

Application No: 12/4750C

Location: 63, FIELDS ROAD, ALSAGER, ST7 2LX

Proposal: Demolition of extensions and refurbishment of original dwelling house.
Construction of new detached dwelling house within the garden curtilage
(Conservation Area consent)

Applicant: MR & MRS GOODALL

Expiry Date: 30-Jan-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the Conservation Area

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This type of application would usually be dealt with under delegated powers; however Councillor Shirley Jones has called in the planning application into Committee for the following reason, and for completeness the Conservation Area Consent has also been put to committee.

'I am 'calling in' this application as Ward Councillor as it has come to my notice that there are strong objections to this proposed development on the grounds of unneighbourliness. The residents of Ashmead who live in bungalows for elderly people are very concerned about the impact the proposed new dwelling will have on the amenities of their homes.'

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is situated on Fields Road, within the Alsager settlement zone line. The application site is a former care home and is a substantial detached Victorian dwellinghouse. The building is sited within the Alsager Conservation Area and there are two TPO trees on the site. The building was purchased in 2003 by the current occupier and occupied as a single residential property.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks permission to demolish the rear and side extensions of the existing building within the Alsager Conservation Area.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

14772/3 - Change of use from dwellinghouse to private accommodation for the elderly – Approved with conditions 8th March 1983

17500/3 - Extensions to existing building to form additional bedrooms (6 no)- Approved with conditions 14th March 1986

18357/4 - Partial Demolition Of Outbuildings And Construction Of New Gable – Approved with condition 10th March 1987

21609/3 - Extension To Provide Three Additional Bedrooms –Approved with conditions 16th October 1989

26373/3 - Additional bedrooms and ancillary accommodation to nursing home – Refused 27th September 1994

28738/3 - Removing existing doors and rebuilding with window & general repairs (front elevation) – 4th February 1997

30757/3 - Single storey extensions to side/rear of existing residential nursing home and two storey extension to front to provide nine additional bedrooms, laundry room, boiler room, staff changing/welfare facilities and new entrance/reception – Approved with conditions 12th April 1999

35038/3 - Change of use from nursing home to part residential, part bed/breakfast – Approved with conditions 25th November 2002

05/1245/COU - Change of use from former nursing home bedrooms attached to domestic property into office space – Approved with conditions 19th December 2005

07/1264/COU - To establish existing Coach House as a separate dwelling from 63 Fields Road – Approved with conditions 7th February 2008

5. POLICIES

POLICIES

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

Congleton Local Plan 2005

The site is not allocated in the Local Plan but the following policies apply:

BH9 Conservation Areas

BH10 Demolition in Conservation Area

6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning) – None received at time of writing this report

7. VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL - Alsager Town Council has no objection to this application. Alsager Town Council would recommend that the refurbishment of the new dwelling be completed before the new build work commences. Alsager town Council would note that the new building is very close to the existing property.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

- Letters of representation have been received from the occupiers of 8 residences. The main issues raised are;
 - Impact on neighbouring amenity by means of overlooking
 - Would have no objection to a true bungalow being built on the site
 - Happy that the owners are improving the area
 - Conservation Area
 - Not in keeping with surrounding area
 - Plans which have been submitted are not those shown at the public consultation
 - Proposed demolition is welcomed
 - Proposal is un-neighbourly
 - New build is to the southerly aspect of the Close and if too high would deprive residents of sunlight and much need Vitamin D
 - The existing building has rats
- A petition has also been signed by 12 occupiers.

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement
Heritage Statement
Tree Survey

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

The main issues that require consideration in this application are the impact on the character and appearance of the Alsager Conservation Area. Policy BH10 states that: *"Conservation Area Consent and/or planning permission, as relevant, for the demolition of a building or group of buildings which significantly contribute to the present character or appearance of a Conservation Area will not be granted unless the harm from the loss was outweighed by the public benefits of an approved replacement scheme."*

No. 63 Fields Road is a substantial villa property situated in the Alsager Conservation Area. This is a predominantly residential area, focused upon the Victorian/Edwardian suburbs in proximity to the railway station. The Conservation Area is characterised by a variety of properties of different architectural styles and periods, but there are also a number of larger, higher status villas in the Conservation Area. These buildings provide focal points and key landmark features within the Conservation Area, and include 63 Fields Road.

The agent for the application has researched the history of the building and this has highlighted that it was one of the earlier large Villas, built for the owner of John Maddock and Sons, one of the pottery works in Burslem. What is also clear from that research and from examining the historic maps, is that it had an extensive curtilage and it was orientated toward the south, towards Sandbach Road. This is evident in the architecture of the building, with its more ornate southern frontage. However, over time this setting has been significantly undermined by infill development, impacting upon the individual significance of the building.

The western elevation toward Fields Road, was a secondary frontage and the area to the rear of the building, which is the site of this application, was the working end of the building. The property has gone through various phases of expansion and adaptation. The original part is the most ornate and polite architecturally. This was extended with a wing to the north in the early 1900s (the part proposed to be demolished along with late 20th century extensions), that connected to the coach house to the north. This connection has more recently been changed, with the demolition of much of the coach house and sale of garden land, which is now housing. The frontage part of the coach house remains, converted into a separate dwelling (61A).

The proposals seek to demolish this rear wing and erect a new dwelling to the rear of the retained part of the building, effectively creating 2 independent dwellings. The Heritage Statement explains that several scenarios for retaining and re-using the entire building, except the modern inferior extensions, have been examined but concludes that the only viable solution is to demolish the rear wing, reduce the size of the host building and create the opportunity for an infill dwelling.

The NPPF at paragraphs 137 and 138 specifically discuss Conservation Areas and the buildings and features within them, identifying the opportunities for new development to better reveal their significance (para 137) and that loss of a building or other element which makes a positive contribution, should be treated as substantial or less than substantial harm (para 138). Paras 132 to 134 of the NPPF discuss the approach with regard to substantial and less than substantial harm.

Whilst it is unfortunate that the rear wing is to be demolished, in terms of the significance of the building within the Conservation area, retaining and bringing back into use the most important part of the building, the original Villa, is the primary conservation objective. The proposed demolition will also remove some unsatisfactory later additions that do little for the building, albeit they are largely invisible in the context of the Conservation Area. Therefore it is considered that the harm to the Conservation Area as a whole would be less than substantial, because the main part of the subject building is being retained and restored and the wing being demolished is of a lesser significance. The conservation of the original part of the building also constitutes public benefit in the context of para 134 of the NPPF. Furthermore, if a high quality of design is achieved for the new build, then this would also help balance any harm arising from demolition.

Consequently, the principle of demolition is accepted in Conservation terms and provided the design of the new house is of high enough quality and works as a grouping with original building.

11. CONCLUSIONS

For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the proposed development complies with the relevant local plan policies and the demolition of the building is considered to be acceptable.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions,

- 1. Standard time – 3 years**
- 2. The rebuilt gable of the house to be constructed in reclaimed brickwork from the demolished extension and in a bond to match the existing house, to be agreed prior to commencement via sample panel. Mortar and pointing to also be agreed via the sample panel,**
- 3. Method statement for demolition and making good the rear gable wall of the retained part of the building**
- 4. Approved plans**

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