

Application No: 11/3330C

Location: 20, BLADON CRESCENT, ALSAGER, ST7 2BG

Proposal: 1 1/2 OR 2 STOREY DWELLING, ACCESS, TURNING, PARKING AND SINGLE GARAGE WITHIN CURTILAGE.

Applicant: MR/MRS DE CONINCK

Expiry Date: 31-Oct-2011

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

- Principle of the Development
- Scale
- Layout
- Amenity
- Character of the Area
- Access and Highways

REASON FOR REFERRAL

Called in by Councillor S Jones on the following grounds: *“Access onto Bladon Crescent on elbow bend which is already cluttered with vehicular accesses. Unneighbourly to properties on both sides as the driveway is pushed in between two existing driveways. Will impinge on the privacy of residents of No.18 Bladon Crescent due to proposed location of property and indecision regarding height.”*

DESCRIPTION AND SITE CONTEXT

The application relates to an area of garden sited to the rear of number 20 Bladon Crescent and 161 Sandbach Road North, Alsager. The site is within the settlement zone line of Alsager and the surrounding development consists of a mixture of residential dwellings.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks outline planning permission for the erection of one detached dwelling to the rear of 20 Bladon Crescent, Alsager. The matters that detailed approval is sought for are access and scale. Appearance, landscaping and layout are reserved for later consideration. The application states that the dwelling would be 1.5 or 2 storey and the access would be taken from Bladon Crescent, between numbers 18 and 20.

RELEVANT HISTORY

11/2371C	Outline application for dwelling	Withdrawn 2011
09/3468T	Fell Oak Tree	Consent 2009

08/1587/OUT Outline application for dwelling	Refused 2008
08/1586/OUT Outline application for dwelling	Refused 2008
08/0451/OUT Outline application for dwelling	Withdrawn 2008
08/0450/OUT Outline application for dwelling	Withdrawn 2008

POLICIES

National Guidance

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3 – Housing

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 Spatial Principles

DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities

DP4 Making the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure

DP5 Manage Travel Demand: Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility

DP7 Promote Environmental Quality

DP9 Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change

RDF1 Spatial Priorities

L2 Understanding Housing Markets

L4 Regional Housing Provision

RT2 Managing Travel Demand

RT9 Walking and Cycling

EM1 Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets

Congleton Local Plan 2005

PS4 – Plan strategy

GR1 - General criteria for new development

GR2 - Design

GR6 – Amenity & health

GR9 - Highways safety & car parking

H1 – Provision of new housing development

H2 – Housing supply

H4 – Residential development in towns

SPD2 –Private Open Space

Other Material Considerations

Draft National Planning Policy Framework

Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth (23rd March 2011)

The Minister of State for Decentralisation issued this statement on 23rd March 2011 and advice from the Chief Planner, Steve Quartermain states that it is capable of being regarded as a material consideration. Inter alia it includes the following:

*“When deciding whether to grant planning permission, local planning authorities should support enterprise and facilitate **housing**, economic and other forms of sustainable development. Where relevant – and consistent with their statutory obligations – they should therefore:*

- (i) Consider fully the importance of national planning policies aimed at fostering economic growth and employment, given the need to ensure a return to robust growth after recent recession;*
- (ii) Take into account the need to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of land for key sectors, including housing;*
- (iii) Consider the range of likely economic, environmental and social benefits of proposals; including long term or indirect benefits such as increased customer choice, more viable communities and more robust local economies (which may, where relevant, include matters such as job creation and business productivity);*
- (iv) Be sensitive to the fact that local economies are subject to change and so take a positive approach to development where new economic data suggest that prior assessments of needs are no longer up-to-date;*
- (v) Ensure that they do not impose unnecessary burdens on development.*

The Government has also stated that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This states inter alia that: *“There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the planning system, which should be central to the approach taken to both plan-making and decision-taking. Local planning authorities should plan positively for new development, and approve all individual proposals wherever possible.”*

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Environmental Health:

Request conditions relating to contaminated land and hours of construction and piling.

Highways

This is the third application for this development and further negotiations with the applicant's agent have resulted in an amended plan to show required highway detail which will mitigate highway concern on this site. It is acknowledged that the required detail can be provided on site.

The Strategic Highways Manager therefore recommends the following informative be attached to any permission which may be granted for the development proposal:

Informative:- The developer will enter into and sign a Section 184 Agreement under the Highways Act 1980, and a properly constructed vehicular crossing will be provided for the development in accordance with Highway Authority specifications.

VIEWS OF TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL

The Town Council objects to this application as it is un-neighbourly to 18 Bladon Crescent. The application would also sizably reduce the plot of 20 Bladon Crescent and therefore No. 20 would be out of keeping with the existing street

scene. The Town Council feel that the ingress and egress of the proposed driveway onto a sharp bend would be dangerous.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Five objections have been received relating to this application expressing the following concerns:

- Highway safety
- Loss of residential amenity
- No demand for new housing in Alsager
- Loss of garden to number 20 Bladon Crescent
- Loss of privacy
- Damage during construction
- Garden grabbing
- Danger to children caused by new drive
- Creation of a concrete jungle
- Removal of a protected tree

The local MP, Fiona Bruce has also written to the Chief Executive to pass on the concerns of three of her constituents. These concerns are included above.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is designated as being within the Settlement Zone Line of Alsager where there is a general presumption in favour of development provided that it is in keeping with the scale and character of the town. Therefore the proposal should be judged on the criteria laid out in the individual sections of this report.

On 9th June 2010 the Coalition Government amended PPS3. As a result garden land is now classed as Greenfield rather than Brownfield land. Nevertheless the application site is situated within the settlement zone line of Alsager as defined on the adopted Local Plan where there is a general presumption in favour of new development as indicated by policy PS4 of that Plan, which also does not have a saved policy relating to backland development.

National policy guidance (PPS3) states that Local Authorities should manage their housing provision to provide a five year supply. It is acknowledged that the Council does not currently have a five year housing land supply and, accordingly, in the light of the advice contained in PPS3 it should consider favourably suitable planning applications for housing. Therefore, the proposal would assist the Council to meet its housing land requirements and would ease pressure on large previously undeveloped greenfield sites elsewhere within the Borough generally.

Highways

Following the previous applications, the Strategic Highways Manager has been in negotiation with the applicant in order to secure measures that mitigate highway concerns. He now considers that a safe access can be provided to the proposed new dwelling. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in highway safety terms and is therefore in compliance with Policy GR9 of the adopted local plan.

Scale

The application states that the dwelling would be 1.5 or 2 storey and the actual design would be determined at the reserved matters stage. The properties on Bladon Crescent, adjacent to the site are simple 2 storey dwellings. To the south the properties are chalet style dwellings with accommodation in the roof space and to the west on Sandbach Road South there are substantial detached dwellings. It is therefore considered that a 1.5 or 2 storey dwelling would be acceptable and in keeping with the character of the area. The block plan indicates that the maximum roof height would be 8 metres, and this is considered to be acceptable in this area of mixed dwelling types.

Layout

The layout of the proposal is reserved for determination at a later stage, however it is important to assess whether the plot is capable of accommodating a new dwelling. The previous application was withdrawn as it was considered that there would be a cramped form of development given the size and shape of the plot. This application provides a larger and more usable space in which to accommodate a dwelling and provide adequate residential amenity space for future occupants.

Amenity

Policy GR6 requires that proposals should not result in loss of privacy, sunlight/daylight, visual intrusion, environmental disturbance or pollution or traffic generation, access and parking. Having regard to this proposal it would be possible to ensure that windows are sited in such a way as not to impinge on the privacy of neighbouring properties. Given the distances that could be achieved between the proposed dwelling and the neighbouring properties, there would not be a significant loss of light to any of these properties caused by the erection of the dwelling.

The occupier of number 18 Bladon Crescent has raised concerns relating to disturbance and safety issues that could potentially be caused by the driveway passing alongside their property. Whilst these concerns are understood, the current situation at the site, whereby vehicles belonging to 20 Bladon Crescent, could park immediately adjacent to the side elevation of this property, means that the addition of the driveway to the proposed dwelling, would not represent a significant increase in disturbance, sufficient to warrant refusal of the application on these grounds. However it is considered that a condition should be imposed requiring submission of details of the driveway, in order to ensure that it is constructed from materials that will cause minimum disturbance when vehicles pass over it.

Having regard to the amenities of future occupiers of the dwelling and number 20 Bladon Crescent, there would be adequate useable private amenity space.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy GR6 of the adopted local plan.

Impact on the Character of the Area

The surrounding area comprises a variety of property types and garden sizes, therefore it is not considered that a refusal on the grounds of adverse impact on the character of the area, could be sustained. In addition the dwelling would be barely visible from the street; therefore adverse impact on the street scene could not be a reasonable reason for refusal of the application.

Landscape and Trees

There is some existing vegetation on the site of the proposed development, mainly shrubs and some immature trees. The vegetation is not widely visible to the public and is not of any significant merit although some elements may provide screening to the neighbouring property to the south east. It is likely that some of this vegetation would have to be removed in order to accommodate the development as indicated on the block plan.

Landscaping of the site is reserved for determination at a later stage, therefore ensuring that the site is adequately landscaped will be determined at that stage.

There was previously an Oak Tree, subject of a Tree Preservation Order, in the garden of 161 Sandbach Road North that would have been adversely impacted by the proposed development. Consent was granted in 2009 to fell the tree as it was affected by decay fungus that compromised its long term health and safety. The tree is to be replaced in a position to be agreed by the Council's Tree Officer.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of the national policy and the development plan in terms of the issues addressed above and therefore approval of this application is recommended subject to the following conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Submission of reserved matters within 3 years**
- 2. Commencement of development within 2 years of approval of the last reserved matters**
- 3. Development in accordance with agreed drawings**
- 4. Approval of the details of appearance, landscaping and layout (the reserved matters) shall be obtained from the LPA in writing before any development is commenced.**
- 5. Submission of detailed drainage scheme**
- 6. Limits on hours of construction**
- 7. Limits on hours of piling**
- 8. Submission of detailed access and junction plans**
- 9. Submission of details of the materials to be used for the construction of the driveway**
- 10. Submission of details of boundary treatments**

