

TWC/2016/0555

Land South of Loadcroft, Lincoln Hill, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire
Erection of 1no. detached dwelling accessed off New Road ## AMENDED PLANS
AMENDED DESCRIPTION

APPLICANT

Mrs Pettit

RECEIVED

24/06/2016

PARISH

The Gorge

WARD

Ironbridge Gorge

THE APPLICATION IS BEING REFERRED TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGER

Online planning file:

<https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationssummary.aspx?applicationnumber=TWC/2016/0555>

1. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION** for the reasons set out in the report below.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This is a full application for the erection of a new dwelling located within the grounds of a property known as Loadcroft, Lincoln Hill, Ironbridge. Access would be from New Road.
- 2.2 The proposed dwelling would be two storey and would have 4 bedrooms. Due to the terraced nature of the site it would need to be constructed on a plinth.
- 2.3 The application is supported by the following:
- Design and Access Statement
 - Heritage Statement
 - Planning Statement
 - Ecology Report
 - Coal Mining Risk Assessment
 - Ground investigation report
 - Tree survey
- 2.4 Amended drawings relating to the external design of the building have been provided. Due to the time the application has been under consideration an updated Ecological Impact Assessment has been submitted.
- 2.5 Pre-application advice was sought in respect of these proposals back in 2015 as part of a scheme for two dwellings to be erected on land owned by

Loadcroft. The proposals related to a different design of dwelling, being single span only, unlike the current proposals relating to a dwelling with two rear gables, thus increasing the bulk of the building.

- 2.6 Subsequently, three planning applications were submitted. TWC/2016/0553 related to the erection of a detached dwelling to the north east of this application site. This was for a similar designed dwelling the subject of these proposals. TWC/2016/0554 related to the demolition of Loadcroft, a bungalow, and the erection of a replacement two storey dwelling, similar to that approved under TWC/2016/0553. These applications were approved on 31 October 2019.
- 2.7 The two dwellings that were approved under TWC/2016/0553 and TWC/2016/0554 had their vehicular access from Severn Terrace. This proposal seeks to have its access from New Road close to the junction with the Wharfage.

3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site is located within the built up area of Telford and Wrekin, within The UNESCO Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site and Severn Gorge Conservation Area. There are a number of Listed Buildings bordering the site to the east, south and south-west. The site is located in an elevated position on land to the south of Loadcroft visible from the Wharfage to the south.
- 3.2 The site is located within Stability Zone 4 where ground movement imposes significant constraints.
- 3.3 Existing public foul and surface water sewers runs through the site from Severn Terrace to the north, down to New Road to the south. The proposed is located to the west of these providing the requisite easement.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 TWC/2016/0553: Erection of 1 no. detached dwelling. Land east of Loadcroft, Lincoln Hill, Ironbridge. Full granted 31/10/2019.
- 4.2 TWC/2016/0554: Erection of replacement dwelling following demolition of existing dwelling 'Loadcroft', utilising existing access off Lincoln Hill - Full granted 31/10/2019.
- 4.3 TWC/2011/0410: Terracing of slope and landscaping and planting works (retrospective). Application withdrawn 30/06/2011.
- 4.4 W2003/0046: Erection of 3 detached dwellings with attached/detached double garages and construction of new vehicular/pedestrian accesses with alterations to existing. Withdrawn 16/01/2004.

5. RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.2 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2011-2031)

SP1 Telford
SP4 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
HO1 Housing requirement
NE1 Biodiversity and geodiversity
NE2 Trees hedgerows and woodlands
NE6 Green Network
C3 Implications of development on highways
C5 Design of parking
BE1 Design Criteria
BE3 Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site
BE4 Listed buildings
BE5 Conservation areas
BE9 Land stability
ER12 Flood Risk Management

6. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 Neighbouring occupiers were consulted upon receipt of the application with two letters have been received raising the following objections:

- Concerns regarding the stability of the site.
- Concerns also raised in respect of drainage.
- Concerns about construction impacts on listed buildings.
- Impacts on setting of listed buildings.
- Site has been terraced without planning permission.
- Impacts on World Heritage site.
- Impacts on Reynolds Tunnel.
- Requirement for platform for dwelling emphasises scale.
- Site and New Road offers respite from noise and pollution along Wharfage.
- Creation of parking area would erode character of World Heritage Site and Conservation Area.

6.2 Former Councillor Nicola Lowery also raised objections to the proposals regarding stability, concerns regarding Reynolds Tunnel, impacts on the World Heritage Site. Concerns regarding impacts on infrastructure due to cumulative impacts with other approved developments in the area.

7. STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS

Standard Representations:

7.1 The Gorge Parish Council: Object. Concerns regarding stability of site.

- 7.2 Shropshire Council Archaeology, TWC Ecology, Drainage and Highways raise no objections subject to conditions.
- 7.3 The Coal Authority raises no objections to the proposals.
- 7.4 Conservation Officer: Objects. Due to the loss of open or green space, and imposition of a boundary form and hard landscaping out of character with the historic environment, there would be harm to the settings of a number of listed buildings, and the character and appearance of the CA and WHS. The development would therefore be contrary to BE3, BE4 i., vi & viii and BE5 of the Local Plan. The harm identified would be 'less than substantial' in the terminology of the NPPF, although at the higher end of the spectrum. The NPPF is clear that this should still be given 'great weight', with '...the more important the asset, the greater the weight...' (NPPF para 193). A World Heritage Site is the highest level of heritage importance. The benefit of providing one additional house in the wider area would not outweigh the harms to significance of the heritage assets.

8 APPRAISAL

8.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the main planning considerations are:

- The principle of residential development
- The impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, and setting of listed buildings
- Impact on neighbouring amenities
- Drainage and flooding
- Slope stability
- Highways
- Ecology

8.2 The principle of development

8.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the development plan consists of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out policy guidance at a national level and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

8.2.2 The site is located within the Telford built up area where the principle of new build development is generally acceptable and is therefore in accordance with the general principles of Policy SP1.

8.3 Impact on Conservation Area and World Heritage Site, and setting of listed buildings

- 8.3.1 The site is located in a prominent position adjacent within the World Heritage Site and the Conservation Area. It is visible from public vantage points including New Road, Wharfage, the Ironbridge, Bowers Yard and Severn Terrace.
- 8.3.2 The site is currently presented as a green backdrop to the buildings located along the Wharfage and the properties at the western end of New Road. This is even more apparent when viewed from more distant viewpoints such as the Ironbridge and Bower Yard.
- 8.3.3 One of the key elements of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Ironbridge Gorge is its substantial remains of traditional landscape. The landscape is described as being a crucial part of the property, and it needs to be managed as a coherent whole, with key views across the valley identified and protected.
- 8.3.4 In terms of the authenticity of the Gorge, in particular the urban and rural patterns, these have retained their essential and authentic historic character. This mining landscape is vulnerable to incremental changes, which over time could impact the character of the valley.
- 8.3.5 The Severn Gorge Conservation Area Management Plan requires Heritage Statements to identify whether the proposed site was always vacant and should justify why it should now be developed. It is also a requirement for the Heritage Statement to demonstrate how the vacant site sits within the historic environment in the past and now, and to demonstrate that the development will preserve and/or enhance the context of the historic setting.
- 8.3.6 The Heritage Statement submitted with the planning application identifies that the site was undeveloped as shown on the 1849 Tithe map, and subsequent maps from 1884, 1903, 1928 and 1948. The Statement refers to the site not being individually identified as having any particular character in the Conservation Area and World Heritage Site Appraisal of 2016. However, it does not address the requirement to assess the site as set out above.
- 8.3.7 The site has not previously been developed. Historic maps indicate limekilns and shafts, and the Reynolds Tunnel of 1800, identified as a non-designated heritage asset by the County Archaeologist. As such, the Conservation Officer interprets the site as part of the overall industrial landscape, a view with which the officer agrees.
- 8.3.8 The further intensification of built form on this site visible from public vantage points such as the Wharfage, a principal route through the World Heritage Site, Severn Terrace and Bowers Yard, would be harmful to the significance of the area and its authenticity.
- 8.3.9 It is noted that planning permission has already been granted for the erection of a two storey dwelling to replace the bungalow known as Loadcroft, and a further two storey dwelling located to the east. The erection of a further dwelling to the south would interfere with the cross-valley views from Severn

Terrace.

- 8.3.10 The proposed access and parking area would introduce a suburban appearance, increasing the visual impact of the development close to the junction between New Road and Wharfage. Whilst this is close to the built-up frontage to the river, it will introduce a car dominated aspect close to the main route through the World Heritage Site. The visual impacts of the car parking area and access would be exacerbated by requirement to remove existing hedgerow and vegetation within the visibility splays should planning permission be granted. This is a requirement in order to satisfy the Highway Officer regarding highway safety.
- 8.3.11 The site is located in an area adjoined by a number of listed and non-designated heritage assets. The proposed building will be seen in the context of these assets, in particular 17-19 Wharfage and 1 New Road. This relationship is more apparent from distant views, in particular from some public vantage points along Wharfage, the Ironbridge and Bowers Yard. When viewed from Severn Terrace there will be views of the proposed dwelling in context with the rear elevations of listed buildings, in particular 19 Wharfage.
- 8.3.12 The proposed dwelling will erode the sense of space around these designated heritage assets, impacting on their setting. This would be exacerbated by the elevated nature of the proposed dwelling and the extensive area of car turning and parking hardstanding.
- 8.3.13 The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets. This is judged at being at the higher end of the spectrum. As such it is necessary to assess whether there are sufficient public benefits to outweigh the harm. The public benefits would amount to a single market dwelling in an area where it is possible to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. There are minimal public benefits arising from the delivery of a single dwelling and these would not outweigh the less than substantial harm, particularly when it has been judged at being at the higher end of the spectrum. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policies BE3, BE4 and BE5 paragraph 196 of the NPPF.

8.4 Impact on neighbouring amenities

- 8.4.1 The application site lies to the south of an existing residential property known as Loadcroft, which now has planning permission to be demolished and replaced, alongside a new dwelling to the east of Loadcroft.
- 8.4.2 There will be approximately 28.5m separation distance between the rear elevation of the proposed dwelling and the replacement dwelling on Loadcroft. The proposed dwelling is set at an oblique angle with the new dwelling approved to the north east and there would be approximately 24m between the side elevation of this proposed dwelling and the front elevation of the approved.

8.4.3 The Council's guidance is that there would be 21m between two building faces for 2 storey dwellings, with the separation distance being increased by 2 metres for every 1 metre rise in ground level between new and existing dwellings.

8.4.4 The details submitted with this application indicate that the proposed dwelling would be constructed on a platform at 55m AOD. The section drawings for the replacement dwelling at Loadcroft indicate that dwelling would be constructed at 65m AOD. Therefore, on the basis of the guidance it is recommended that the separation distance be 41m. However, given the differences in land levels and the height of the dwellings, views from the replacement dwelling at Loadcroft would largely over sail the rear elevation of this proposed dwelling. Residential amenity could be further protected by the erection of appropriate boundary screening.

8.4.5 Given the orientation of the dwelling, no overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts will arise with neighbouring properties.

8.5 Drainage and flooding

8.5.1 A public foul and surface water sewer run through the middle of the site. The application has taken this into account and the proposed dwelling has been located to the west of the sewer and as such is unlikely to result in adverse harm to the sewer.

8.5.2 In terms of drainage, subject to a condition requiring a scheme of foul and surface water drainage to be submitted and approved, the proposals are supported.

8.6 Slope stability

8.6.1 The site is located in Stability Zone 4. In addition, Reynolds tunnel crosses the southern part of the field below the development plots. The tunnel is a single skinned brick lined linear void approximately 2m in height which can be accessed immediately to the west of the site (with permission). It is imperative therefore that the loadings from the development are designed to not cause local shallow stability issues which trigger a landslide.

8.6.2 Ongoing discussions have been held between the applicants agent and Geotechnical Consultant with the Councils Geotechnical Engineer further investigations were undertaken and it was confirmed by the applicant that were the tunnel ever to collapse, it would be unlikely to trigger any large scale movement and only result in a depression of 100mm deep at the surface. As the proposed dwelling is located 15m away from the tunnel it is considered to be outside the zone of influence.

8.6.3 Precautionary measures have been suggested in the form of bi-annual inspections looking at potential collapse and signs of structural damage.

8.6.4 The Council's Geotechnical Engineer has confirmed that they are satisfied

with the recent submissions (Letter from H. S. Lister received 02 August 2019) and the proposed precautionary measures.

- 8.6.5 It is considered that the investigations and measures proposed are acceptable to the local authority and are also in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the NPPF where responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.

8.7 Highways

- 8.7.1 The proposed dwelling would be served by an access taken from New Road, close to its junction with Wharfage. The site has been designed to accommodate a turning and parking area free from the highway to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear.
- 8.7.2 Sufficient information has been submitted with respect to sight visibility from the access and the speed of vehicles. Given the narrow characteristics of New Road and the location of the proposed access it is accepted that visibility splays can be achieved. However, this will require the removal of existing hedgerows and vegetation which will increase the visual impact of the proposals on the conservation area, as discussed above.
- 8.7.3 The proposals have been found to be acceptable to the Highways Officer subject to conditions.

8.8 Ecology

- 8.8.1 The application has been submitted with an Ecological Assessment. This has been assessed by the Council's Ecologist who has no objection subject to conditions and informative(s) as it is possible to conclude that there is no reasonable likelihood that the proposal will cause harm to protected species. Due to the amount of time this application has been with the authority for determination officers were of the view that the ecological survey was now out of date. An updated Ecological Assessment has been submitted and this too has been assessed by the Council's Ecologist who has confirmed their earlier recommendation still stands.

9.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The application site is located in a sensitive location within the Severn Gorge World Heritage Site and Conservation Area, adjacent to a number of listed buildings. The site is undeveloped and historical records indicate that the site has never been developed. Unauthorised terracing works have been undertaken in the past that have changed the character of the site. The site is a greenfield site and provides a landscaped backdrop to the heritage assets fronting onto Wharfage. It is part of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Gorge and is an element that has been identified as needing to be managed and sensitive to incremental change.
- 9.2 The site is visible from various vantage points within the Gorge and the

introduction of a dwelling on this site would be harmful to the setting of the various heritage assets. This less than substantial harm is considered to be at the higher end of the spectrum and there are insufficient public benefits to outweigh the harm.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee on this application is that DELEGATED AUTHORITY be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION for the following Reason:

- 1) The application site is a previously undeveloped site forming part of the urban and rural landscape which is an important element of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Severn Gorge World Heritage Site, sensitive to incremental change. The proposed dwelling together with its loss of vegetation around the proposed access would result in the loss of this site, impacting on the openness of the Severn Gorge Conservation Area and affecting the setting of adjacent listed buildings which maintain their long standing setting. This would be less than substantial harm at the higher end of the spectrum. There are insufficient public benefits arising from the proposals to outweigh the harm, as set out in paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposals are therefore contrary to Telford and Wrekin Local Plan Policies BE3, BE4 and BE5 (adopted 2018).