HPK/2011/0718

12 JAN 2012

Proposed House at
Station Road
Furness Vale
High Peak
SK23 7QA

BACKGROUND, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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Background, Design and Access Statement

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1.0 General Introduction.

1.1 The site is between the west bank of the Peak Forest Canal and the railway line to Whaley Bridge on the western side of the River Goyt, within the build-up area of Furness Vale.

1.2 The application is a full plans one to provide a retirement property for the owner of Stanswood House, prepared by architects Binney Associates, authors of this report.

2.0 The Applicants.

2.1 The applicants are the current and original owners of Stanswood House, Mr. and Mrs. N. Stansfield. The occupier of Stable Cottage is their daughter, Victoria, and her family.

2.2 The applicants wish to construct a property, on a smaller scale than Stanswood House, to provide for their retirement.

3.0 Description of the Site.

3.1 The site is bounded on its long boundaries by the Peak Forest Canal to the east and the railway line to Whaley Bridge on the west. To the north is Station Road and to the south is a narrow field boundary that bridges a short pinch point between the railway and the canal. Furness Vale station is adjacent to the site on the western boundary and the railway crosses Station Road at a level crossing.

3.2 The surrounding land uses are predominantly residential apart from the railway. The canal is now almost fully recreational with the publicly accessible tow path running down its most easterly bank, opposite the site.

3.3 The principal shared private drive is off the Station Road frontage for vehicles and pedestrians. This will remain as existing. The anticipated extra traffic that might be generated is likely to be limited to say four additional passenger vehicle equivalents per day, which is well within the capacity of the existing access, with turning available within the curtilage. The existing driveway surface is constructed in permeable concrete paviours. The access was re-aligned from the original, which was considered too near the level crossing, and this was the subject of a separate earlier planning application.

3.4 The topography is dictated by the site's position on the western slopes of the Goyt valley where there is a gradual fall past the canal and on towards the river about two hundred metres further down the valley.

3.5 On the north-south axis there is a more modest fall and the site is bisected by a major adopted drainage alignment for foul and surface water which falls towards the sewage treatment plant, which is about one thousand metres beyond the site's southern boundary, on the west bank of the Goyt. This alignment and the easement width is respected in these proposals.

3.6 The site is served by mains electricity, mains water and mains drainage connections. Surface water will be to soakaways for release to groundwater drainage to the canal bank.

3.7 Site photographs are included in Appendix 1.

4.0 Physical Context.

4.1 The site is sustainable within the Furness Vale build-up area with local shops, pubs and primary school. Transport links via bus to Stockport are good using the routes down the nearby A6 with efficient rail links to both Stockport and Manchester available from the station adjacent to the site.

4.2 The site has limited long views across the Goyt valley to the east but with the tree growth in the valley bottom the site is not prominent from other aspects. The proposed development will have no impact on any landmarks, natural features or listed buildings.

5.0 Proposed Development

5.1 The proposed single dwelling has a ground floor area of 159 sq.m. (1710 sq.ft.) with a first floor of 64 sq.m. (690 sq.ft.). The predominance of ground floor space is necessary to provide the ground floor living and bedroom accommodation required by this property to serve as a retirement home.

5.2 The development will be constructed in natural materials to a good, sustainable standard of construction with energy efficiency as a notable hallmark.

6.0 The Planning Context.

6.1 The Core Strategy.

6.1.1 Within the Core Strategy, two key policies are relevant. The first is to promote Healthy and Sustainable Communities. This development on the valley side of the River Goyt has no flood risk attached to it, the proposed house will not pollute the environment nor will it contribute to climate change. Security has been considered during the design process and the site is well defended with no through routes so there should be no increase in crime by virtue of the proposals. Current crime levels have been low, falling further during the last five years, so there are no local matters to be addressed,

6.1.2 The second policy is to protect the Character of the Peak District. The application, which is outside the National Park, seeks to use a two storey house with single storey outbuildings in the form of a smallholding with traditional materials, including full stone facing, traditional mullioned windows with the vertical emphasis of sash windows and stone slated pitched roofs. The issue of the character of the development is paid further attention under item 6.3 within this report.

6.2 The Spatial Strategy.

6.2.1 The proposed development of an additional house on the land at Station Road is a concentration of an existing, established land-use within the Built-up Area Boundary for Furness Vale within the High Peak Central Sub-Area.

6.2.2 The use increases the density of the existing use modestly to provide for the needs of a local couple reaching retirement age. The land is sustainable for such a use as it is well served by public transport, footpaths and the railway within a sustainable centre offering a school, pubs and some retail.

6.2.3 The proposed development will also use the existing infrastructure including mains drainage, electricity and water. Surface water will be fed back into the canal to assist in maintaining its water level.

6.2.4 The property will be constructed with reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes with a high degree of air tightness, a minimum level of insulation at Building Regulations standards, the alternative fuel will be wood drawn from sustainable sources and a central heat recovery unit will re-claim the calorific value of any extract air for re-use within the building. Lighting will be by using energy efficient light fittings. Primary heating using a ground source heat pump is proposed and roof mounted thermal panels may be part of a pre-heat circuit for the water heating, though this is currently subject to survey. Due to roof shading, no roof mounted photo-voltaics are considered viable at this stage.

6.2.5 The site does not carry any special designation, it is not a Special Protection Area (SPA) or a Special Area for Conservation (SAC) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. However, it is part of the linear setting of the Peak Forest Council and this role has already received enthusiastic support from the site owners who recently undertook sustainable bank conservation work, using willow, along the western canal bank. The site of the proposed dwelling is 23m distant from this canal bank so there is no impact and no changes to the canal or its setting.

6.2.6 The neighbourhood is already good for promoting healthy living with a network of paths, including the spine route along the canal. The majority of the population (77%) in High Peak already live within two kilometres of a GP or Health Centre, so continued support for an ageing population is not an issue in Furness Vale.

6.3 Adopted Residential Design, Land Development Framework.

Nationally.

6.3.1 PPG 1 supports the positive role for good design while PPG 3 adds flesh to that skeleton, generally for larger proposals than single house applications. However, the scheme supports the general objectives by:-

i) Aiming to create a distinctive expression that enhances the local character and uses local materials.
ii) The proposals have a safe layout, support crime prevention and make no changes that affect public safety.
iii) The needs of pedestrians are given priority and as a sustainable site there is easy access to public transport.
iv) The build promotes the energy efficiency that can be achieved from a new build; in this case with an air tight construction with heat recovery from extract air.

Sub-Regionally, High Peak Borough Council, H, Policy 3.

6.3.2 Sub-regional policies bear more relevantly on the proposals and some evaluation of the site is necessary.

6.3.3 The site is a long thin finger with an east-west axis set alongside the west bank of the Peak Forest Canal. The site is bisected by a significant easement for both surface water and foul water drains heading for the nearby sewage treatment plant. The easement reinforces the influence of the east-west axis and divides the site into small opportunities for development, each shaped by the easement. The original development in the 1970's is set on the north side of the easement and this proposal follows the same precedent, but it leaves the main building, Stanswood House, within its own setting some 33m distant. The new proposal is thus nearer the road frontage but not on the road side as the developable frontage is halved by the constraints imposed by the easement, then halved again by level changes and the abutment for the bridge over the canal on Station Road. In short, the Station Road frontage is undevelopable.

6.3.4 The visual expression is therefore more like a campus setting for two houses rather than a street setting. The street context is swept away by the strong east-west alignments of the railway and the canal, which, at this point, are only 60m apart.

6.3.5 From the street, though, there is some general context derived particularly from the use of materials and the proportion of the windows and doors. The objective is to leave Stanswood House, with its re-constructed stone walls and asymetrical roof planes, as a single statement, screened from the road by the existing trees and hedging. The proposals use precedents from Station Road which include local, natural materials, modest scale and traditionally sized openings, with mullions, for the windows.

6.4 Environmental Policy 17, Design Quality.

6.4.1 The design quality policy sets out the long list of objectives that the proposal seeks to satisfy. In particular:-

i) Scale and Siting.
The proposal leaves Stanswood House as the dominant building. The proposed house is set beneath its ridge height and the proposed ridge height is 1.3m below the existing. Stanswood House commands the east part of the site, the new build will be sited in the west part of the site. As the proposal is in the west it is fitting that the existing street, Station Road, and its architecture, bring some influence on scale and materials, in particular, the traditional two and three storey buildings on Station Road dictate the use of a stone facing, a slated roof, sash type window openings and details such as cast iron gutters and downpipes. The proposals acknowledge this guide from the use of stone to the cast iron detailing.

ii) Materials.

The selected materials, also detailed on the submission drawings are:-

House & Garage Roof:	Natural, reclaimed Welsh slates, blue/black, laid in diminishing courses from the eaves to the ridge.
House Walls:	Natural gritstone walling laid as random rubble walling brought to course with rough cut quoins.
House & Garage Heads and Cills:	Natural stone matched to rubble walling for colour. Cut masonry detailed by architect.
House and Garage Windows and Doors:	Moisture controlled European Redwood with double glazing and painted timber finish. Primer and one undercoat to be factory applied.
Garage Walls:	Rendered blockwork with expressed stone heads and cills to openings, but not including the double garage doors.
Ironmongery:	Client selection of brass or cast iron.
Rainwater goods:	Half round gutters on eaves straps or spike brackets with adjustment, 68mm cast iron downpipes fixed with eared collars to walls. All black painted.

iii) Associated Landscaping.

a) Walls: Dry stone walling under vertical set cap stones, all as the existing stretch to the RHS of the gate near the site entrance. (See Photograph No. 2 in Appendix 1).

b) Paving: Natural stone flags, reclaimed if available.

The materials have been selected for their quality and are substantially above the standard available in the existing housing stock. In particular, the stone facing selected for the house is a substantial improvement on the planning standard of reconstructed stone accepted by High Peak for areas outside the Peak District National Park (PDNP).

7.0 Disabled Access.

7.1 The disabled access to the property starts in front of the garage where an almost level gradient will support an easy transfer from car to wheelchair or assisted walking aid.

7.2 From the parking level, a ramped path with handrails will provide access to the front door, facing south. The opposite north facing front door has a stepped approach, suitable for other visitors including the postman. At the south facing door a level platform, 1200 x 1200mm is provided to enable a level approach to the door. A bell push and entry speaker phone at a height of 1200mm will enable contact to be made with the residents.

7.3 Once inside the house, a disabled accessible W.C., on the same level as the front door threshold, can be reached by an unaided wheelchair user. There are no other steps or level changes throughout the ground floor.

7.4 Within the dwelling door widths will be 750mm or wider, measured as clear openings. The disabled accessible front door will have an opening leaf width of 910mm. Corridor widths will be 1000mm clear of obstructions. Light switches will be a maximum of 1200mm above finished floor level (ffl), socket outlets and low level switches will be a minimum of 450mm above ffl. W.C.'s will have a minimum clear approach of 1000mm centred on the bowl with an activity space of at least 750 x 1000mm available from the edge of the bowl extending into the centre of the room. The door to the ground floor W.C. will open outwards.

8.0 Summary.

8.1 The application of a design strategy drawn from planning policies is not a straightforward issue. The frontage to Station Road is undevelopable due to the physical constraints set by a significant drainage easement, the site access and its visibility splays and the level changes at the bridge abutment. These constraints dictate a campus style development that reflects the principal east-west axis of the site.

8.2 From that point, the proposals leave the existing property, Stanswood House, dominating the east of the site but largely screened from the roadside view by the existing trees while the proposed house will be glimpsed through the trees and hedges at the west end of the site, its scale, expression and use of materials closely matched to the materials and details that predominate in Station Road.

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APPENDIX 1

Site Photographs

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Appendix 1 – Background, Design and Access Statement: Photographs

Proposed House at Station Road, Furness Vale, High Peak, SK23 7QA.



Photograph 1 – View down the existing drive from inside the site boundary with Stanswood House visible through the trees.



Photograph 2 – View through the gate, which is retained showing the proposed site area. The stone wall on the RHS is a sample panel for the walling around the proposed site.



Photograph 3 – View up Station Road towards the A6 junction. The buildings are all constructed in local gritstone rubble walling with quoined corners.



Photograph 4 – A recent dwelling on the opposite side of Station Road constructed in reconstructed stone.