

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2026/0117
Valid 30/03/2026

GARAGE REAR OF 1A
TOWN HEAD
ALTON

CONVERSION AND
EXTENSION OF EXISTING
GARAGE TO DWELLING
HOUSE
(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Design and amenity
- Development within a Conservation Area, heritage

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site consists of a single-story garage, toilet and store with greenhouses, shed and log store and is situated within the Alton Development Boundary and Conservation Area. It is located to the rear of 1A Town Head, where the garden has been divided and part (the application site) sold. The site is based in the settlement of Alton, which lies approximately 8km northwest of Uttoxeter. The site is adjacent to the Alton (St. Peter) Churchyard Extension to the west. With residential properties and their gardens being to the north, east and south. A footpath runs along the sites south border (Alton 157).

22 and 24 Townhead, which lies northwest of the site, is a Grade II Listed Building. The site is accessed via a driveway shared with the dwellings whose gardens face onto it.

According to the Heritage Statement accompanying the application, the existing garage was built in 2009 to building regulation standards, although a building regulation application was not submitted as it fell within permitted development guidelines. Ownership of the site was separated from 1A Town Head in 2012 and the garage has since been used as a garage for the storing of classic cars. Externally, there are a number of outbuildings on the site, including a garden shed, greenhouse, and log store. The log store shown on the plans is not separated by the red edge as it appears, the structure shown is in fact two separate buildings separated by a fence.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for the change of use of the garage into a 1-bedroom dwellinghouse, along with physical alterations to facilitate this. It is proposed to demolish the existing store and W/C and extend the garage northwest and convert the building into a single storey house.

The proposed extension adds 975mm to the length of the existing structure. The extension is narrower than the existing garage, the eaves and ridge heights are to be the same height as the garage and it is to be constructed of complementary materials. Revised plans have been received which show the dwelling wholly finished in red

brick, rather than the shiplap timber cladding originally proposed, and with a slightly larger extension as to meet the NDSS internal space minimums.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS8 Larger Villages Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
H1 New Housing Development
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 -14, 47, 109, 131, 135, 139, 207 – 221.

Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 9 – Promoting sustainable transport, 12 – Achieving well designed and beautiful places, 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands
- Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD
- Space About Dwellings SPD

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

- None relevant.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 05/05/2026

Neighbour consultation period ends: 05/05/2026

Press Advert: 06/05/2026

Public Comments

Two comments received:

Objection – concerns regarding highway safety, particularly for users of the footpath (which would also serve as the access road).

Neither object nor support – concern regarding highways access and highway safety as the access road is unadopted, with an increased risk for elderly pedestrians due to nearby housing.

Town / Parish Comments

None received.

SMDC Conservation

Recommend altering the facing materials as the proposed cladding would have a minor harmful impact on the Conservation Area. Recommended condition subject to this amendment:

No development shall be commenced in respect of the features identified below, until details of their design, fixing and finish in the form of manufacturer's specification or drawings and sections at a scale of not less than 1:10 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall thereafter be undertaken and retained for the lifetime of the development in accordance with the approved details.

- *Any new rooftiles to be used*
- *Ridge, verge and eaves details*
- *External facing materials for the extension*
- *New brickwork for the infill*
- *External windows and door details*
- *Any external vents and flues*

Reason: *To preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.*

SMDC Arboriculture

No objection.

SMDC Waste

Bins will need to be presented for collection at the curtilage of the property - adjacent to the public highway. There should be sufficient space at the proposed new dwelling for the storage of 3 wheeled bins and a food waste caddy.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection subject to condition.

The property is located to the rear of 1A Town Head. Town Head (Road No. D1359), an unclassified road that is subject to a speed limit of 30 mph, there are no footways, but streetlights are present.

To the rear of the 1A Town Head and also providing access to the garage is Headland Way (Road No. D1359). Headland Way leads to a row of bungalows and benefits from a footway and streetlighting; it terminates as public highway just beyond a tarmacked turning head where the surface changes into a hard stoned track. The track provides rear access to some properties on Town Head.

The site comprises a garage located to the rear of No. 1A Town Head. However, it has been confirmed by the agent that the garage has not been in the ownership of No. 1A Town Head since 2012. Public right of way footpath Alton 31 runs along Headland Way and follows the private track to connect with footpath Alton 55 on The Hurstons Footway.

Comment

The proposal is to convert a detached garage into a 1-bedroom dwelling. The conversion of the garage will create an ensuite bedroom, utility, WC, and hallway. An extension is also proposed this will provide an open plan living area.

The submitted plan titled Proposed Site Plan shows parking for 2 vehicles, this is in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Parking Standards which state a detached/semi-detached property of up to 3 bedrooms will require 2 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m each space) for residents and visitors.

The proposal would utilise the existing access serving the garage, and no alterations to the access arrangements are proposed.

It is considered the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the highway. I therefore have no objection to the proposal (application number SMD/2026/0117) subject to the following condition:

The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the parking area has been provided in accordance with the approved plan titled Proposed Site Plan. The parking area shall thereafter be retained unobstructed as a parking area for the life of the development.

REASONS: *To comply with NPPF; to comply with SMDC Local Plan policy DC1; in the interests of highway safety*

SMDC Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions:

Construction & Demolition Works: Time of operations

Unless prior permission has been obtained in writing from the Local Planning Authority, all noisy activities shall be restricted to the following times of operations.

- *08:00 - 18:00 hours (Monday to Friday);*
- *08:00 - 13:00 hours (Saturday)*
- *No working is permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays.*

In this instance a noisy activity is defined as any activity (for instance, but not restricted to, building construction/demolition operations, refurbishing and landscaping) which generates noise that is audible at the site boundary.

Reason: *To avoid the risk of disturbance to neighbouring dwellings from noise during unsocial hours.*

Construction & Demolition: Pollution Control

I. During construction/demolition phases amplified music and/or radios shall not be audible beyond the site boundary;

II. Any waste material associated with the demolition or construction shall not be burnt on site but shall be kept securely for removal to prevent escape into the environment. All waste transfer records should be retained for inspection by officers of the Local Planning Authority;

III. No activity hereby permitted shall cause dust to be emitted beyond the site boundary so as to adversely affect adjacent residential properties and/or other sensitive uses and/or the local environment. In the event dust is caused to escape the site boundary the activity shall be stopped until sufficient dust suppression has been undertaken to prevent further escape. There shall always be the appropriate means and sufficient water resources on site for dust suppression. These should be made available for inspection when required by officers of the Local Planning Authority

Reason: To protect the amenities of the area during construction

Contamination

Development shall not commence until a site risk assessment has been undertaken to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. Once completed, a written report of the findings and recommendations shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If the site risk assessment indicates that potential risks exist, development shall not commence, until a detailed remediation strategy to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use has been prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme and prior to bringing the development into first use, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

If, during the course of development, any contamination is found which has not been identified in the site investigation, additional measures for the remediation of this source of contamination shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The remediation of the site shall incorporate the approved additional measures.

Reason - To ensure that the proposed development meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in that all potential risks to human health, controlled waters and wider environment are known and where necessary dealt with via remediation and or management of those risks.

Lighting

The artificial lighting incorporated into this site in connection to this application shall not cause glare or increase the pre-existing illuminance or caused glare at the adjoining light sensitive locations when the light (s) is (are) in operation. Details of all artificial lighting to be installed under this permission should be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to development commencing.

Reason: To protect the local amenities of the local residents by reason of excess of illuminance.

Peak and Northern Footpaths Society

The use of any PROWs, and the safety of users must not be affected by the development, nor during the work taking place.

Ramblers Society

At the rear of 1A Town Head is a P.R.O.W footpath Alton 31 which will run close to where the proposed development will take place. This must not affect the use of this path by the public in any way.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

In its general approach, in accordance with Policy SS1, 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 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 the Local Plan shall be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy SS2 the Settlement Hierarchy for the borough, states that Rural Area Larger Villages are the most sustainable settlements in the rural areas, and the spatial strategy focuses the bulk of the rural development in these settlements and seeks to ensure that they are sustained and promoted as service centres. These settlements will be defined by a Development Boundary. The site is located within the Alton Development Boundary. Policy SS8 states that the Council will aim to help meet housing requirements by supporting the development of housing windfall sites within the village boundaries, subject to wider Local Plan policies, such as Policy H1 - New Housing Development. Policy H1 states that housing development on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H 2 will be supported as follows:

- a) Within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages, residential development and development on unidentified (windfall) sites will be permitted, subject to compliance with the Spatial Strategy and wider Local Plan policies.

As the proposed development falls within the settlement boundary for Alton the principle of development is acceptable in line with Policies SS8 and H1. The main issues are assessed under the various subheadings below.

Design

SMDC Policy DC1 requires development to be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area; and 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, character and appearance.

Paragraphs 131 and 135 of the NPPF outline what is expected of good design and required for the development of high quality, beautiful places, and provides for a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Design Guide SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that extensions should harmonise with the parent building. For a development to be considered appropriate in terms of its size and massing, the Council would universally expect to see extensions subordinate to the dominance of the original building. In this case, the parent building is ancillary in nature as it was originally built as a garage, and will come together with the extension to form a new dwelling. Nevertheless, the extension still respects the dominance of the existing garage to be converted by being set down at the roof ridge and set back from the principal elevation. The proposed materials complement each other and are in keeping with the locality. As such, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of design and compliant with Policy DC1.

Amenity

Paragraph 135 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity. The proposed development comprises of a modest extension to an existing garage building in order to facilitate a change of use of that building to form a 1 bed dwellinghouse. The site is bounded by 1A Town Head to the north and east, and the graveyard to the west. There is an approx. 30 metre separation between the proposed dwelling and the rear elevation of 1A, and as a single storey dwelling it would not overlook or overshadow neighbours. In order to protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and for highway safety reasons, certain Permitted Development Rights will be removed by way of condition. The SMDC Spaces About Dwelling SPD states that dwellings with Permitted Development rights removed should have a garden area of at least 65m², not including outbuildings. It shall be conditioned that PD rights removed for this dwelling, and so the 65m² minimum applies. The garden is approx. 296m² excluding outbuildings, and therefore complies with policy.

Nationally Described Space Standards

The proposed dwelling has an internal floor area of approximately 51.55m², which was calculated using the measuring tool on Adobe Acrobat Reader. The NDSS sets out that a single storey 1 bed 2-person dwelling house have an internal floor area of no less than 50m², 1.5m² of built in storage, with a double bedroom floor area of at least 11.5m² and at least is at least 2.75m wide. In this case, the double bedroom is over 3.3m wide, 11.6m² and has 1.9m² of built in storage. As such, the proposed development exceeds the NDSS minimums.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to

making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development can accommodate the required vehicular parking, in line with Appendix 2. The property is located to the rear of 1A Town Head. Town Head (Road No. D1359), an unclassified road that is subject to a speed limit of 30 mph, there are no footways, but streetlights are present. To the rear of the 1A Town Head and also providing access to the garage is Headland Way (Road No. D1359). Headland Way leads to a row of bungalows and benefits from a footway and streetlighting; it terminates as public highway just beyond a tarmacked turning head where the surface changes into a hard stoned track. The track provides rear access to some properties on Town Head including the application site.

The site comprises a garage located to the rear of No. 1A Town Head. However, it has been confirmed by the agent that the garage has not been in the ownership of No. 1A Town Head since 2012. Public right of way footpath Alton 31 runs along Headland Way and follows the private track to connect with footpath Alton 55 on The Hurstons Footway.

The submitted plan titled Proposed Site Plan shows parking for 2 vehicles, this is in accordance with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Parking Standards which state a detached/semi-detached property of up to 3 bedrooms will require 2 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m each space) for residents and visitors.

Some concerns have been raised by local residents regarding highway safety at the site, with anecdotal evidence of collisions. SCC Highways have assessed the proposal and determined that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the public highway (Headland Way) and therefore have no objection to the proposal subject to a parking condition. With regards to the private access track and footpath, it is not considered that the proposed use would pose a significant or undue intensification of this access as this is already in frequent vehicular use as a garage and the proposal is for a one bedroom house with turning and parking facilities provided within the site ensuring that vehicles can enter and leave in forward gear. It is also in a sustainable location. As such, it is considered that the proposed development would comply with Policy T1 and is acceptable in terms of highway safety.

Heritage

Policy DC2 seeks to preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting, and ensure that proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment. All applications likely to affect a heritage asset will need to be accompanied by a heritage statement.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the general duty of local planning authorities in respect to determining applications regarding listed buildings. S.66 (1) and (2) states the LPA shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the general duty of local planning authorities in respect to determining applications regarding conservation areas. S.72 (1) states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

While the site is within the Alton Conservation Area, the existing garage is of no heritage value; it is a pitched roof constructed of red brick (render to the rear) and plain tile roof with a lean-to finished in black timber cladding.

The Conservation Officer raises no objection to the proposed extension of the building. She comments that this would still be relatively modest in scale to the existing building and would not dominate or distract from any positive buildings in the Conservation Area. It would increase the visibility and prominence from the graveyard, but if detailed sympathetically this would not harm the appreciation and experience of this part of the Conservation Area.

The proposed blue clay tiles mentioned in the application form would be sympathetic to the surrounding built heritage. The Conservation Officer recommended the change in materials for the extension to brick to be more appropriate to the heritage context. Such revisions have been made, and therefore it is considered that the proposed development complies with Policy DC2 of the Local Plan and section 16 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains. This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. Development subject to the de minimis exemption that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat is exempt from having to supply this 10% uplift.

The application is accompanied by a biodiversity and landscaping plan, however this is not required for a BNG assessment as the site is exempt under the 'de minimis' exemption as less than 25m² of habitat is impacted. The removal of the existing lean-to and addition of the garage would only add a net 8m² to the footprint – i.e. 8m² habitat loss. Including the proposed parking area would bring the total up to 22m² as the proposed parking area occupies 14m² of habitat (non-hardstanding land, in this case lawn).

Other Matters

The application was originally not submitted with a Certificate B notifying other landowners of the planning application, which is required because the red edge includes the access track to the site which is not under the sole ownership of the applicant. Certificate B has now been provided, and an additional 21-day notification period has since passed. Therefore, it is considered that ample notice was served to interested parties prior to determining the application.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

On balance, the proposed development is considered to comply with all relevant local and national policy and guidance. The site is within the development boundary of Alton, where housing development on windfall sites is supported (subject to compliance with other LP policies), as well as the Conservation Area, however the Conservation Officer has confirmed that the proposed development would not negatively impact the CA, subject to revised materials which have since been supplied.

SCC Highways have assessed the development and confirmed that, subject to a parking condition, the application would not have a detrimental effect on highway safety. The impact from the proposal would also not greatly intensify the existing vehicular use. The proposal is also exempt from BNG due to the de minimis exemption.

Therefore the recommendation is to approve.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE, subject to conditions

Case Officer: Reuben Berriman

Recommendation Date: 07/07/2026

X 

Signed by: Jane Curley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council