

# PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSAL : RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 6 DWELLINGS**

**ADDRESS : THE GRANGE, CLAY LAKE, ENDON, ST9 9DD**

**APPLICANT : S.A.L**

**DATE : DECEMBER 2024      JOB No. : 2022-2755**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application which seeks consent for redevelopment of the site to provide 6 detached dwellings with means of access and associated hard and soft landscaping works.

1.2 The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of S.A.L and is accompanied by the following drawings and technical information, all of which should be read in conjunction with this statement:-

- 2022-2755-26D Planning Proposal Site Plan
- 2022-2755-27A Planning Proposal Plot 1 Floor Plan and Elevations
- 2022-2755-28A Planning Proposal Plot 2 Floor Plan and Elevations
- 2022-2755-29 Planning Proposal Plot 3 Floor Plan and Elevations
- 2022-2755-30 Planning Proposal Plot 4 Floor Plan and Elevations
- 2022-2755-31 Planning Proposal Plot 5 Floor Plan and Elevations
- 2022-2755-32 Planning Proposal Plot 6 Floor Plans and Elevations
- 2022-2755-33 Existing Conditions Block Plan
- 2022-2755-34 Planning Proposal Block Plan
- 2022-2755-35 Planning Proposal – Plot 2, 3, 5 Garage Plans and Elevations
- 2022-2755-36 Planning Proposal Location and Block Plan
- 2022-2755-37 Planning Proposal Landscaping Plan
- Clay Lake Development Planting Schedule December 2024
- Energy and Sustainability Statement December 2024
- Arboricultural Report undertaken by Tree Heritage February 2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report December 2024

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, prejudicing 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 an irregular shaped parcel of land which extends to some 4,995 sq metres. It lies on the south western side of Clay Lake, Endon and comprises of curtilage associated with The Grange, a large detached dwelling which lies to the north west and an adjoining paddock which comprises of semi-improved grassland. The site is located on ground that slopes in a south-westly direction from the Clay Lake on the northeast boundary towards a brook that runs in proximity to the southern and south western site edges. The land to the north of the application side on the opposite side of Clay Lake comprises of residential development that is arranged in a linear pattern, albeit with some new dwellings constructed within the large plots which follow the highway whilst contiguous to the eastern boundary of the site is a much denser

and deeper form of residential development which extends the full width of this boundary. The boundaries of the site are formed by mature hedgerows interspersed with mature tree planting.

2.2 To the south west of the site lies Stonehay Wood an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) as identified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. The woodland (including none ASNW areas) is a Habitat of Principle Importance (Priority Habitat) under the NERC Act (Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland). Importantly none of the ASNW lies within the application site and a minimum 15m exclusion zone has been applied.

2.3 The site does not contain any listed or non designated heritage buildings nor is it within, or adjacent to a Conservation Area. The entire application site is located within the defined settlement boundary of Endon village where there is a general presumption in favour of development.

### **3.0 PROPOSAL**

3.1 This is a full application which seeks consent for the erection of 6 detached dwellings with associated works. The proposed development would be set around a short cul de sac arrangement which would be taken from the existing access off Clay Lake. Plots 1 and 2 would be located adjacent to the south eastern boundary of the site with the dwellings positioned gable end onto Clay Lake with their principal elevation looking onto the cul-de-sac. Plots 3, 4 and 5 would be positioned on the southern side of the cul -de-sac with their ridge lines running broadly in an east to west direction and their principal elevations facing north. Plot 6 would be positioned on the western side of the cul de sac, adjacent to the north western boundary and set in line with the neighbouring dwelling, The Grange with its principal elevation facing north onto Clay Lake.

3.2 Plots 1, 4 and 6 would comprise of 4 bedroom 6 person dwellings containing a lounge, hallway integral garage and open plan kitchen / family room on the ground floor with 3 double bedrooms one of which would be ensuite, family bathroom and separate study on the first floor and a further ensuite double bedroom in the attic. These dwellings would have a footprint of 96.5 sq metres, an overall floor area of 191.8 sq metres with an eaves height of 5.45m and an overall ridge height of 9.05m.

3.3 Plots 2, 3, and 5 would comprise of 5 bedroom units containing a lounge, utility, downstairs w.c., hallway, open plan kitchen and family room with 4 bedrooms, 1 of which would be ensuite and family bathroom above and a further bedroom and play room in the attic. These units would have a footprint of 94 sq m each and an overall floor area of 204 sq m. They would have an eaves height of 5.5m and an overall ridge height of 9.05m.

3.4 Off road parking would be provided to each of the units with gardens to the front, side and rear as shown on the submitted site plan. Plots 2 and 3 would be provided with a shared garage arrangement whilst plot 5 would have a dedicated double garage serving the unit.

3.5 The proposed dwellings would be constructed from local building materials with facing brickwork with mock Tudor cladding under a plain clay tile roof and have a traditional appearance in keeping with the local vernacular.

### **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 1-14
- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 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); SS3 (Future Provision and Distribution of Development); SS8 (Larger Villages Strategy); SD1 (Sustainable Use of Resources), SD3 (Carbon saving measures in Development), SD4 (Pollution and Water Quality), SD5 (Flood Risk), H1 (New Housing Development); H3 (Affordable Housing), C1 (Creating Sustainable Communities), DC1 (Design Considerations); DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting), NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Resources), NE2 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows) 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 The following documents are also strong material considerations in the determination of this application:

- The National Planning Policy Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD (2018)
- SMDC Housing Land Supply Statement (2023)
- SMDC Annual Monitoring Report (2020-2021)
- SMDC Quantifying the Economic Benefits of Growth Report

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

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT**

5.1 As set out above this is a full application for the erection of 6 detached dwellings with associated access and soft and hard landscaping works. The key issues are considered to be:

- The Principle of development
- The impact upon the character and appearance of the area
- Residential amenity
- Highway safety
- Biodiversity
- Impact on Trees and Hedgerows
- Other Considerations

#### *Principle of development*

5.2 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.

5.3 Policy SS2 of the adopted development plan directs development to those locations or settlements where it is deemed most suitable, largely based on the availability and provision of various services. As part of this, the adopted development boundaries define towns, rural area larger villages, rural area small villages and other rural areas and are the spatial representation of the District's over arching development strategy.

5.4 The application site lies within the development boundary of Endon which is identified as a larger village within the Council's adopted Local Plan. Support in principle for housing in such locations is provided in policy SS8 which confirms that such villages will retain their role as rural service centres providing for the bulk of the local housing needs of the rural areas. Although the Local Plan includes land allocations small unidentified "windfall" sites within the development boundaries, often comprising of gaps between houses or even garden land on large plots, can still make a valuable contribution to the housing stock. The Development Plan continues to allow new houses within the identified development boundaries of towns and villages providing that all other relevant policies in the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework are complied with.

5.5 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 village. Furthermore the site is within close proximity to the A53 where public transport services offer regular links with the neighbouring towns of Leek and Hanley. As such the principle of development is therefore considered to constitute an acceptable form of development which is in accordance with current local and national planning policies.

#### *The impact upon the character and appearance of the area*

5.6 Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable 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.

5.7 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF requires that planning decisions ensure that new development is sympathetic to landscape setting and maintains a strong sense of place. It goes on to state that design is an important part of planning and makes it very clear that development that is not

well designed should be refused (paragraph 134). It also states that significant weight should be given to local design policies and guidance.

5.8 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.

5.9 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.

5.10 This area of Clay Lake is generally characterised by large detached and semi detached dwellings with differing designs set in spacious plots but of varying sizes with two storey dwellings nestled between more modest single storey developments. The style, design and materials of the existing dwellings are equally as varied with brick, stone, render, plain clay and interlocking tiles all being evident within the locality. Properties vary substantially in age and scale along this part of Clay Lake. The outcome of which is that there is no strong or prevailing character within the street scene.

5.11 The proposed development contains two dwelling styles both of which are consistent with the general area and ratio of openness to build development which respects and reflects the character and appearance of the surrounding area whilst maximising and working with the topography of the site. Each dwelling would be provided with on site parking provision to the side of the dwelling with private amenity space provided to the front and rear. The proposed layout of the development responds positively to the edge of village location and the generous spacing between the plots would retain the verdant and open feel of the site.

5.12 The dwellings would be constructed from facing brickwork and Staffordshire Blue plain clay tiles which would provide a sense of cohesion to the development and ensure that they are quickly assimilated into their surroundings. The use of mock Tudor timberwork incorporates a detail found on the adjacent dwelling, The Grange. In conclusion it is considered that the proposed development is of a size, scale, form, design and appearance which would not adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the application site or their valued characteristics of the 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*

5.13 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.

5.14 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.

5.15 With regard to residential amenity the proposed dwellings have been carefully sited to ensure that they have an indirect relationship with the existing residential properties to the north and east in order to avoid any harmful overlooking into neighbouring houses and their rear gardens as well as not leading to any light pollution, overshadowing or appear over dominant or bearing within their surroundings. In addition adequate separation distances would be achieved between the proposed dwellings and all surrounding nearby dwellings in accordance with the Council's Space About Dwellings SPG and adequate parking and amenity space will be provided for the occupiers of the new dwellings. 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.

### *Highway Safety*

5.16 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 Local Plan Policies DC1 and T1 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.

5.17 The application site is served by an existing access directly off Clay Lake. Clay Lake is subject to a 30mph speed limit, it is lit and has footways on both sides. The existing access will be upgraded as required to provide a 5m wide entrance with 6m radius curves to either side and a 2m wide pavement to the eastern for a distance of 10m before reverting to a 1m wide service strip. The western side of the private road is to have a 1.0m wide service strip only. Visibility sight lines from the new access shall be provided to give visibility of a minimum of 58m to the east and 52m to the west with any vegetation in advance of the sight lines being reduced to a maximum of 600mm. A turning head will be created at the head of the cul de sac to enable delivery and refuse vehicles to turn and exit the site in a forward gear. All dwellings are to be served by a mix of private drives and garages. Parking spaces are to be 2.5m wide x 5.0m long and have a 6.0m road width behind for manoeuvring. All garages will be a minimum of 3m wide x 6m long. All units will have 3 spaces as required by the Council's Parking Standards. In conclusion therefore it is not considered that the proposed use would adversely affect highway safety and would therefore be compliant with LP Policies DC1 and T1 and guidance contained in the NPPF.

### *Biodiversity*

5.18 The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a core principal of the NPPF. Paragraphs 174 and 179 also require Local Planning Authorities to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. The Local Plan reinforces this through Policy NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Resources which seeks to protect, manage and where possible enhance biodiversity by ensuring that development will not result in harm. Development will not be permitted which directly or indirectly results in significant harm to biodiversity interest unless it can be demonstrated that there is no appropriate alternative site available, statutory and regulatory requirements have been satisfied and appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided.

5.19 The application is accompanied by a BNG assessment which has been undertaken by Liz Ecology. Whilst it is not the intention to replicate the findings of that report here it demonstrates that the baseline habitat units are 2.08 and hedgerow units are 500. Based on the application submission the net change in habitat units is 0.21 which equates to a 10.23% increase and 70.03 in hedgerow units resulting in a 14.01% uplift. The net gain has been generated with higher distinctiveness, better quality habitats within the vicinity of the site. The measures to create and maintain the proposed habitats within the client's ownership will be registered and detailed within a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) which will cover a minimum period of 30 years. On the basis of the above it is not considered that the proposed development would have any adverse impacts on biodiversity and therefore accords Local Plan Policy NE1 and guidance contained within the NPPF in this regard.

### *Impact on Trees and Hedgerows*

5.20 Trees provide valuable visual, environmental, biodiversity and ecological benefits to the local area. They benefit human health and contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the area. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF places great importance on the retention of existing trees and the planting of new trees, in development proposals. This is reiterated in Local Plan Policy NE2 which seeks to safeguard existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows wherever possible.

5.21 An arboricultural report undertaken by Tree Heritage has also been submitted as part of this application. A total of 60 trees were surveyed. None of the trees are proposed for removal to facilitate the proposal. The arboricultural report does however propose that some of the trees (7 – 2 Horse Chestnuts T3 and T4, 1 Sycamore T14, 1 Lombardy poplar T18, Crack Willow T19 and 2 Ash Trees T46 and T48) are removed on safety grounds. The site area lies outside a 15m protection area for the adjacent Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and the proposed development will not therefore impact upon it.

5.22 Whilst the footprint of all the dwellings sit outside the RPA's of the trees on site some ancillary development is proposed within some of the RPA's. Namely this comprises of the boundary post and rail fence of plot 5 which will be located within the RPA of T20 a Category A Alder, the patio of Plot 1 which encroaches slightly into the RPA of a Category B Horse Chestnut T5 and the access drive to Plot 6 which encroaches into the RPA of T23 a Category B Horse Chestnut Tree. Development within these RPA's will require special protection measures, details of which have been set out in the report and which can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. On this basis it is considered that the proposed development would not have any adverse impact upon existing trees or hedgerows and the proposal therefore accords with Local Plan policy NE2 and guidance contained within the NPPF in this regard.

#### Other Material Considerations

5.23 Paragraph 68 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing at all times. The Local Authority has a long history of housing under-supply and consequently the social benefits of this proposal in contributing towards that housing land supply carries further weight in favour of the proposed development. As evidenced by the council's most recent Housing Land Supply Statement (April, 2023) the Local Authority's housing land supply currently stands at 3.58 years. Indeed, the Local Authority was only able to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing for a relatively short period of time (7 months) during the adopting of the Local Plan.

5.24 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that where Local Authority's can not demonstrate a five year housing supply then the presumption in favour of sustainable development is triggered and planning should be granted unless (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. Importantly, Footnote 8 to Paragraph 11 confirms that 'out of date policies' includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the LPA cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites.

5.25 As already discussed above it is clear that the proposed development represents an appropriate form of sustainable development within the village which would make a valuable contribution towards meeting the Local Authority's shortfall in housing land supply. It would not result in any harm to assets of particular importance such that they provide a clear reason for refusing planning permission. Furthermore, the proposal will also derive benefits of to the local economy, both to local tradesmen during the construction phase, and though the expenditure associated with the creation of five additional households. Economic benefits such as these lend further significant weight in favour of the proposed development.

5.26 The Local Plan's vision for the Rural Areas is that they will have viable, attractive villages and smaller settlements which will continue to foster appropriate, sensitive growth and vitality to support rural living and work. The larger villages will be the rural centres for services, facilities and jobs acting to sustain the rural areas. Endon is identified as a larger village and as such they are recognised as being vital to the rural areas particularly in terms of providing for local housing and rural employment needs. The loss of local population through lack of housing opportunities is recognised. Environmental benefits will also ensue as a consequence of delivering 6 new family dwellings in a location where local day-to-day facilities can be accessed on foot, bicycle and via public transport. Such environmental benefits also weigh in favour of the proposed development. It is therefore clear that the proposal will result in a number of positive social, economic and environmental benefits and no adverse impacts would arise as a result of the proposal that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh them. The proposal therefore satisfies the "tilted balance approach" and planning permission should be approved in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

## **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 Endon 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, such as parts of large residential gardens or large gaps between buildings, on unallocated areas of land within the development boundaries of towns and villages.

6.3 The proposal would also make a significant contribution to housing land supply in accordance with policy SS1 and SS8 of the Local Plan and the NPPF. The proposal is acceptable in relation to the character and appearance of the area, highway safety and residential amenity.

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, SS8, SS12, DC1, DC3, H1, H3, T1 and NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 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 the proposed development reflects the nature and character of existing development which surrounds the site.

### **AMOUNT**

7.2 The application proposes the erection of 6 dwellings. 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 rural 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 around the proposed access road.

## **SCALE**

7.4 The application proposes the erection of 6 detached dwellings which reflects the scale of nearby detached and semi detached two storey and single storey dwellings. The proposed dwellings would have the following dimensions:

Plots 1, 4 and 6 would have a footprint of 96.5 sq metres, an overall floor area of 191.8 sq metres with an eaves height of 5.45m and an overall ridge height of 9.05m.

Plots 2, 3, and 5 would have a footprint of 94 sq m each and an overall floor area of 204 sq m. They would have an eaves height of 5.5m and an overall ridge height of 9.05m.

The detached garage to plot 5 would have a footprint of 42.5 sq metres with an internal floor area of 36 sq metres, an eaves height of 2.4m and an overall ridge height of 5.3m. The shared garage to plots 2 and 3 would have a footprint of 44 sq metres and an internal floor area of 37.5 sq metres with an eaves height of 2.4m and an overall ridge height of 5.3m.

## **LANDSCAPING**

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 use, with improvements, the existing vehicular access off Clay Lake. The site is within easy walking and cycling distance of the centre of the village which has a wide range of services and facilities. Public transport links are easily accessible to Leek and other parts of the Staffordshire Moorlands as well as the neighbouring city of Stoke on Trent.