

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan Ref. Expiry Date
Michael Wright 'A'	Change of use of Stable / Summerhouse / Utility Block into one bedroom dwelling. As amended : by Amended plans received 11/06/2012 Rock Cottage, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1LE	RES	12/0391 - SC 05/07/2012

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be **GRANTED**

Consultations

DRNENG Consulted – Views received 24.05.2012: No objection s.t.c

POLICY Consulted – Views received 30.05.2012:

The NPPF is now a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications with all PPGs and PPSs revoked. Annex 1 of the NPPF states that “*due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater weight that may be given).*” Therefore, the Bromsgrove District Local Plan was adopted prior to the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 meaning that due weight can be attached to the saved policies depending on the level of conformity with the NPPF.

At the heart of the NPPF there is the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) which is an important consideration when determining planning applications. Therefore policy DS13 within the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (BDLP) is applicable.

The above site is situated within the residential area of Bromsgrove Town within the BDLP. I consider that the issues within Local Plan policies S7 and S8 and guidance within SPG1 are particularly relevant, as they seek to accord with the NPPF core planning principle above and should thus be applied in this instance.

The NPPF states that local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area. This aligns with Policy S8 in the BDLP, which states “*The District Council will not permit proposals for plot sub-division or housing on backland sites where such development would be*

detrimental to the character, traditional pattern or amenity of the location”.

The issue of scale, density and backland development in SPG1 are of particular relevance in this application. Para 5.7 states that *“development which significantly increases the proportion of ground coverage or the scale of proposed buildings is likely to be out of keeping with its surroundings. The impact is particularly noticeable, for example, where redevelopment or infilling reduces generous side gardens and leads to the loss of foliage and trees.”*

The NPPF also seeks to deliver *“a wide choice of high quality homes”* (Para 50) which is echoed by Local Plan Policy S14 which seeks to *“increase the range of Housing types available within the District.”* The opportunity to increase provision of a one bed room dwelling should be taken into consideration”.

A Core Planning Principle within the NPPF is to *“always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”*. The concept of high quality design is re-enforced within Chapter 7 and states that *“good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people”*.

The site is below 0.2 hectares and 6 units; therefore SPG11 should not be applied to the proposal.

Due to the changing needs of access and parking on the site it will be important to promote sustainable transport (NPPF, para. 35), the Highways Engineers’ comments will be pertinent in this respect.

HIGHPTN Consulted – Views received 13/06/2012: No objection s.t.c.

Publicity Site Notice posted 01.06.2012; expired 22.06.2012
Neighbour notification letters (7) posted 24.05.2012; expire 14.0.2012
Additional neighbour notification letter (1) posted 01/06/2012; expires 22/06/2012

1 letter of objection received from Cllr Spencer (31/05/2012) raising the following concerns:

- Development would represent overdevelopment and a loss of privacy by virtue of nearby dwellings.
- Noise due to residential use and car parking.
- Highways concern due to angle of driveway onto busy road and brow of hill creating limited visibility.
- Insufficient parking for visitors.

The site and its surroundings

The application site is wedge shaped and located on the southern side of Alcester Road, immediately adjoining the northern garden boundaries of dwellings on Valencia Road.

The site is designated as residential in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and represents the western most part of the curtilage of Rock Cottage. At present, a wooden outbuilding that appears to have originally been constructed as a stable is located on the northern boundary of the site. The outbuilding is prominent in the street scene by virtue of its raised location, proximity to the public highway and separation from the further set back Rock Cottage. The site is served by a highway access at the westernmost end of the site in addition to the driveway immediately to the front of Rock Cottage. A mature hedge forms the site's highway boundary with Alcester Road and a high brick wall forms the common boundary with the properties of Valencia Road.

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the proposed conversion and change of use of the existing wooden outbuilding to a one bedroom dwelling.

Relevant Policies

WMSS	QE3
WCSP	CTC.1, CTC.5, CTC.8, SD.2, SD.3, SD.4, SD.5 T.4
BDLP	DS2, DS13, S7, S8, RAT2, TR11
Draft CS	CP3
Others	NPPF, SPG1, SPG4

Relevant Planning History

11/0526: Take down the existing stable / tack room / store, remove the existing WC / store. Lower ground to suit the existing footpath and construct a new 'Cottage' style 2 bedroom, 2 storey dwelling. The existing vehicular entrance will be retained with parking for a car (Amended plans received - 12/07/2011) – Refused 10/08/2011

B/14046/1986: Alterations and extension to dwelling, erection of loose box and construction of vehicular access, (as augmented by additional plan received 2.6.86). – Granted 16.06.1986

Assessment

The main issues to be considered in this application include:

1. Whether the principle of an additional residential unit at this site is acceptable.

2. Whether the development would be detrimental to the character, traditional pattern of development or amenity of the location.
3. Highways

Principle of Development

The proposals are located within residential garden land and on land that is designated as residential within the Bromsgrove District Local Plan. It is noted that garden land is not included within the definition of 'previously developed land' as set out within the NPPF. However, whilst garden land is no longer within the definition of 'previously developed land', Members will note that this does not mean that garden land may not be developed with an additional residential dwelling. Rather, the feasibility of developing a site depends on the particulars of the proposed site and its context.

Part 6 of the NPPF is of a strategic nature and it is considered to be of relevance to the proposal insofar as it provides that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Para 49: "Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development."

In this case, the site is located within an established residential area within reasonable walking distance of nearby community facilities including green space, a public house and bus stops. Given the predominance of the Green Belt within the Bromsgrove District, there is inherently a shortage of land that is suitable for new housing development. Allowing suitable development on residential garden sites can help to relieve development pressures on more sensitive Green Belt sites.

On the above basis it is considered that the principle of the development of this site for an additional unit of housing is acceptable.

Layout and character

Policy S7 provides that new dwellings will be considered favourably subject to the requirement (inter alia) for the form and layout of the development to be appropriate to the area.

Policy S8 states that the Local Planning Authority will not permit proposals for plot subdivision where such development would be detrimental to the character, traditional pattern or amenity of the location.

In this instance, the proposal involves the change of use of an existing building and does not propose any new buildings, driveway or vehicular access. The existing building has a footprint measuring approximately 3.6m x 10.2m and sits within a plot in excess of 190 sq m. Whilst the wedge shape of the plot results in a proposed dwelling that is relatively close to the gardens of Valencia Road, it is not viewed that the change of use will give rise to an unacceptably cramped residential layout. In consideration of the small scale of the dwelling and the size of the proposed plot, it is not viewed that the proposal would

introduce a density of residential development that would be harmful to the area. Members will note that Rock Cottage would retain a garden area in excess of 100 sq m.

It is proposed to introduce three velux windows to the southern elevation roof, a single window to the eastern elevation and an additional window to the northern elevation. Predominantly, however, the existing openings of the building will be re-used and it is viewed that the character of the existing building will be retained. The existing wooden outbuilding appears subordinate to the main dwelling. No extensions to the existing building are proposed and the dwelling will only provide a single bedroom unit. It is not viewed that the scale of the dwelling or the visual impact of associated uses will be detrimental to the character or pattern of development of what is an existing residential area.

Residential Amenity

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out Core Planning Principles and 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;”

Policy S7 of the BDLP states that new housing must not adversely affect the existing amenities of adjoining occupiers. The Council's Residential Design Guide (SPG1) sets out a range of criteria to ensure that new development affords future occupiers an acceptable standard of residential amenity whilst protecting the residential amenity of nearby dwellings also.

As a single storey building, it is viewed that the proposal will not give rise to concerns in relation to overlooking into neighbouring properties. The dwelling would be located within close proximity of the rear gardens of Valencia Road, with a separation distance from the front elevation to the rear gardens of Valencia Road varying from 3.3m to 6.4m. In consideration of the existing domestic use of the building, the high boundary wall and the small scale of the proposal, it is not viewed that the proposal would introduce an unacceptable intensity of use or give rise to a loss of residential amenity by virtue of additional noise, light or loss of privacy.

The proposal provides sufficient garden space for both the proposed and existing dwellings in accordance with SPG1. Considering the existing use, it is viewed that the proposal will not be unacceptably detrimental in relation to residential amenity impact.

Highways and Servicing

Policy TR11 of the BDLP requires all development to incorporate safe means of access and egress appropriate to the nature of the local highway network and to provide sufficient off-street parking.

The County Highways Officer has been consulted with regards to the designs and has raised no objection, subject to conditions, to the proposal. Members will note the third party comments received in relation to highways, parking and visibility.

In consideration of these matters, significant weight should be given to the views of the Highways Engineer. As such, it is viewed that the proposal would not introduce vehicular usage detrimental to the proper functioning of the highway.

The Council's Drainage Engineer has been consulted with regards to the designs and has raised no objection to the proposal and I am therefore satisfied that the proposal is acceptable in terms of drainage implications, subject to conditions.

Conclusion

It is viewed that the proposed change of use would introduce an additional dwelling within an appropriate designated residential area. Whilst the new dwelling would be in close proximity to adjoining occupiers, the proposal is not viewed to result in additional overdevelopment of the site or in unacceptable harm to residential amenity given the small scale and existing domestic use of the building. As such, it is recommended that permission is granted.

RECOMMENDATION: that permission be approved

Conditions

1. C001 (Three years)
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the Approved Plans/ Drawings listed in this notice:

Location Plan, Block Plan, Layout Plan, Elevations & Floor Plan at scales 1:1250, 1:200, 1:100, dwg no. 373002 A – amended plan received 11/06/2012

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. C007 (Drainage)
4. C022 (Removal of PD)
5. C005 (Obscure glazed window)
6. Cycle parking.

Notes:

This decision has been taken having regard to the policies within the West Midlands Spatial Strategy, the Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) June 2001 and the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004 (BDLP) and other material considerations as summarised below:

Plan reference

WMSS	QE3
WCSP	CTC.1, CTC.5, CTC.8, SD.2, SD.3, SD.4, SD.5 T.4
BDLP	DS2, DS13, S7, S8, RAT2, TR11
Draft CS	CP3
Others	NPPF, SPG1, SPG4

It is the Council's view that the proposed development complies with the provisions of the development plan and that, on balance, there are no justifiable reasons to refuse planning permission.