. Paragraph 155 of the Framework says that the development of homes in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate development where criteria (a)-(d) (inclusive) applies.

17. Paragraph 155(a) says that this exception applies where development would utilise 'grey belt' land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan-area. 'Grey belt' is defined at Annex 2 of the Framework as follows:

"Grey belt: For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in Paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development."

18. The Site is previously developed land and it does not perform strongly against any of the purposes at parts (a), (b) or (d) of Paragraph 143 of the Framework:

- ✓ In terms of unrestricted sprawl, the site is self-contained and sits alongside existing dwellings. The site performs no role in terms of checking the unrestricted sprawl of any settlement.
- ✓ In terms of merging of neighbouring towns, the site performs no contribution in this regard given its location within a small group of dwellings in the countryside.
- ✓ In terms of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns, the site performs no contribution in this regard given it is not located near any historic towns.

19. The site does not perform strongly in relation to any of the purposes at (a), (b) or (d) in Paragraph 143 of the Framework. It satisfies the 'Grey Belt' definition for the purposes of the definition in Annex 2 of the Framework

20. In terms of Paragraph 155(b) of the Framework, there is a demonstratable unmet need for housing development in Staffordshire Moorlands. The Framework requires authorities to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing and there is currently a 2.95-year supply (as of April 2025) in Staffordshire Moorlands.

21. With reference to Paragraph 155(c) of the Framework, the site lies close to the village of Horton as demonstrated by the proximity of the nearby village hall. Paragraph 110 of the Framework recognises that opportunities for sustainable transport options will vary between urban and rural areas and this should be recognised in the decision-making process. This PIP application is for single, small bungalow only and the site is locationally sustainable for this scale of development. It is not a 'significant development' for the purposes of Paragraph 110 of the Framework. The thrust of Paragraph 110 appears to relate to development that would generate significant levels of vehicle movements, particularly by car and the proposed development is for a single dwelling that is close to an established village. The requirement at paragraph 155(c) is satisfied.

22. The 'Golden Rules' at paragraph 155(d) of the Framework are not relevant to the proposal as this is not a major development.

23. The proposed development would, therefore, not comprise inappropriate development within the Green Belt as Paragraph 155 of the Framework is satisfied. There is, therefore, a presumption in favour of allowing this Stage 1 PIP application.

Summary and Conclusions

24. The application seeks PIP for the demolition of the stable block and the construction of a small, single bungalow. The proposal is acceptable for the following reasons:

- ✓ The development is the redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt where the impact on openness would not be 'substantial', in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 154(g) of the Framework.
- ✓ The development is not inappropriate development in Green Belt as it would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. This satisfies the requirements of Paragraph 155 (a) of the Framework.
- ✓ The proposal would make effective and efficient use of previously developed land which would help to contribute towards the unmet housing needs within Staffordshire Moorlands. There is a significant shortfall of deliverable housing in the Borough and the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Each and every additional dwelling makes a contribution to this undersupply.

25. Considering all of the above, this Stage 1 PIP application should be approved. All other detailed matters, relating to design, ecology and highways would be dealt with through the Technical Details Stage 2 application. There are no known or likely constraints that could not be addressed as part of the technical details consent stage.

Yours sincerely

Andy Ellis

Chartered Town Planner