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My ref
GD/EVB – R82/48

19 February 2010

To the Chair and Members
of the
CONSERVATION ADVISORY
WORKING PARTY

Dear Sir/Madam

A meeting of the **CONSERVATION ADVISORY WORKING PARTY** will be held in **COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, MERRIAL STREET, NEWCASTLE** on **TUESDAY, 2 MARCH 2010 at 7pm.**

AGENDA

1. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members on items included in this agenda.
2. Minutes of meeting held on 9 February 2010 (copy attached for non-Council Members information).
3. To consider the attached reports at Appendix A and B (blue and salmon paper).
4. To consider any applications for financial assistance from the Conservation and Heritage Fund which may have been brought to this meeting by the Officer.
5. To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Yours faithfully

P W CLISBY

Head of Central Services

Members: Councillors Miss Cooper, Heesom, Mrs Naylor, Slater and Mrs Williams

Outside Representatives: Messrs Chatterton, Ferrington, Heeks, Manning, McNair Lewis, Tribbeck and Worgan

The appropriate Parish Council representative(s)

**DECISIONS OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL ON APPLICATIONS WHICH
HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN CONSIDERED BY THE WORKING PARTY**

For reports on all committee decisions, please follow the minutes and agendas search on the Council's website or refer to your copy of the Planning agenda for the permitted date. Reports for delegated items are attached to the agenda (pink paper).

Reference	Location and Applicant	Development	Working Party Comments	Planning Decision
09/647/FUL	4 Smithy Lane, Knighton. A Sanderson & S Marshall.	Two storey side extension, ground floor side/rear extensions and front entrance porch.	Members felt that the Brook House setting would be more enhanced by a more simplified design of this extension.	Permitted under delegated powers 21 January, 2010.
09/679/LBC	The School Rooms and the Croft, Main Road, Betley Mr & Mrs A Southall.	Change of use from school rooms to form additional accommodation, alterations and ground floor rear extension and new vehicular access.	No objection to the changes to the front elevation. The Conservation Advisory Working Party welcomed the simplicity of design.	Permitted under delegated powers 29 January, 2010.
09/723/AGR	Smithy Cottage, 35 Mucklestone Road, Mucklestone. Mr I Phillips.	Erection of steel framed barn.	The Conservation Advisory Working Party Welcomed the restoration of the barn but felt that the steel framed building could harm views into the Conservation Area contrary to Policy B14. The Conservation Advisory Working Party requested that consideration be given to re-orientating the barn lengthways along the track and for a landscaping scheme to be provided.	Permitted under delegated powers 26 January, 2010.
09/725/CPO	Betley C of E Primary School, Church Lane, Betley. Staffordshire County Council – The Cabinet.	Demolition of existing entrance and toilet block extension. Replacement extension building to comprise of a main entrance, reception, offices, toilet facilities and internal alterations.	The Conservation Advisory Working Party felt that the proposed extension lacked a style relation to the attractive village school and would prefer a revisitation and consultation with the Conservation Officer to improve the final proposal and enhance the building.	Permitted under delegated powers 11 January, 2010.
09/735/ADV	Jubilee Baths, Nelson Place, Newcastle. Newcastle Borough Council.	3 non illuminated banner advertisements.	No objections.	Permitted by Planning Committee 26 January, 2010.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY WORKING PARTY

Reference	Location and Applicant	Development	Remarks	Ward Councillors
09/734/DEEM3	Holdcroft Motor Centre, Brunswick Street, Newcastle. Newcastle Borough Council.	Proposed Health and Wellbeing Centre which includes a 25m swimming pool, learner pool, spectator gallery, changing facilities, climbing wall, fitness suite, children's activity zone, dance studio and multi-purpose room. Amended Plans received.	The proposal lies partly within the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area.	Councillor D Clarke Councillor Mrs E Shenton
10/59/FUL	The Old Wood, Betley Hall Gardens, Betley. Mr J Williams.	Erection of a two bedroom lakeside guest annexe (Resubmission of 08/961/FUL).	Within the Betley Conservation Area. The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.	Councillor D Becket Councillor A Wemyss
10/72/ADV	Former Georgia Pacific site, Lower Street, Newcastle. Stainer Homes LLP.	Proposed signage including 2 internally illuminated fascia signs, 1 internally illuminated logo box, 4 static beam uplighters to new hotel, 3 illuminated signs to new supermarket, 2 double sided internally illuminated signs mounted on steel frame and one directional sign to new hotel.	Site adjoins the Newcastle Town Centre Conservation Area and affects the setting of a Listed Building.	Councillor D Becket Councillor Mrs E Shenton
10/82/FUL	Shut Lane Head Farm, Shut Lane Head. Mr M Allen.	Erection of boundary wall.	Grade II Listed Building.	Councillor P Maskery Councillor Mrs F Myatt Councillor B Tomkins

OFFICER REPORT ON DELEGATED ITEMS

Applicant: Sanderson and Marshall

Application No: 09/647/FUL

Location: 4 Smithy Lane, Knighton

Description: Two storey side extension, ground floor side/rear extensions and front entrance porch.

Policies and Proposals in the Development Plan Relevant to This Decision:

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

Policy QE1: Conserving and enhancing the environment

Policy QE3: Creating a high quality built environment for all

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 -2026 (adopted 2009)

Strategic Aim 16: To eliminate poor quality development;

Policy CSP1: Design Quality.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 2011

Policy D2: The Design and Environmental Quality of Development

Policy NC1: Protection of the Countryside: General Considerations

Policy NC2: Landscape Protection & Restoration

Policy NC18: Listed buildings

Newcastle Under Lyme Local Plan 2011

Policy H18: Design of Residential Extensions, Where Subject to Planning Control

Policy T16: Development - General Parking Requirements

Policy N21: Areas of Landscape Restoration

Policy B5: Control of Development Affecting The Setting of a Listed Building

Other Material Considerations

Relevant National Policy Guidance:

PPS 1

PPS 7

PPG 15

Companion guide to PPS1

Planning History

03/244/OUT	Refuse – dwelling house on adjacent land
04/302/FUL	Permit – two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and detached garage
08/78/FUL	Refuse - two storey side extension, single storey side/rear extension and front porch

Views of Consultees

Loggerheads Parish Council objects to proposal on the grounds of over development of the site and impact on surrounding properties due to the size of the proposal.

The **Conservation Advisory Working Party** felt that Brook House setting would be enhanced by a more simplified design of this extension.

Representations

One letter of objection has been received raising concerns in respect of it being a similar proposal to the previously refused scheme, the property is currently being marketed, damage to a conifer hedge and the removal of a tree and how any extension would be built, loss of privacy and visual amenity, loss of light and overshadowing, effect and impact on Grade II listed building, noise and disturbance resulting from the use of the proposed garage.

Key Issues

This application is for full planning permission for the erection of a two storey side extension, single storey side and rear extension and front porch to this semi detached properties located in the small village of Knighton. Knighton is not in a recognised village envelope by the Local Plan but is within an area of landscape restoration. The proposal would provide a kitchen/ family room, cloaks/utility room, living room extension, entrance porch and single integral garage at ground floor level and a master bedroom and ensuite facilities at first floor level.

As stated previously the property is a semi detached property, the end of a row of 6 semi detached properties. The application site has a large side garden beyond which is the curtilge of a grade II listed building Brook House. A close boarded fence and mature hedge separates the two sites.

The property has been subject to two previous planning applications in 2004 and 2008. The 2004 permission albeit unimplemented and lapsed provide a similar size extension as being proposed with this current application.

The 2008 proposal was refused due to the extension was considered not subordinate to the existing dwelling.

The main issues to consider with this proposal are the design of the proposal, residential amenity and impact on the listed building.

Design

Planning Policy Statement 1 (34) states that Planning Authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design in the external design of all new developments. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions should not be accepted.

Policy H18 of the adopted Local Plan requires residential extensions to be of materials and a design to fit in with those of the dwelling to be extended and not to detract materially from the character of the original dwelling. In achieving this, the form, size and location of the extension should be subordinate to the design of the original dwelling. It is also required that an extension must not detract materially from the integrity of the original design of the group of dwellings that form the street scene or the setting.

The proposal would replace an existing flat roofed flat roof garage.

The existing dwelling has a frontage of approximately 6.5 metres, the two storey side extension would have a width of approximately 4 metres with the single storey attached garage/utility being approximately 5 metres wide, these being similar to the 2004 permission. The equivalent dimensions of the previous refused scheme being 5.3 metres and 7.45 metres respectively.

The current proposal provides the sought after set back off the front elevation of approximately 900mm resulting in a drop in the overall ridge height of the two storey extension, with this dwelling being the end of the row of similar properties it is considered this set back is sufficient to prevent the desirable terracing of the properties.

The rear extension is a single storey is considered of the acceptance design.

This results in an acceptable subordinate proposal which complies with policy H18 subject to the use of matching materials.

Impact on adjacent Listed Building

Development Plan policies resist development that would be harmful to the setting of a Listed Building.

It should be noted that the impact on the Listed Building has not been an issue on the previous 2004 permission or 2008 refusal.

The adjacent property (Brook House) is Grade II Listed. The boundary between the two properties is heavily landscaped and the distance between the proposed garage and the Listed Building would be about 15 metres. It is not considered given this context, the previous decisions and that this proposal provides a greater separation distance the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the Listed Building.

Impact on neighbours

Because the boundary is heavily landscaped the proposed development would not have a harmful impact on the occupiers of Brook House. The proposed single storey rear extension is close to the boundary of the adjoining property however there would be no breach of the 45 degree sight line as taken from the nearest ground floor principal window.

There is no breach of the SPD guidance regarding space about dwellings.

Other issues raised.

The other issues raised by the objection relating the marketing and tenure of the dwelling are private issues which the local planning authority can not take into account in the determination of this application.

Reason for Granting Planning Permission

The proposal now accords with provisions of the development plan for the locality indicated in the decision notice and there are no other material considerations that would justify a refusal of planning permission.

Recommendation

Permit subject to:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
- R1. To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act.
2. MAT2 The materials to be used in the construction of the development hereby permitted shall match in all respects (size, texture and colour) those of the existing house.
- R2. In the interests of amenity to comply with the requirements of policy D2 of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 and policy H18 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011.
3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

- Kevin Dean Construction Design Services drawing number 09/SM/SL/07
- Kevin Dean Construction Design Services drawing number 09/SM/SL/06
- Kevin Dean Construction Design Services drawing number 09/SM/SL/09

R3 For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Note to the Applicant

Policy N10. (Crime prevention)

OFFICER REPORT ON DELEGATED ITEMS

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Southall
Application No: 09/00679/LBC
Location: The Croft (And School Rooms), Main Road, Betley
Description: Change of use form School Rooms to form additional accommodation, alterations and ground floor rear extension & new vehicular access

Policies and Proposals in the Development Plan Relevant to This Decision:

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

Policy QE1: Conserving & Enhancing the Environment
Policy QE3: Creating a High Quality Built Environment for all

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996 - 2011

Policy NC18: Listed Buildings

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026 (Adopted 2009)

Policy CSP2: Historic Environment

Newcastle Under Lyme Local Plan 2011

Policy B6: Extension or alteration of Listed Buildings

Other Material Considerations

Relevant National Policy Guidance:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)

Companion Guide to PPS1 "The Planning System: General Principles"

Planning History

04//01077/COU	Change of use to dwelling with single storey extension – Refused
07/390/LBC	Internal and external alterations and rear extension – Approved
07/667/FUL	Change of use of school room to dwelling house with single storey rear extension – Approved

Views of Consultees

The **Conservation Advisory Working Party** has no objections to the changes to the front elevation and welcomes the simplicity of design.

Representations

Nil

Applicants/Agents Submission

A Design and Access Statement has been submitted.

Key Issues

The property is an early nineteenth century Grade II Listed building. This application is for listed building consent for internal and external alterations to the property and a rear single-storey extension. An application for planning permission for the change of use is also currently being considered (Ref. 09/00680/FUL).

Policy B6 of the Local Plan states that the Council will resist alterations or additions to a listed building that would adversely affect its character or architectural or historic features.

Planning permission was granted in 2007 for the change of use of the School Rooms to a separate dwelling (07/00667/FUL) and listed building consent was also granted for internal and external alterations and a rear extension (Ref. 07/00390/LBC). The Council's Conservation Officer considers that the current applications which would result in one single unit, is in principle a better solution for the building as it retains the school room as a single storey space with no subdivision.

The main changes to the previous consent include a new front entrance door within the 2-storey side element, and due to floor levels, a more significant stepped access is required. The design has been kept fairly simple in its approach and subject to controls over the detailing and finish of the materials, it is considered acceptable.

As in the previous scheme, a single-storey extension is proposed to the rear. A more contemporary approach has been adopted and a single-storey glazed link is also proposed to provide circulation space from the rear entrance to the rear sun room and the basement. The frameless glass structure would allow the existing fabric to be read and with the proposed contemporary approach, it is not considered that it would compromise the integrity of the listed building.

In conclusion, it is not considered that the proposed alterations would have any detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the Listed Building.

Reason for the grant of listed building consent:

It is considered that the proposal does not have any detrimental impact on the character or appearance of this Grade II Listed Building, and accordingly the proposal complies with policies in the development plan indicated in the decision notice and national guidance on works to Listed buildings.

Recommendation/Conditions

Grant consent subject to the following conditions

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
- R1. To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - M2902 (1) Location plans
 - M2902 (2) Site plan
 - M2902 (3) Basement floor plan as existing
 - M2902 (4) Ground floor plan as existing
 - M2902 (5) First floor plan as existing
 - M2902 (6) Elevations and section as existing
 - M2902 (7) Roof plan as existing

M2902 (8) Basement floor plan as proposed
M2902 (9) Ground floor plan as proposed
M2902 (10) First floor plan as proposed
M2902 (11) Roof plan as proposed
M2902 (12) Elevations as proposed
M2902 (13) Elevations and sections as proposed

- R2. For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. No works referred to in this listed building consent shall commence until full and precise details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority: -
- (a) The external facing materials including for the steps, driveway and parking areas.
 - (b) Rainwater goods.
 - (c) A method statement for any repair works.

The works shall be undertaken in accordance with the aforesaid approved details

- R3. To protect and safeguard the historic fabric and appearance of the listed building in accordance with the requirement of Policy NC18 of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 and Policy B6 of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011.

OFFICER REPORT ON DELEGATED ITEMS

Applicant: Mr I Philips
Application No: 09/00723/AGR
Location: Smithy Cottage, 35 Mucklestone Road, Mucklestone
Description: Erection of steel framed barn

Policies and Proposals in the Development Plan Relevant to This Decision:

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2008

Policy QE1: Conserving and Enhancing the Environment
Policy QE3: Creating a high quality built environment for all

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011

Policy D1: Sustainable Development
Policy D2: The Design and Environmental Quality of Development
Policy D4; Managing Change in Rural Areas
Policy NC1: Protection of the Countryside: General Considerations
Policy NC2: Landscape Protection and Restoration

Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011

Policy N17: Landscape character: general considerations
Policy N19: Area of Landscape Maintenance

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026

Policy CSP4: Natural Assets
Policy ASP6: Rural Spatial Policy

Other Material Considerations

Relevant National Policy Guidance:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
The Planning System: General Principles (Companion Guide to PPS1)
PPS7 Sustainable Development in rural areas (2004)

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Planning for Landscape Change: Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011, formally adopted on 10 May 2001

Planning History

The most pertinent case to this agricultural determination is another agricultural determination granted in 2007. This was for the erection of two buildings for livestock rearing and ancillary uses.

Views of Consultees

Environmental Health – No objection.

Conservation Advisory Working Party – welcomed the restoration of the barn but feel that the steel framed building could harm views into the Conservation Area contrary to policy B14. The

Conservation Advisory requested that consideration be given to re-orientating the barn lengthways along the track and for a landscaping scheme to be provided.

Loggerheads Parish Council – Object to the application for the following reasons:-

- Building out of character with surrounding properties, it is a serious visual intrusion in a Conservation Area which will affect 2 listed buildings and the cemetery which is situated immediately next to the proposed barn.
- Building out of proportion for intended use of storing landrover and tractor.
- Trees within the Conservation Area will need to be cut back in order to accommodate the proposed barn.

Representations

No representations received.

Applicants/Agents Submission

The requisite application forms were submitted along with a supporting design and access statement.

Key Issues

The application is for prior approval of the erection of a steel framed barn. It is therefore important in the first instance to be satisfied that the development constitutes agricultural permitted development.

Part 6 Class A rights are claimed so the Local Planning Authority must satisfy itself that:-

- This is agricultural land
- The proposed building covers a ground area of less than 465m²
- That the works are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit and the building is designed for the purposes of agriculture

Having visited the premises as well as viewing the history of the application site and the previous permissions and determinations granted it is clear that these tests are met and the application constitutes agricultural permitted development. The structure appears similar in design to many of the modern agricultural buildings present within this Borough as well across the wider British landscape.

The issues to address therefore are whether the siting, design and external appearance of the building is acceptable in relation to its location in an area of landscape maintenance, the open countryside and Mucklestone Conservation Area

The proposed steel barn would measure 16m in length with a width of 8m. The roof would be pitched with an eaves height of 3.5m and a ridge height of 5.5m. The barn would be constructed of a box profile steel sheet to the walls and roof with a green colour.

Impact upon the open countryside

Due to the relatively modest scale of the development located in a sympathetically positioned former silage clamp, the steel barn would not be a highly prominent and visual intrusion within the landscape due to a great deal of it effectively being hidden from view due to its development within the landscape. This site lends itself to the location of a built structure due to the topography of much of the surrounding land being at a higher level than this. It is also located in close proximity to existing hedgerows and mature tree screening which is preferable to the implementation of new substantial landscaping schemes. It is therefore felt that the proposed location is the most suitable within the surrounding landscape and would have no adverse impact upon the open countryside or the Area of Landscape Maintenance.

Impact upon the Conservation Area

Although comments have been received from the Conservation Advisory Working Party and Loggerheads Parish Council with regards to the impact of the proposed development on the Conservation Area due to its proximity and orientation, it is not felt that the development in its current form would adversely impact the character of the Conservation area subject to a suitable landscaping scheme being provided along the Western boundary between the cemetery and the application site. This would improve the quality of the indigenous hedgerow/vegetation present and provide a screen between the Conservation Area and the surrounding farm land. With regards to the re-orientation of the steel barn, it is the officer's opinion that the proposed orientation would be more preferable due to its lower eaves height (3.5m) that would be less prominent than the gable ended ridge height of 5.5m even though it would border the cemetery for a longer distance.

Other matters

It does not appear as though any trees would need to be cut back as a result of this proposal however if this were the case the applicant does indeed have rights to trim trees that over hang his land as long as a result of the works he does not cause physical harm to the tree. It is also assumed that as part of the required landscaping scheme the existing trees and vegetation would be considered with indigenous species that compliment the existing stock forming part of any scheme.

Consideration has been given to the security issues raised by the applicant in his submission and this is felt to be justified in this instance. The existing livestock buildings are relatively remote and it is accepted that surveillance could be provided to some extent of the proposed structure from the applicant's dwelling.

Recommendation

Prior approval of the siting, design and appearance of the agricultural building be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions;

No development hereby approved shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping along the Western boundary of the development bordering the cemetery.

1. All planting comprised in the approved scheme shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season after completion of the development or within 12 months of the commencement of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

- R1: In the interests of visual amenity and to protect the character and quality of the landscape and Conservation Area, in accordance with policies D2 and NC2 of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure plan 1996-2011 and policy and N19 of the Newcastle-Under-Lyme Local Plan 2011.

Informative

This determination does not grant any rights to rebuild the existing sandstone structure indicated on the proposed plans. Insufficient details have been provided to assess this within the current agricultural determination.

OFFICER REPORT ON DELEGATED ITEMS

Applicant: Staffordshire County Council

Application No: 09/00725/CPO

Location: Betley Church Of England Primary School, Church Lane, Betley

Description: Demolition of existing entrance and toilet block extension, and erection of a replacement extension building to comprise of a main entrance, reception, offices, toilet facilities

Policies and Proposals in the Development Plan Relevant to This Decision:

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2008

Policy QE3: Creating a High Quality Built Environment for all
Policy UR4: Social Infrastructure

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996 - 2011

Policy D1: Sustainable Development
Policy D2: The Design and Environmental Quality of Development
Policy NC19: Conservation Areas

Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke on Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 - 2026 (Adopted 2009)

Policy ASP6 – Rural Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality
Policy CSP2: Historic Environment

Newcastle under Lyme Local Plan 2011

Policy B9: Prevention of Harm to Conservation Areas
Policy B10: The Requirement to Preserve or Enhance the Character or Appearance of a Conservation Area
Policy B13: Design and Development In Conservation Areas
Policy B14: Development in or Adjoining the Boundary of Conservation Areas
Policy B15: Trees and Landscape in Conservation Areas

Other Material Considerations include:

National Planning Policy

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)

Companion Guide to PPS1 “The Planning System: General Principles”

Supplementary Documents

Betley Conservation Area Character Appraisal adopted December 2008

Betley Conservation Area Management Proposals (CAMP) adopted December 2008

Relevant Planning History

05/921/CPO Provision of shelter for covered play area - Permit
03/58/CPO Infill of courtyard to provide teaching area - Permit

Consultations and Publicity

It is the County Council's responsibility to carry out consultations and publicity concerning this application but the Borough Council's Conservation Advisory Working Party has provided the following comments:-

The proposed extension lacks a style in relation to the attractive village school and (they) would prefer a revisit and consultation with the (Borough Council's) Conservation officer to improve the final proposal and enhance the building.

Applicants/Agents Submission

A Supporting Statement incorporating Design and Access Statement has been submitted with the application. In the Statement the architect sets out the basis for their design proposals, having outlined their "conservation philosophy". They say that the extension is designed to sit alongside the Victorian school building as a contemporary designed extension. The glazed entrance will be "lightweight" against the existing building, adding "clarity and visual separation to the junction between old and new". An entrance to the school is created, and the south and west elevations "visually express the internal functions of the rooms". A buttress feature (in a contemporary style) is included – that being a significant feature of the existing building, and the proposal includes a plinth with a strong horizontal emphasis. It is explained why the architects consider that the extension should be flat roofed rather than pitched – the latter would "conflict with the architectural language of the existing building" and would create increased maintenance problems but more fundamentally the flat roof "allows the proposed extension to appear subservient to the existing building without harming its historic character or setting".

Key Issues

This is a consultation by the County Council. The request for comments was received on 16 December 2009. For any comments that the Borough Council may have on this proposal to be taken into account, they have to be submitted to the County Council by no later than the 11 January 2010. The application site is a school within the village envelope of Betley and located within the Betley Conservation area, as indicated on the Local Plan Proposals Map.

The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are the design of the proposal and its impact on visual amenity and the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Design and impact on visual amenity and the Conservation Area

Policy B9, B10, B13 and B14 of the Local Plan seek to prevent harmful impact on Conservation Areas and refer to the requirement to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Policy CSP2 of the recently adopted Core Spatial Strategy also relates to the historic environment whereby sites and areas of special architectural or historic interest should be preserved and enhanced.

The Betley Conservation Area character appraisal identifies that the school was built in 1853 next to the St. Margaret's Church. The appraisal details the current alterations to the school as negative features because they have not been carried out sympathetically. Notwithstanding this the appraisal and the proposals map identifies the school as making a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and as helping the village to provide a key amenity, thus preserving the village community. The proposals map also identifies the school as a focal building, along with the nearby church which illustrates the importance of this part of the CA.

The Conservation Officer has had detailed pre-application discussions with the applicant concerning a series of designs. The design has not substantially changed from that originally submitted with a flat roof extension still proposed with predominantly red brickwork, with some limited glazing, principally, in the front elevation.

Policy D2 of the Structure Plan also requires that development should be informed by, or sympathetic to, the character and qualities of its surrounding, in its location, scale and design.

Paragraph 34 of PPS 1 states that “good design should contribute positively to making places better for people.

The Conservation Area Management proposals (CAMP) identifies a number of policies, particularly policy Betley CA no.3 which states that new development should be sympathetic to the surrounding historic building in terms of scale, materials and details. It also states that the roofs and chimneys in the Betley Conservation Area are an important part of its special character and new development should reflect the traditional roof forms, pitches, materials and details, of existing historic properties; New development within the conservation area should be carefully designed to reduce its impact on existing views, both within and into, the conservation area.

The proposal is located on the side of the existing building which has a traditional appearance of a Victorian village school that has been extended and altered over the years. The proposal would replace an existing flat roof extension which blends in against the existing building. The proposal would be clearly visible from Church Lane but it is noted that other views from the north and west would be limited due to the mature tree screening on the western boundary and the existing building would also screen views. Church Lane is a key vantage point within the Conservation Area with the Grade 1 Listed St. Margaret’s Church and the school building being classed as a focal point, as detailed within the CAMP.

The proposal is modest in height but has a significant floor area, extending out almost to the back line of the original building, and having a footprint of almost twice that of the flat roofed extension that is to be removed. In using a flat roof design, and the use of materials on external walls (including the glazing on the front elevation, brickwork including oversize brickwork) and aluminium framing) the architects have attempted to introduce a contemporary design whilst also using features of the existing building (such as the plinth and buttress) to tie the two elements together. However, it is not considered that this particular approach has worked. An extension of a certain size to the building is not opposed nor is a contemporary design but the aim of the Conservation Officer during pre application discussions was to seek a more contemporary, lightweight design with glazing utilised more and features of the existing building utilised more subtly. The glazing ideally should be frameless with potentially a pitched glazed roof. The extension fails to achieve an addition which is truly contemporary and sufficiently lightweight given its scale relative to that of the building to which it is attached. Therefore, it is difficult to acknowledge that the proposal would enhance the historic character of the building or improve the overall appearance of the Conservation Area. Thus it is therefore contrary to SSSP policy NC19 for conservation areas, the above policies of the Local Plan and CSS policy CSP2.

Decision

That the County Council be informed that Newcastle Borough Council OBJECTS to the proposal because it is considered that the development would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Betley Conservation Area by reason of its failure to achieve an addition which is truly contemporary and sufficiently lightweight given its scale relative to that of the building to which it is attached.