

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL : DEMOLITION OF EXISTING WORKSHOP, STORE AND OFFICE AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE TO PROVIDE 2 DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING WORKS AND ALTERATIONS TO ACCESS

ADDRESS : PROSPECT WORKS, PROSPECT ROAD, LEEK, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST13 5BX

APPLICANT : P D & S SMART LTD

DATE : DECEMBER 2025 JOB No. : 2025-3028

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application which seeks consent for the demolition of the existing workshop, store and office and redevelopment of the site to provide 2 detached dwellings with associated hard and soft landscaping works and alterations to access.

1.2 The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of P D & S Smart Ltd and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2025-3028-01, 2025-3028-02, 2025-3028-03, 2025-3028-04, 2025-3028-05, 2025-3028-06, 2025-3028-07, 2025-3028-08 and a Bat Activity Report all of which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

1.3 This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of the proposed development on the basis that it would provide clear social, economic and environmental benefits in relation to the provision of new housing within an accessible and sustainable location without adversely impacting upon the character and appearance of the area, harming residential amenity adversely impacting upon highway safety or being detrimental to any established ecological interests. The proposed development therefore accords with the provision of local and national planning policy and should be approved without delay.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site comprises of a broadly rectangular parcel of land which extends to some 501 sq metres. It lies on the north eastern side of Prospect Road close to its junction with Pickwood Avenue and contains a number of structures comprising of a workshop, store and office which have previously been used in association with the use of the site as a joiner's workshop.

2.2 The site is located in a predominately residential area within the defined settlement boundary of Leek where there is a general presumption in favour of development. Residential development lies to the north, east, south and west.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 This is a full application which seeks consent to replace the former industrial buildings with two new dwellings. The detached single storey dwellings which would comprise of a kitchen with separate lounge, two bedrooms and bathroom would have a footprint of 75.5 sq metres and an overall floor area of 63.2 sq metres. They would have a simple rectangular footprint with a small projecting bay on the front and a pitched roof with their axis running in a north east to south west direction. Eaves height would be 2.45m with an overall ridge height of 5.1m. The proposed dwellings would be constructed from brick walls under a forticrete tiled roof with a PV array installed along each of the south western facing roof slopes. Two parking spaces for each dwelling will be laid out to the front with a patio and private garden area at the rear. The existing pavement shall be altered to provide a new dropped kerb arrangement to serve the dwellings and the pavement shall be increased in depth to 2m. The existing blockwork walls to the south eastern side and north eastern rear elevations shall be modified with the upper portion demolished and a sawn timber panel fence fitted above. The existing concrete post and timber panel fence to the north western elevation between the application site and the new dwellings erected as part of the Flying Horse redevelopment shall be retained.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in December 2024. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered as a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan.

4.3 The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It goes on to seek to significantly boost the supply of new housing throughout the country and sets out requirements for Local Authorities to maintain a five year deliverable supply of housing at all times. It also sets out guidance inter alia in respect of making effective use of previously developed land, securing high quality design and assessing impacts on highway safety. The content of this document has been taken into account in the preparation of this application and the most relevant sections of the NPPF are considered to be:-

- 1 Introduction paragraphs 1-6
- 2 Achieving sustainable development paragraphs 7-14
- 4 Decision making
- 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 11 Making effective use of land
- 12 Achieving well designed places

4.4 The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of Local Plan which was adopted in September 2020. The main policies of relevance to the determination of this application are as follows:-

SS1 (Development Principles); SS2 (Settlement Hierarchy), SS5 (Leek Area Strategy); H1 (New Housing Development); DC1 (Design Considerations); E3 (Existing Employment Areas, Premises and Allocations) and T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

4.5 In terms of Supplementary Planning Guidance Council's adopted Design Guide and Space About Dwellings publications are also important in the consideration of this application.

5.0 ASSESSMENT

5.1 In its general approach the Council expects the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. When considering development proposals the Council will in accordance with policy SS1 take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This means that planning applications that accord with the policies in Local Plan shall be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 As set out above the application site contains a number of structures which together provide a workshop, store and office. The application site is therefore considered brownfield land. It also lies within the town development boundary where there is a general presumption in favour of development as set out in Local Plan Policy H1. Although the Local Plan includes land allocations which would meet the new housing targets for the District over the plan period, small unidentified "windfall" sites within the development boundaries can still make a valuable contribution to the housing stock.

5.3 The application site comprises of a sustainable location for new housing that is within easy walking and cycling distance of the numerous local services, facilities and employment opportunities on offer within the town. Furthermore the site is within close proximity to the main Ashbourne to Leek road where public transport services offer regular links.

5.4 Therefore given its location within an identified settlement boundary, the principle of development is therefore considered to constitute an acceptable form of development the principle of which is in accordance with current local and national planning policies (SS3, SS5, H1 and T1) providing that all other relevant policies in the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework are complied with.

Loss of existing employment site

Local Plan Policy E3 states that employment areas, premises and allocations that:

- are well located to the main road and public transport network; and
- provide, or are physically and viably capable of providing through redevelopment, good quality modern accommodation attractive to the market without harm to the amenity of nearby residents; and
- are capable of meeting a range of employment uses to support the local economy will be safeguarded for such purposes.

Whilst it could be argued that the application site lies in close proximity to the main Ashbourne to Leek Road it lies on a short residential cul de sac with no off road parking or turning provision. Despite its established B2 use the application site is clearly unsuitable for large delivery vehicles. The application site lies within a predominately residential area and is bounded on all 4 sides by residential development including the provision of 5 dwellings recently permitted to the front and side of the site as part of the Flying Horse redevelopment scheme. The existing use is a B2 use, which is obviously more general and has potential for far greater disturbance than the more restrictive B1 use and its lack of any operating restrictions in terms of operating hours or occupancy means that there is potential for any future occupier to have a much greater impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents by noise employment uses. Policy E3 does not look to safeguard such sites for continued employment purposes and it is therefore considered that the proposal complies in this regard.

The impact upon the character and appearance of the area

5.5 Policy H1 "New Housing Development" of the Local plan states that all housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location and with the character of the surrounding area. Higher densities will generally be appropriate in locations which are more accessible by public transport and which have good access to services.

5.6 The specific design policy of the LP Policy DC1 also states that all development should 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, landscaping, character and appearance.

5.7 The above guidance is reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It furthermore states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; is indivisible from good planning; and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Developments should function well and establish a strong sense of place creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Proposals should also optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and respond to local character and history including local materials and the use of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Developments should also create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

5.8 As set out above the application proposes two modest bungalows. These would have simple rectangular floor plans with their gable ends set onto the highway. They would be positioned centrally within the plot with 2 off road parking supplemented with EV charging points at the front for each dwelling and a dedicated patio and garden area to the rear. Whilst it is acknowledged that the existing building sits hard up against the highway it is recognised that the dwellings to either side are both set back and the proposed siting of the dwellings responds positively to this and reinforces this linear pattern of development along Prospect Road. The single storey form of the proposed dwellings also mimics the single storey nature of the existing building and meets a specific identified housing need whilst the simple form and design of the units are in keeping with the overall character and appearance of the area. Having regard to the above it is considered that the overall size, scale, form, massing and design of the dwellings is in keeping with and responds positively to the character and appearance of the application site and wider surrounding area. In this respect the proposal accords with CS policies H1 and DC1 and the guidance contained in the NPPF more generally.

The impact on residential amenity

5.9 Local Plan policy H1 states that all new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.

5.10 Policy DC1 states that all development 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.

5.11 With regard to residential amenity it is considered that the demolition of the existing commercial buildings and their replacement with two residential dwellings would improve the amenity of the area as the proposed use would be more in keeping with the neighbouring land uses. The south east elevation of the units would be blank whilst the north west elevations would contain a pedestrian door and obscure glazed bathroom window. Principal windows for rooms have been limited to the front and rear facing gables where adequate separation distances can be achieved between the properties on Ashbourne Road, to the north east and those on the other side of Prospect Road to the south west. The proposed dwellings would not give rise to any harmful overlooking into neighbouring houses and their rear gardens nor would they result in any light pollution, overshadowing or appear over dominant or bearing within their surroundings. In addition adequate parking and amenity space will be provided for the occupiers of the new dwellings in accordance with the council's adopted Space About Dwellings Standards. The proposed dwellings would have a floor area of 63.2 sq metres which exceeds the requirement for the standards set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards for a two bedroom three person one storey dwelling. In conclusion therefore it is considered that the proposal would not be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of the existing or proposed occupiers and the proposal complies with Local Plan policy HC1 and DC1 in this regard especially having regard to the existing use of the application site.

Highways

5.12 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that development should provide a safe and suitable access for all users with paragraph 111 stating that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. This guidance is reflected in policy DC1 which requires, amongst other matters, for development to provide for a safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.

5.13 The proposed development is to be accessible off Prospect Road. Two parking spaces per dwelling, each measuring 2.5m wide x 5.0m long, will be provided at the front of the units. The existing pavement / footpath is to be altered to facilitate access for vehicles which will include the replacement of the transition kerbs and half-battered kerbs for dropped kerbs. The pavement shall also be altered to suit the falls required for the new access. The construction of the pavement shall be agreed at a later date with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Highways and can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. In conclusion therefore it is not considered that the proposed use would adversely affect highway safety and would therefore be compliant with LP Policy DC1 and guidance contained in the NPPF.

Bats

5.14 As the application seeks consent to demolish the existing structures on site a bat survey assessment was undertaken by Absolute Ecology (August 2024) and is submitted with this application. This comprised of an initial search of the building as well as undertaking two dusk surveys. Whilst a number of bats were seen commuting across the application site there was no evidence that they were using any of the building proposed for demolition. The assessment confirms that a reasonable level of survey effort has been undertaken and that neither an EPS licence or further surveys will be required. A number of mitigation measures are however proposed within the conclusion of the report relating to timing of works, lighting etc and it is considered that these can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. On the basis that the proposed development would not harm protected species and would result in an enhanced ecological value it is considered that Local Plan policy NE1 and guidance contained within the recently updated NPPF are complied with.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 This application should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as confirmed by the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed development is acceptable in principle as the site is located within the development boundary for Leek and in a sustainable location with good access to the services, facilities and employment opportunities provided within the village via a range of transport modes.

6.2 Local Plan policy HC1 supports the provision of housing on unidentified windfall sites on unallocated areas of land within the development boundaries of towns and villages. Whilst the application would result in the loss of the existing joiners workshop it is not considered that this would, in isolation, be sufficient grounds to warrant refusal of the scheme especially having regard to the access arrangement, poor parking and turning provision within the site and neighbouring land uses.

6.3 The proposal would also make a modest contribution to housing land supply in accordance with policy SS1, SS3 and SS5 of the Local Plan and the NPPF at a time of chronic undersupply. The proposal is acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the area, highway safety and residential amenity and biodiversity.

6.4 In addition the economic and social benefits which the development would bring in terms of its contribution to housing land supply, new homes bonus, jobs in construction and the construction industry supply chain and spending in local shops would also attract weight in favour of the proposal.

6.5 The proposed development therefore accords with the provisions of policies SS1, SS3, SS5, DC1, E3, H1, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the NPPF. For these reasons it is therefore considered that the proposal is capable of being supported by the Council.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

7.1 The application proposes the use of the application site for residential purposes. The application site is located in a predominately residential area and reflects the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

AMOUNT

7.2 The application proposes the erection of two bungalows. This amount of development is considered to comply with the Council's Space About Dwellings Standards and is in keeping with the density of existing development in this area.

LAYOUT

7.3 The layout of the development will be as shown on the submitted site layout plan. The proposed dwellings would be positioned centrally within their plots and accessed directly off Prospect Road.

SCALE

7.4 The application proposes the erection of two detached bungalows both of which would have a footprint of 75.5 sq metres, with an internal floor area of 63.2 sq metres and an overall volume of 290 cu metres. The proposed bungalows would have an eaves height of 2.45m and an overall ridge height of 5.1m.

7.5 Hard and soft landscaping works are shown on the submitted drawings.

APPEARANCE

7.6 The proposed development will deliver a traditional design using traditional materials.

ACCESS

7.7 The application proposes to alter the existing transition kerb arrangement and provide a dropped kerb so that both the units can be accessed directly off Prospect Road. The site is within easy walking and cycling distance of the centre of the town which has a wide range of services and facilities. Public transport links are easily accessible to both the town centre and other parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands as well as the neighbouring city of Stoke on Trent.