

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0197
Valid 24/11/2025

LAND ADJ FULWOOD
SCHOOL ROAD
BAGNALL

OUTLINE PLANNING
PERMISSION WITH ALL
MATTERS RESERVED FOR
PROPOSED BUNGALOW WITH
GARAGE

(OUTLINE - MINOR APPS)

MAIN ISSUES

- Local Plan Approach to Rural Housing Development
- Impact on Green Belt
- Impact on Conservation Area (significance of the designated heritage asset)
- Impact on Character and Appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Bagnall is identified in the Local Plan at SS9 as a 'smaller village' as defined in the Local Plan's settlement hierarchy at SS2. The Bagnall Conservation Area includes much of the village and coincides with the Green Belt boundary to the south. Smaller villages do not in the adopted 2020 version of the Local Plan have 'development boundaries'. However, in the case of Bagnall, the village did have a development or settlement boundary under the terms of the old 1998 Local Plan, which had the effect of taking the settlement out of the Green Belt, Bagnall therefore, is now surrounded by a Green Belt and Conservation Area boundary that provides a de facto boundary or edge to the village.

The site is a field plot, in the Green Belt, to the edge of that boundary, adjacent to the built edge of the village and the dwelling furthest south. The red edges site is a slim rectangular plot of field with roadside frontage 15 wide, roughly half the width of, and the same depth as, the adjacent Fulwood plot. The profile of the land rises gently from the roadside to a brow in the landscape behind the plot to the west.

The adjacent red brick dwelling Fulwood is a large, mid to late 20th Century, dormer bungalow with a full pitch roof. The curtilage boundary to the side of Fulwood is 11m from the side of the dwelling and encloses planted garden with a dry stone wall with half round coping stone which presents to the application site and the farmland to the south.

Further to the south, some 9m from the southeastern corner of the application site, there is a protected tree (TPO SM007T004) that grows from behind the grass verge to the pavement edge.

Fulwood and the application site both face onto a triangular open green that forms an island at the fork in the road and rural pastoral character and setting to the settlement on southerly approach.

PROPOSAL

Application seeks an outline planning permission- all matters are reserved. The development is described as a 'self-build' bungalow with garage.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS9 Smaller Village Strategy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
H1 New Housing Development
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

79/06541/OLDDC Site for detached bungalow. REFUSED.
80/08254/OLDDC Site for bungalow. REFUSED.
81/09598/OLDDC Erection of bungalow. REFUSED.
82/10823/OLDDC Site for Dwelling. REFUSED.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 13/01/2026
Neighbour consultation period ends: 13/01/2026
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Bagnall PC: Concerns about the application. The site sits immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the Village Conservation area. The conservation area appraisal states:-

"The boundary has been drawn tightly around this historic settlement, excluding southern parts of the ancient closes that are protected by the green beltOf particular importance is the surviving remnant of Close 1, which mitigates the effects of modern development on the rest of the close, and preserves the pastoral character of the village on its southern approach (9.2).....Entering the village from the south, the

surviving portion of Close 1 creates an essential barrier between old buildings and new (9.2), and gives an unbroken view of Old Hall Farm....New buildings has resulted in the loss of almost all the original walling of the western close, except where a group of listed buildings and additional stone cottages cluster together near the church. New buildings has also robbed the western arm of the Conservation Area of much of its rural character, apart from the area immediately adjacent to Old Hall Farm”.

We consequently take the view that the proposed site would effectively be a form of ribbon development extending the Village towards Bagnall Heights. I suggest that it would adversely detract from the aims of the Conservation area by extending the area mentioned in para. 10.7 of the Conservation Area document. We feel that approving this application would set a precedent for future development of the green belt around the village .

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions covering

1. Construction impacts (Condition)
2. Unexpected Contamination and Soil Importation (Condition)
3. Lighting (Condition)
4. Drainage (Building Control)

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Conditional/No objection subject to conditions

There are no objections on Highway grounds to the proposed development subject to the following conditions; No development hereby approved shall be commenced until full details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- Point of Access
- Layout and disposition of dwellings
- Provision of parking, turning, and servicing within the site curtilage
- Means of surface water drainage
- Surfacing materials

OFFICER COMMENTS

Local Plan Approach to Rural Housing Development

As defined by the Local Plan settlement hierarchy at policy SS2, the site is to the edge of a ‘smaller village’, within the Green Belt and an ‘other rural’ area of countryside that surrounds the villages and towns.

In the other rural areas, Local Plan policy SS10 applies. 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 places restriction on new build housing development in the countryside to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with Local Plan housing Policy H 1. Where the other rural area also provides Green Belt, policy SS10 reiterates that strict control shall be exercised over development in accordance with the terms of the NPPF.

Local plan policy SS9 is applicable to the 'smaller' villages. Here there is some support in a limited way, for new housing development, including small infill schemes and rural exceptions housing in appropriate locations (all in accordance with Policy H 1). SS9 requires new development to reflect and enhance each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.

Local Plan Housing policy H1 requires that, generally, all development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision. In addition, 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. Outside of the development boundaries, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character will be supported, provided that the development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development; in all cases the development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the countryside

However, notwithstanding, the authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land, the development plan policies most important for determining the application shall be considered out of date, and it is paragraph 11 of the NPPF that applies. Planning permission should be granted unless - the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular, such as a designated heritage asset or the Green Belt, provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or 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.

The provision of a single dwelling would make a small contribution to housing supply and there would be some small economic and community benefit associated with the development.

Impact on Green Belt

The site is within a part of the Green Belt that spans between Baddeley Green and the edge of the Potteries conurbation, to the west, and the rural 'smaller village' of Bagnall, in Staffordshire Moorlands, to the east. The site is to the southern edge of the village's built-form and the part of the village that is not in, and, to date, has been constrained by, the Green Belt.

In the Green Belt development is inappropriate and harmful, by definition, unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions that appear on the closed lists at Chapter 13 of the NPPF. Any harm to the Green Belt must be attributed substantial weight and planning permission cannot be granted unless there are other considerations, amounting to 'very special circumstances', that clearly outweigh that harm.

The application proposal would provide housing development; however, the site is to the edge of a village, and the development would not make a limited village infill, the site does not provide a gap between buildings; the development would not provide

affordable housing for a local community need; and the site is not previously developed land, it provides farm or agricultural land owned by, and enclosed to the side of, the adjacent dwelling 'Fulwood'. In all of those considered respects the listed exceptions do not apply to the development proposed.

Since Dec 2024 the updated NPPF has included a 'grey belt' land exception at paragraph 155. Grey belt is defined for the purposes of the NPPF as land in the Green Belt that does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. These purposes are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; and, to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

The site is to the edge of a 'smaller village' and is some distance, 1.5km, from the eastern edge of the large built-up area of Stoke on Trent. The site is not adjacent or near to a large built-up area. The site is not land that lies to the edge of a town, or forms part of a substantial gap between towns, historic or otherwise, where erosion of the land could result in merger or the loss of visual separation between the towns.

The site, therefore, is not land in the Green Belt that strongly contributes to any of the purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 and it is therefore, considered to be grey belt land. To be provided for by the exception at paragraph at 155 the land must be grey belt but also the development must not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

The development would be confined to a slim plot of land to the edge of existing development; it would be limited to the provision of a single dwelling. The release of this land and the development would not affect the ability of all the remaining Green Belt across the area of the Staffordshire Moorlands from serving all five of the Green Belt purposes in a meaningful way.

The development, therefore, 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; there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed; and the development would be in a sustainable location – it would front a footpath, be within walking distance of a bus stop, pub, primary school, and church. All of the criteria at paragraph 155 would be met and the exception at paragraph 155 can apply.

For the purposes of current government Green Belt policy, the proposed development would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not be harmful to the Green Belt.

Impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset (Bagnall Conservation Area)

Local Plan policy SS9 requires new development to reflect and enhance each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.

Local Plan Policy DC 2 'The Historic Environment' states that the Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of

maintaining and enhancing their significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

The NPPF states that in determining applications, local authorities should take account of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within the setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Where a proposed development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

The historic settlement of Bagnall has designated heritage asset in the form of its Conservation Area and a cluster of listed buildings that are central to the settlement. The Conservation Area centres on the early 17th Century hamlet with its village greens, farms, closes and Holloways. The application site is to the edge, south and west of, but outside, the Conservation Area on the adjacent farmland that surrounds the settlement.

The site is to the south and side of the dwelling at Fulwood, the property at the southern end of a row of four large, tightly spaced, late 20th Century bungalows. Opposite the site there is an undeveloped area of land that provides village green that sits with triangular shape between the fork in the road formed by the junction of The Green with School Road. The green is open to the road and farmland beyond to the west, east, and south. The green extends to the northeast along The Green, providing separation between the historic farmstead buildings at Old Hall Farm, referred to in the conservation area appraisal as unlisted buildings of significance, and the more contemporary residences to the north.

The boundary of the Bagnall Conservation Area, at the western edge, follows the curtilage boundaries to the rear of the large bungalows on School Road to the north of the site. Although the Conservation Area includes these properties, and a substantial area to the northwest, that are not part of the original settlement, the boundary has been drawn to include a late farmstead at Manor Farm, and to provide a rural buffer between the Conservation Area and the contemporary buildings further to the north on Clewlow Bank.

From the southwest corner of the Fulwood curtilage, the boundary turns east. It runs across the southern edge of the curtilage, following the line of a dry-stone wall that encloses garden space, 11m from the side of the dwelling. The boundary meets School Road at the southeast corner of the dwelling's curtilage. From the road, the boundary steps or extends to the south, with a peninsula of greenery, to include the whole of the village green, before broadening out to the northeast to enclose the farm buildings at Old Hall Farm.

The Conservation Area is characterised by a series of small greens flanked to the south and west by a sinuous line of early farmhouses and farm buildings. Variable in shape, they result from the intersection of the numerous local drove roads that outline the closes. Discussing the setting of the Conservation Area and its green spaces, the appraisal notes that entering the village from the south, the surviving portion of Close 1 (which includes the open village green described above), creates an essential barrier

between old buildings and new, and gives an unbroken view of Old Hall Farm. The green mitigates the effects of modern development on the rest of the close and preserves the pastoral character of the village on its southern approach.

Discussing the erosion of historic detail, the appraisal notes that new building has robbed the western arm of the conservation area of much of its rural character, apart for the area immediately adjacent to Old Hall Farm.

This means that, in summary, important to the significance of the Conservation Area to the southern edge and the locality of the application site, the open village green:

- creates an essential barrier between old buildings and new
- provides setting and uninterrupted views of Old Hall Farm
- preserves the pastoral character of the village on its southern approach.
- mitigates the effects of modern development on the rest of the close
- provides a visually pleasing entrance to the village and accentuates the rural character of the Conservation Area

The development would not affect or interrupt the setting or views of Old Hall Farm.

However, the development would be adjacent to the green, flanking and enclosing the green, to the west, where otherwise it is open to undeveloped farmland and rural setting and surrounding the latter of which makes a positive contribution to the setting and significance of this rural Conservation Area. Where the row of large bungalows has already, to some extent, robbed the western side of the Conservation of its rural character, an extension to that row would exacerbate that impact and close down further the rural character and setting of the Conservation Area, particularly when experienced from within or across the green from the east and also on the approach to the village from the south.

The application of policies in the NPPF that protect designated heritage assets, in this case, provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. There would be less than substantial harm of a high degree to the setting of the Conservation Area. However, considered on balance, these are adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the small benefit associated with the delivery of a single dwelling. Those benefits would not amount to 'Public Benefit' that would outweigh the less than substantial harm and great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset's significance.

Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

All strands and elements of Local Plan policy converge to provide protection for the character and appearance of the locality and settlement setting through development that relates well to the form and pattern of existing development.

Specifically, SS9 (smaller villages) requires new development to reflect and enhance each village's special character and heritage by protecting and enhancing the setting and historic character of the village, including heritage assets.

Local Plan housing policy H1 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. Outside of the development boundaries, development

considered to be infill of an appropriate scale and character will be supported, provided that the development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development.

Local Plan design and landscape character policy DC1 and DC3 require all development to be well designed and to reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area; and, to protect and, where possible, enhance the setting of settlements by resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement.

On southerly approach to the village, sweeping views onto and across the village green are open towards surrounding farmland to the west and east. The setting to the southern edge of the village is open and undeveloped, distinctly rural with the built edge of the village presenting tree lines, open green, planted garden and stone walls that provide buffer and containment while allowing transition to a more suburban section of School Lane. Specifically, contained by dry stone wall, the garden to the side of Fulwood provides a significant width (11m) of maintained garden planting that blends between the farmland and the edge of the building. To the other side of the dwelling, adjacent to the north, within the recognised area of built settlement, the neighbouring bungalows in the row are tightly arranged with narrow gaps and spaces between buildings.

The application site is 11m from the adjacent building, separated by planted garden. The 15m width of the site is relatively narrow in comparison to the adjacent plots. This means that at the end of, and beyond, the tightly spaced row of bungalows there would be further building form encroaching beyond a significant gap and very likely filling the width of the plot without the pleasant garden surround that provides buffer to the side. The built form is likely to have hard edge very close to the adjacent to the field and appear as a prominent intrusion into the countryside. The proposed dwelling would disrupt the pattern, density and rhythm of existing development to the edge of the settlement and create a protrusion, exacerbated by an incorporation of irregular spacing, that creates or extends ribbon development to the south.

The proposed dwelling would erode and conceal the planted garden edge to the end of the existing development and provide a hard built edge to the southern end of the settlement, damaging views into the settlement from the south. To the west of the village green the dwelling would close and increase the built form that would flank the green, disrupting the open rural aspect that sweeps across the green to the west. This would be damaging to the public experience and enjoyment of the green and views across its open space, out of the village, toward the south and west.

In all of these regards there would be conflict with policies SS9, SS10, H1, DC1, and DC3 of the SMDC Local Plan 2020 and the terms of the NPPF.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The provision of a single dwelling would make a small contribution to

housing supply and there would be some small economic and community benefit associated with the development in those regards.

However, the application of the policies in the NPPF that protect an area of particular importance, the setting of Bagnall Conservation Area, a designated heritage asset, provide a strong reason for refusing the development.

The proposed development would, for the purposes of the NPPF, result in less than substantial harm, of a high degree, to the setting of the Conservation Area. The benefits associated with the development would not amount to 'Public Benefit' that would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the setting of the designated heritage asset and great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset's significance.

There would also be harm to the setting of the settlement and the distinctly rural character and appearance of the area.

Considered on balance, the harm to the setting of the Conservation Area; and the harm to the setting of the settlement and the distinctly rural character and appearance of the area, are adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the small benefit that would be associated with the development.

There would be conflict with policies SS9, SS10, H1, DC1, DC2 and DC3 of the SMDC Local Plan 2020 and the terms of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 19th January 2026

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council