

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

24th August 2022

Planning Application 22/00202/FUL

Demolition of existing dwelling and construction of a new replacement dwelling

55 Alcester Road, Feckenham, Redditch, Worcestershire, B96 6JP,

**Applicant: Mr SMITH
Ward: Astwood Bank And Feckenham Ward**

(see additional papers for site plan)

The case officer of this application is Sarah Hazlewood, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527881720 Email: sarah.hazlewood@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site comprises a single detached two storey dwelling (with cellar) in a poor state of repair on the northern side of the B4090 Alcester Road (Saltway). The original dwelling was a double fronted cottage with chimneys to end gables and has been subject to significant alteration in the past by way of a two storey side and two storey and single storey rear extensions. The dwelling is now finished with render under a slate roof. There exists a vehicular access and parking to the front of the existing dwelling. The dwelling has a long narrow rear garden at the northern end of which a timber outbuilding has been constructed. To the west lies 53 Alcester Road, a dwelling which has previously been subject to extension/alteration. The site lies in open countryside to the east of the village of Feckenham and within the Green Belt.

Proposal Description

The application is for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of a replacement including a new detached garage. The proposed dwelling is of a similar style to that being demolished, being of a broadly symmetrical design and replicating details such as a chimney which exist on the existing dwelling. It is proposed that the dwelling will be finished in red brickwork with slate roof tiles and painted timber windows. A number of energy efficient features are incorporated into the dwelling such as recessed photovoltaic panels with the dwelling having been designed to achieve net zero operational energy. A detached garage is also proposed to the east of the proposed dwelling and set back from the front. The design is broadly similar to that of the main dwelling being red brick under a slate tiled roof.

Relevant Policies :

Policy 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy 8 Green Belt
Policy 15 Climate Change

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Policy 16 Natural Environment
Policy 36 Historic Environment
Policy 37 Historic Buildings and Structures
Policy 39 Built Environment
Policy 40 High Quality Design and Safer Communities
High Quality Design SPD
National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Planning History

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------|
| 21/01020/HHP RIO | Single storey extension. | Refused | 04.08.2021 |
| 21/01397/HHP RIO | Flat roof single storey extension from rear of original house as shown on the drawings. Height will be less than 4m. | Prior approval not required | 21.10.2021 |

Consultations

Worcestershire Archive And Archaeological Service

The application is judged to impact a non-designated heritage asset of built historic environment interest that will be completely lost through development. Given its historic character, as an early-19th century wayside cottage that makes a positive contribution to local landscape, it would be preferable to see the retention of the heritage asset rather than its demolition (as per policy BDP20.10). Should you be minded to grant planning permission for this scheme, the loss of the non-designated heritage asset should be offset, through a programme of archaeological works secured and implemented by means of a suitably worded condition(s) attached to any grant of planning permission. This should comprise a Level 3 Historic Building Recording, as defined by Historic England, of the building prior to demolition.

Cadent Gas Ltd

Recommend informative note

Feckenham Parish Council

Objection. Feckenham Parish Council notes and agrees with the quoted views of Redditch Borough Council's Conservation Officer: "we would not be supporting the demolition of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset. The building is a wayside cottage that, alongside the neighbouring property, contributes strongly to the character and history of the area. Despite alterations that have happened at the property, the original form and architecture of the building is still clearly legible. Policy BDP20.10 supports this as states that 'The demolition of buildings or the removal of trees and other landscape

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features which make a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance will be resisted.' Furthermore, Policy BDP20.3 states that 'Development affecting Heritage Assets, including alterations or additions as well as development within the setting of Heritage Assets, should not have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance or significance of the Heritage Asset or Heritage Assets'. The demolition of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset would have an irreversible impact on its character, appearance and significance."

Conservation Officer

Thank you for consulting me in respect of this application for planning permission.

55 Alcester Road, comprises an early 19th century dwelling which can be clearly seen on the First Edition of the 1885 OS, but is also present on the Tithe Map of 1838. It is of brick construction now rendered, beneath a pitched slate roof. There are extensive 20th century extensions to the east, which almost double the width of the building, in addition to further extensions to the rear. It was originally a modest wayside dwelling located on Alcester Road, the Roman Road between Droitwich and Alcester

It is considered a non designated heritage asset, due to its age and its origins as a wayside cottage. Although it has been much extended its original modest form is clearly discernible.

The applicant is proposing to demolish the existing building and to construct a replacement dwelling, with similar modest proportions to the front, and more extensive gabled and flat roofed projections to the rear.

Policy 37 of the Redditch Local Plan supports applications for development which conserve and enhance a building, its setting and features of special architectural or historic interest. Guidance in the NPPF must also be considered. Paragraph 194 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, the level of detail being proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on significance; Paragraph 195 requires LPAs to take account of the significance of affected heritage assets when considering the impact of a proposal, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal; Paragraph 197, requires when determining applications that the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness should be taken into consideration; and Paragraph 203 requires that the effect of a proposal on the significance of a non designated should be taken into account in determining the application, and a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of harm and the significance of the asset.

The building is a wayside cottage that, alongside the neighbouring property, contributes strongly to the character and history of the area. Despite the later extensions, the original form and architecture of the building is still clearly legible. The property is not on the Redditch Local Heritage List, although like the Statutory List properties can be added at

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any time. That said although this property is considered a non designated heritage asset, due to the alterations that have been carried out its significance is relatively low and it would probably not be eligible for inclusion on the local list.

The proposed replacement dwelling would appear to draw on the architecture of the existing building, and comprises a modest front elevation, with cottage like proportions, but is deeper in plan form than the existing to incorporate the required space. It would therefore sit more comfortably in the streetscene than the scheme initially proposed.

Although a new building could undoubtedly be more energy efficient in way it is heated and insulated, so reducing its 'operational' emissions, the embodied energy of the original structure and proposed structure should also be brought into the equation. This includes the energy used during construction, maintenance and demolition or reuse. A whole building approach measures carbon emitted at all stage of a building's lifespan and demonstrates the importance of embodied carbon emissions. It is suggested that this information is also considered when deciding whether environmentally this is the best way forward.

The retention and upgrading of the existing structure would be preferred, and this option does not appear to have been fully explored. It is acknowledged, however, that the building is of low heritage significance, and this must be weighed against the benefits of the proposed scheme as required by paragraph 203 of the NPPF, when determining the application.

If you are minded to grant consent it is suggested that a full building recording is conditioned with guidance from WAAS on the appropriate level.

Highways Redditch

No objection subject to conditions.

Public Consultation Response

No comments received

Assessment of Proposal

Green Belt

The site lies in the Green Belt where there is a presumption against new development. Policy 8.3 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4 (BoRLP) states that applications for development within the Green Belt should be determined in accordance with national planning guidance on Green Belts. In this regard, paragraphs 147-149 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are relevant to the determination of this application.

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The NPPF identifies that the fundamental aim of national Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Paragraph 147 of the Framework states that ‘inappropriate development’ in the Green Belt is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 149 regards the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate development, subject to a number of listed exceptions.

Paragraph 149 d) sets out one such exception – “the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces”. The site comprises a dwelling and the proposal seeks its replacement, therefore the new building, with reference to paragraph 149 d) above, is in the same use. It is therefore necessary to go on to consider whether the replacement building is *materially larger* than the one it replaces (my emphasis). There is no definition of materially larger set out in the NPPF. Whilst being mindful of the Tandridge DC v SSCLG (2015) case which made it clear that the assessment of Green Belt impact should not be a purely arithmetical one, appeal decisions considering this matter have indicated that increases of less than 10% can be considered not materially larger.

With respect to the current proposal the supporting statement provided with the application confirms the following:

| | Existing | Proposed |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Footprint | 107m ² | 132m ² |
| Floorspace | 200m ² | 230m ² |
| Volume | 498m ³ | 650m ³ |
| Height to eaves | 4.65m | 4.98m |
| Height to ridge | 6.08m | 6.3 |

The proposal, when compared with the existing therefore represents a 23% increase in footprint, 15% increase in floorspace, 30% increase in volume and a 3.6% increase in overall height. Taking all these factors in the round it is considered that the proposed dwelling would be materially larger than the one it replaces contrary to paragraph 149 d) of the NPPF and is therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Loss of non-designated heritage asset

The existing dwelling has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset with a Heritage Impact Assessment having been submitted in support of the application. The council’s Conservation Officer has provided views on the proposal as set out above as well as those of Worcestershire Archaeology and Archive Service. Policy 37 of the BoRLP seeks to support applications for development which conserve and enhance a building, its setting and features of special architectural or historic interest. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining planning applications. Furthermore, in weighing applications which directly affect non designated

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heritage assets a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Clearly, through the demolition of the dwelling, the loss of the asset will be total. However, it is noted that the proposed dwelling is considered by the Conservation Officer to be of low heritage significance, commenting that due to the alterations that have been carried out it would probably not be eligible for inclusion on the local list.

It is noted in the supporting documentation that in order to improve the dwelling to meet modern habitable standards further work to the fabric of the dwelling would be necessary. Problems that the dwelling suffers from include walls with no insulation, damp and poor wiring and plumbing that require replacement. It is also of note that the dwelling benefits from a householder prior notification approval for single storey extensions to the rear which, if undertaken, would further erode the fabric of the existing dwelling. In addition, the Conservation Officer has commented that the proposed design of the replacement dwelling is sympathetic to the surroundings.

Taking all these matters in to account it is considered that harm would arise through the loss of the heritage asset, although given those matters outlined above this harm would be limited.

Protected species

The application is supported by a preliminary bat roost assessment and a bat survey and site assessment. The bat survey found that: "bat activity was greatest at the front of the dwelling and was seen to be mostly associated with the hedgerows and mature trees that line the corridor of Alcester Road. No bats were seen to emerge from potential bat roosting sites within the dwelling house or the mature oak tree at the front of the site and bat activity over the site was generally considered to be low." Whilst no bats were found to be roosting at the site recommendations are made, which can be reasonably controlled by condition, with respect to precautionary working methods and biodiversity enhancement at the site.

Amenity and Design

No comments have been received from the occupiers of the adjoining dwelling (53 Alcester Road), however notwithstanding this it is considered necessary to assess the impact of the proposal on the amenity of the occupiers of this dwelling.

The proposed dwelling is sited broadly in the same position as the existing. There is an existing window on the side elevation of number 53 which will look directly towards the proposed dwelling. A single storey element of the proposal will be 7.7m from this window. This is slightly further away compared with an existing single storey element of the existing dwelling. A two storey rear projection is proposed which is 12.5 metres away from this window. This separation distance meets with the guidance in the adopted High

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Quality Design SPD at 4.2.49. it is therefore considered that the proposal will not result in any harmful overbearance to the occupiers of 53 Alcester Road.

One small window is proposed in the first floor side elevation facing 53 Alcester Road serving a corridor element to a bedroom and which the plans indicate will be obscurely glazed. No windows are proposed in the ground floor side elevation facing the neighbouring dwelling. Whilst it is inevitable that some overlooking could arise from bedrooms 4 and 1 this will be at oblique angles and is not considered to be materially more harmful than if the existing dwelling were retained and refurbished.

With respect to overshadowing, given that the proposed dwelling is sited to the east of 53 Alcester Road it is likely that a limited level of overshadowing may occur at the start of the day. However, this has to be tempered against the impact of the presence of the existing dwelling and that the proposed dwelling is not significantly higher than the existing or set any closer than the existing dwelling. Taking these factors in to account the proposal is not considered to have a harmful impact through overshadowing.

The design of the proposed dwelling seeks to replicate the existing with respect to architectural features, materials and overall scale and proportion. It is noted that the Conservation Officer refers to it as cottage-like and that it will sit comfortably in the street scene. Overall, it is considered that the design of the dwelling is appropriate for the rural context within which it sits.

Other considerations and Green Belt balance

The development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and paragraph 148 of the Framework requires that substantial weight must be given to any harm. In addition, it has been found that harm would arise through the loss of a heritage asset however given the low significance of the building this is considered to have limited weight against the proposal. Inappropriate development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, which will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

With respect to the Green Belt impact in support of the application a permitted development fall back has been advanced. The dwelling benefits from the approval of a larger house extension prior approval for two single storey rear extensions. In considering whether the permitted development scenario outlined should be given weight the Courts have held that the fall back has to only be "more than a merely theoretical prospect". The likelihood of the fallback occurring may, however, affect the weight given to it. The supporting information submitted with the application has outlined that if this application were to fail then the permitted development rear extensions would be constructed as an alternative. This being the case the dwelling could be expanded without further recourse to the council. It is considered likely that this course of action would be undertaken by the occupiers given that it would provide greater ground floor accommodation, a situation which is reflected in the design of the proposed replacement

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dwelling. Calculations provided with the application show that with respect to all factors, with the exception of eaves and ridge height, the proposed dwelling would be smaller than the existing plus permitted development extensions:

| | Existing with PD | Proposed | % Difference |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Footprint | 152m ² | 132m ² | -11.2% |
| Floorspace | 244m ² | 230m ² | -5.7% |
| Volume | 688m ³ | 650m ³ | -5.5% |
| Height to eaves | 4.65m | 4.98m | +7.1% |
| Height to ridge | 6.08m | 6.3m | +3.6% |

The increase in ridge and eaves height has been explained as being necessary to achieve modern building regulations with the modest increase sitting below the 10% threshold that has been found to be 'not materially larger' as set out in this report above. Having regard to the above it is likely that the permitted development extensions would be implemented at the site in the event that this application was not successful and therefore this represents a realistic fallback. If this were to occur, a greater amount of built form would be present in the Green Belt than proposed under this application. This matter is afforded significant weight. With respect to the proposed garage this would add an additional floorspace of 34 square metres of built form to the site. Whilst the height of the proposed garage would exceed that which could be constructed under permitted development, the site does benefit from Class E permitted development rights which means that a significantly larger building could be constructed, in a location which is more detached from the dwelling having a significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than that which is proposed. Again, this matter is afforded significant weight.

The application is accompanied by a statement to explain how the dwelling will incorporate features to achieve net zero carbon in operational energy. This principally means that the dwelling will be heated through an air source heat pump and a solar array will be installed in the south facing roof slope. In addition to this an embedded carbon statement has explained how, where possible, the existing fabric of the building will be reclaimed and re used in the proposed development of the site. Examples of this include setting aside the existing roof slates for use on the garage roof or as stone chippings in the rear garden and the existing brick walls being crushed to fill the existing basement. Policy 15 of the BoRPLP supports this approach to development and therefore it is afforded moderate weight.

The highway authority have not objected to the proposal. However this weighs neither for or against the proposal so is a neutral factor in the determination of the application.

It has been found that the proposal represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt which is harmful to the Green Belt by definition and therefore is afforded substantial weight. In addition, the proposal will result in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset, which given its low significance is afforded limited weight. On the other hand, the

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proposal benefits from a permitted development fallback position which would result in a greater amount of development in the Green Belt than the proposal and this is afforded significant weight. Furthermore, the proposal seeks to achieve net zero carbon operational energy and this is afforded moderate weight. It is therefore considered that these other considerations taken together clearly outweigh the totality of harm to the Green Belt and harm through the loss of a non-designated heritage asset and therefore very special circumstances necessary to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt exist.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

2017-PL01
2017-PL11 Rev G
2017-PL10 Rev E
2017-PL15 Rev A
2017-PL14 Rev D
2017-PL13 Rev E
2017-PL16 Rev A

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

3. Prior to their first installation, details of the form, colour and finish of the materials to be used externally on the walls and roofs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance, to safeguard the visual amenities of the area

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4. No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation, has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:
- a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
 - b) The programme for post investigation assessment.
 - c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording.
 - d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 - e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
 - f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (1) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The Development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the first 5 metres of the access into the development, measured from the edge of the carriageway, has been surfaced in a bound material.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

7. The Development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until the proposed dwelling has been fitted with 2 electric vehicle charging points. The charging points shall comply with BS EN 62196 Mode 3 or 4 charging and BS EN 61851 and the Worcestershire County Council Streetscape Design Guide. The electric vehicle charging points shall be retained for the lifetime of the development unless they need to be replaced in which case the replacement charging point(s) shall be of the same specification or a higher specification in terms of charging performance.

Reason: To encourage sustainable travel and healthy communities.

8. The Development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until sheltered, safe, secure and accessible cycle parking to comply with the Council's adopted highway

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design guide has been provided in accordance with details which shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the approved cycle parking shall be kept available for the parking of bicycles only.

Reason: To comply with the Council's parking standards.

9. The Development hereby approved shall not be occupied until the parking and turning facilities have been provided as shown on drawing 2017 - PL13 Rev E.

Reason: To ensure conformity with submitted details.

10. The dwelling hereby approved shall be constructed in accordance with and incorporating those features outlined in the Embedded Carbon Statement by Jeff Scoffham and Net Zero Carbon House statement by Engineering Services Consultancy Ltd.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable development.

11. Prior to occupation of the development hereby approved details of biodiversity enhancement measures to be installed at the site in accordance with the submitted protected species survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall be implemented on site within one month of the first occupation of the development

Reason: In order to enhance biodiversity at the site.

12. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order) no development included within Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A to E shall be carried out without express planning permission first being obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the openness of the Green Belt.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because an objection has been received from a consultee which has not been resolved through the course of dealing with the application.