

Land adjacent to Westerdale, Birchall Lane, Leek

Planning Submission

Design and Access Statement

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David and Shirley Jackson-Hulme

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1.0 Introduction

- This planning application is for the construction of a single one-off, detached dwelling on land to the west of Westerdale, Birchall Lane, Leek. The site currently forms part of the curtilage of Westerdale, a large detached dwelling, built in 1929.
- This application is made by David and Shirley Jackson-Hulme, who have owned and lived in Westerdale for 15 years. Westerdale was purchased as a home for them and their three children, all of whom have now moved away. If successful in achieving planning permission, David and Shirley intend to live in the new dwelling.

2.0 Site Context

- The application site is a triangular plot forming the westernmost part of the garden to Westerdale. Due to the topography of the site and surrounding area, the plot sits some 2 metres lower than the main 'formal' garden to Westerdale and 4 metres below the ground floor level of Westerdale house itself. The site is terraced rather than sloping.
- The site was originally cultivated as a fruit garden but is currently laid to lawn with a shrub border. This lower garden is rarely used by the inhabitants of Westerdale mainly due to the fact that it sits away from the house and is in addition to the main higher garden.
- Westerdale is a detached dwelling with white rendered walls, a large tiled hipped roof and very generous windows. Within the grounds of the house is a white rendered, detached garage with a large gabled, tiled roof. Westerdale sits at the back of its plot, orientated towards the west, in front of a stone-faced wall that retains the garden of Woodlands to the east.
- Westerdale is served from the north fork of Birchall Lane. The driveway sits directly adjacent to that of Woodlands and is opposite the junction with Rivendell Lane.
- The housing stock along Birchall Lane is predominantly composed of single one-off houses sitting within their own plot, with the exception of an 'estate style' development to the south of Westerdale, built within the garden of Sundown (Application number 04/00363/FUL). Birchall was developed over a long period of time with many houses being built in gardens. The 'one-off' nature of the developments has resulted in a diverse selection of house types and styles with materials such as render, brick, timber, stone, Staffordshire blue tiles and grey slates being utilised.
- Precedent for houses built or given permission to be built within existing gardens/plots of land in the area exists –
 - SMD/2012/0981 Woodside, Cheddleton Road
 - SMD/2012/0135 Hillside, Cheddleton Road

- SMD/2009/1101 Larkshill, Cheddleton Road
- SMD/2008/0634 Brooklands, Cheddleton Road
- SMD/2008/0034 Fairlawn, Cheddleton Road
- SMD/2003/0499 Blackthorn House, Cheddleton Road
- SMD/2001/1339 Greenways, Cheddleton Road
- SMD/2002/0730 Land to the rear of the Gables, Birchall Lane
- SMD/2001/0629 Land at Birchall Close

3.0 The Proposal

- This proposal involves dividing the garden at Westerdale along a natural break line, between the higher and lower level gardens. The higher, formal garden would be allocated to the existing house, Westerdale, which will remain, with the lower garden becoming the plot to which this application relates.
- It is intended that the mature and beautifully planted higher garden remain within the curtilage of the original house with a new garden being cultivated at the lower level to suit the proposed 3 bedroom dwelling.
- The proposed dwelling would be located towards the back (east) of the site, having a similar relationship with its rear boundary and main garden as Westerdale currently enjoys – the front of the dwelling facing its garden. The existing terraced nature of the site would allow the new house to be located at a much lower level than Westerdale, thus minimising the impact on the existing house. The proposed dwelling would be tucked in behind the well-established 4 metre high Beech hedges to the perimeter of the site.
- For David and Shirley, it is important that the proposed dwelling meet some particular criteria,
 - The design must be high quality, paying attention to the site context and adjacent dwellings;
 - The layout must be adaptable in order to accommodate them into old age in addition to young grandchildren and family;
 - As keen gardeners it is important that the house has a good connection with the garden, making the most of its orientation and providing a space for growing vegetables as well lawns and flower beds;
 - The house must be energy efficient in construction, reducing heat-loss and energy consumption to ensure that it has minimal impact on the environment and is affordable to run in the future;
 - Although Westerdale has been a much-loved family home, the house and garden are too large for the requirements of David and Shirley and are much more suited to a younger family with children at home. If this application is successful, David and Shirley will be afforded the opportunity to continue living in the Birchall area.

4.0 Design, Scale and Massing

- The proposed dwelling is detached and provides 3 bedrooms. In order to reduce the overall footprint and scale of the new house, it is intended that the living space be split over ground and first floor levels with the main bedroom being on the first floor level and the two additional bedrooms being within the roof space.
- The design of the proposed dwelling takes cues from many of the existing Birchall houses; however, the proposal is intended to be a pared back version, simple and contemporary in appearance. The house will be rectangular in shape with a slate, gabled roof. The principle windows will be located towards the front of the dwelling and its garden. The windows will have a grey, metal frame. It is intended that the house references the architectural style of the original 'Birchall houses' but is not a pastiche of an existing house type – it is appropriate because it celebrates the character of the area but does not imitate.
- The external walls will be a mixture of timber cladding and render as seen on Westerdale, Woodlands, Birchall House and The Moorings. Precedent for gabled rooflines has been set by Woodlands and Birchall House, amongst others.
- Each house built along Birchall Lane is in some way a reflection of the time in which it was built - Westerdale itself is a good representation of suburban arts and crafts style architecture. It is intended that the new dwelling be simple in design but also clearly of its time - The modest form, together with the use of vernacular, local materials mean that this house will sit comfortably not only in the plot but also within its suburban surroundings.
- A garage will be provided and partially built into the house at the top of the driveway. A standalone garage cannot be accommodated on the plot. The original garage at Westerdale had a similar relationship with the house.
- The topography of the ground and the height of the existing Beech hedge create a naturally hidden pocket towards the bottom of the existing garden to Westerdale. These natural features allow a house to nestle discreetly within the plot identified on the street impact assessment, accompanying this application.

5.0 Amount

- The proposal is for the construction of a single, one off detached dwelling with 3 bedrooms. The proposed site is approximately 734 sq m in size. The footprint of the proposed dwelling and garage is 103 sq m, covering 14% of the proposed site area. The size of the plot remaining to Westerdale is approximately 1844 sq m in size. The footprint of the existing dwelling and garage, at Westerdale is 245 sq m, covering 13% of the remaining site area. Westerdale, a detached 4 bedroom house will be retained under separate ownership.

6.0 Layout, Privacy and Daylighting/Sunlighting

- Please refer to the drawings submitted with this application for details of the site and building layouts.
- The proposed dwelling uses the existing topography and landscaping to its advantage, providing privacy for it and neighbouring houses. The proposed house is orientated away from Westerdale and towards the West. The main façade of the dwelling is almost perpendicular to any other dwelling along Birchall Lane.
- The new dwelling does not impact on any other in terms of daylighting or sunlighting. The position of the new dwelling within the plot leaves a garden that is able to benefit from an east-west sunpath.

7.0 Landscaping

- The proposed house will be located to the rear of the site. The site will be accessed from the northern branch of Birchall Lane (an unadopted private road) via a driveway to the west of the existing driveway access to Westerdale. The new plot sits some 2 metres lower than the existing garden to Westerdale. To the front (west) of the proposed property will be a garden that will contain flowerbeds and trees with the existing Beech hedge to the perimeter. To the south of the proposed property will be an area for growing vegetables and storing logs.
- A rockery currently forms the retaining structure for the higher garden terrace level. In order to create additional space on the new plot, it is proposed that this be removed and replaced with a dry stone wall faced retaining structure, reusing the rockery stone, that will sit behind the new house.
- It is proposed that permeable paving be used around the perimeter of the new dwelling for access and to provide an area on which to sit in warmer months.

8.0 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires development to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. We believe that the proposed development meets this target in the following ways,
 - The provision of an individually designed house along Birchall Lane will provide an additional dwelling within Leek's development boundary, within a particularly desirable area. This contributes to *widening the choice of high quality homes*. Leek town centre is a 20 minute walk from Birchall Lane. Allowing the construction of an additional

dwelling in this location will undoubtedly bring additional support for the town centre and its amenities.

- By allowing Shirley and David Jackson-Hulme the opportunity to build a house suitable for them into their retirement they are able to continue living within an area with which they have strong links. Westerdale will be inhabited and enjoyed by another family. This builds on and strengthens an existing community.
- It is the intention that the house be constructed to minimise heat loss and pollution and to use natural resources prudently. The house has been designed and positioned to enhance the environment within which it sits. The garden and vegetable garden will improve the biodiversity of the area and in turn contribute to environmental sustainability by providing a food source for the occupants of the house. A bus stop with links to both Leek and Hanley is located within 200 metres of the application site.
- The NPPF also states that planning should *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings* - both achieved by this proposal. The design of the proposal is high quality, specifically designed and positioned to respect the local character whilst achieving a good level of accommodation and amenity for both its inhabitants and those of Westerdale.
- The NPPF also recommends that Local Planning Authorities plan for a *mix of housing based on the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)*.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) Adopted Core Strategy

- The SMDC Core Strategy states that Leek Area Strategy seeks to *increase the range of available and affordable house types, especially for first time buyers and older people*. Shirley and David Jackson-Hulme have lived within the Staffordshire Moorlands for the whole of their married life with Shirley's family being one of the oldest farming families in the town. This proposal would allow them to continue residing in an area which has been their home for many years during their retirement.
- The site is considered to be in a sustainable location and the 'development' is designed to minimise energy needs and achieve energy savings. For these reasons it is believed that this proposal accords with policy SD1. The plot also allows for the efficient use of land, in line with the NPPF and SMDC Core Strategy.
- Section 8.4 of the Core Strategy document states a need to *ensure that an appropriate range and type of housing is provided which meets identified needs arising from changes in population structure including special needs for the elderly, and promotes higher quality, more sustainable housing design and layout*. This proposal provides a house type designed for an active couple approaching retirement – the house is a high quality design constructed to ensure low energy usage and therefore low energy bills; it has an open plan layout allowing flexibility internally as well as space for a lift should one ever be required; the ratio of garden to house is

appropriate for keen gardeners but not so large as to become problematic. The house has been designed with Lifetime Homes in mind.

- Policy DC1 states that *new development should be of a high quality, incorporating detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area; be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance; incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts, protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.* As described in sections 4.0-7.0 of this statement, we believe that this proposal successfully addresses all these points.
- As described in sections 4.0-7.0 of this statement, we believe that the proposal *respects and enhances local landscape character* and utilises *sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape*, in line with Policy DC3.

SMDC Design Principles SPD: New Dwellings and Extension to Dwellings

- The proposed dwelling makes use of the existing landscape features to enhance the design whilst also protecting the character of the area – it nestles in behind the existing and well established beech hedge, utilises the existing terraced nature of the ground and relates to the neighbouring houses in terms of scale, proportion, massing and materials.
- The roof form is simple with a dominant roofline. The pitch and materials are appropriate to the locality.
- Roof lights are located on the reverse slope of the roof, do not protrude above the roof slope and are aligned horizontally.
- In order to maintain a private rear elevation, the windows are located mainly to the front of the property and are positioned and sized to maximise natural light ingress – this is key to the sustainability of the dwelling and is made possible by the short front-rear dimension and open plan floor arrangement.
- The proposed garage is modest in size.
- The proposed materials have been chosen because they are high quality and appropriate to the locality. The way that the materials are applied to the building and the well-considered detailing used will allow the house to sit comfortably within its surroundings whilst also standing apart from the ubiquitous new home design frequently found across the country.

9.0 Conclusion

- This is an opportunity to create a well-designed, contemporary house within an existing residential area. David and Shirley are committed to investing in this proposal and continuing to enjoy living within this community for the long term.
- When they moved to Westerdale some 15 years ago, the house was in a great state of disrepair having been previously lived in by an aged couple who were unable to look after the property or its extensive gardens. The Jackson-Hulmes have worked for 15 years to create a beautiful home and garden which they and their family love and is an asset to the local area. However, they recognise the amount of constant work and attention that a property and garden of this size require and for this reason they wish to allow another family to take over their legacy and move into a smaller more manageable house within the local area. This proposal allows this to be achieved.
- The care, love and pride that David and Shirley have invested in Westerdale and therefore the local area is very apparent and will continue if they are given the opportunity to continue living on Birchall Lane. The fact that they wish to live within the proposed dwelling guarantees that the house will be constructed and maintained to a high quality. It is also a guarantee that they wish only to make a positive impact on the local area.
- The proposal has been designed with respect to the site, locality and Local and National Planning Guidance as explored addressed by this report. We believe that the proposed dwelling should be granted planning approval because it complies with Planning Guidance and improves and enhances the local area.