

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990
(As Amended)**

Planning Statement / Heritage Impact
Assessment

Full Planning Application and Listed Building
Consent for Residential Development
Comprising of the Erection of 4no. New Build
3-Bedroom Dwellings, Reorganisation of
Units 5 - 7 (approved under
SMD/2011/00664 & SMD/2011/0601) to
Provide an additional 3-bedroom Dwelling
and Associated Works (Enabling
Development)

Site: Dove House Farm Barns, Blythe
Bridge Road, Caverswall, ST11 9EA

Document date: October 2015

Applicant: Mr S Beaumont

Ref: BEA176/1

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning statement has been submitted by Knights on behalf of Mr S Beaumont (the applicant) to accompany a full planning application and listed building consent to erect four 3-bed dwellings to the rear of the recently approved barn conversion scheme at Dove House Farm Barns. That scheme was granted planning permission under 11/00578/FUL and listed building consent under 11/00672/LBC, which approved the conversion of these barns to provide 7 dwellings. This planning application also seeks to amend the previous conversion scheme in respect of the reorganisation of Units 5 - 7 of the barns and provide an additional 3-bed dwelling (Unit 8). The proposed development therefore seeks planning permission for a net increase of 5 dwellings to increase the overall scheme at Dove Farm Barns to 12 dwellings.
- 1.2 This planning application is an enabling development to ensure that the conversion of Dove House Farm Barns (as approved under 11/00578/FUL) can be undertaken viably. This Planning Statement, along with an accompanying Viability Assessment produced by Mounsey Chartered Surveyors and details of construction costs produced by Wood Goldstraw Yorath, seeks to demonstrate that the additional development proposed is necessary to secure the long-term preservation of these historic barns.
- 1.3 The application site's location within the curtilage of the Grade II listed building of Dove House Farm and its location within the Caverswall Conservation Area requires this planning application to consider the proposed development's potential impact on the heritage assets contained within this area. As a consequence, in accordance with the requirements contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, this Planning Supporting Statement incorporates a Heritage Impact Assessment (which can be found within paragraphs 6.18 and 6.31 in the main body of this report).
- 1.4 On account of the site's location within the curtilage of a listed building and within the Caverswall Conservation Area, prior to formally submitting this planning application, pre-application discussions (LPA reference: PAD/2014/0059) were held between the applicant, Carl Copestake (Knights Professional Services Limited), the architects (Wood Goldstraw Yorath) and representatives at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council; namely Christopher Johnson and David Sykes (planning officers) and Gillian Bayliss (a conservation officer) who provided an informal view that the proposed development could be acceptable in principle.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site comprises of a complex former agricultural buildings which were previously associated with Dove House Farm, which is located immediately to the south the site's boundary. The total area of this site is 2,690 square metres. These barns are listed by their association with the Grade II listed building of Dove House Farmhouse. The barns themselves have been vacant for a number of years, having

first received planning permission and listed building consent to convert the barns to provide residential dwellings in 1992. However despite subsequent planning applications seeking to renew planning permission, the development was not implemented. The principal reason for this is due to the significant costs to convert the buildings, which has stalled previous projects. The Council have discharged all prior to commencement conditions relating to the latest scheme (11/00578/FUL and 11/00672/LBC) and the applicant has lawfully commenced development through the undertaking of a material start of the approved scheme prior to the expiry date on the planning permission of 22 December 2014. The barns at this time were structurally unstable (with the bad weather further effecting their condition and fears that the structure would not survive another winter) and therefore required emergency stability works to ensure that they maintained their stability to prevent harm to the building and to the public using Blythe Bridge Road. Since the pre-commencement conditions have been discharged the structure has been supported through scaffolding, and the buildings have been stabilised and covered up to stop any further degradation of the structure in the short term.

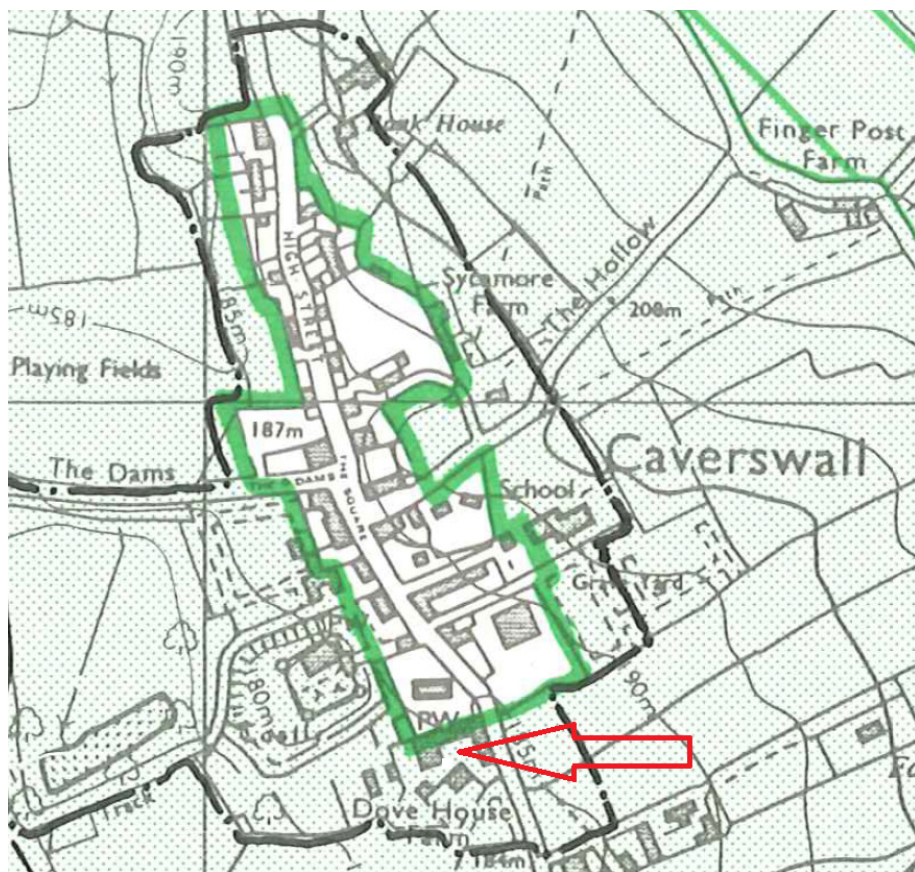


Figure 1 - Proposals Map indicating application site by red arrow

- 2.2 The site is located on the southern fringe of the village of Caverswall, just outside the settlement boundary as demonstrated in Figure 1. The site is also located with the Caverswall Conservation Area boundary which extends beyond the settlement limited to incorporate various rural buildings and structures. The site is also designated as Green Belt land.



Figure 2 - English Heritage Listed Buildings Map indicating application site with red arrow

- 2.3 There are a number of listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of the site (aside from Dove House Farmhouse) including the Grade II* listed Church of Saint Peter's and the various structures of the Wood Memorial, church wall and piers, groupings of chest tombs and Wilshaw Memorial within the church's curtilage which have Grade II listed status, to the north of the site. To the northwest of the site is the Grade I listed Caverswall Castle (including screen walls, gatehouse and bridge), the sundial, East Lodge, West Lodge and the steps and balustrading which are located within the curtilage of Caverswall Castle and are Grade II listed. Further north of the East Lodge is the Grade II listed Church of St Filomena. Beyond this are two further Grade II listed buildings of 4 The Square and the Stone House, which are situated around the Square. An extract of the English Heritage listed building map is set out in Figure 2 which identifies the location of these listed buildings.
- 2.4 The village of Caverswall itself has a linear layout typified with houses located either side of both The Square and High Street. The centre point of the village is characterised by the mature tree within the main square which leads eastwards to The Hollow and westwards to The Dams (and the village of Cookshill). A linear road runs north to south and centres around the Square, turning into Blythe Bridge Road to the south and High Street to the north. The village is predominantly residential in

character, however there are a number of key services and facilities such as the Filomena Primary School, Caverswall Village Hall, the Red House public house and the Red House Hotel. Directly to the east of the application site is a recent new residential development which has been approved (under planning application SMD/2013/0497) outside of the village settlement boundary. The application site is shown in context in the Figure 3.



Figure 3 - Aerial Photograph indicating application site with red arrow

- 2.5 In the site's wider context, Caverswall is located 1.2 miles to the north of Blythe Bridge and 1.3 miles to the centre of Weston Coyney. Otherwise, the village is surrounded by open countryside (designated as Green Belt), particularly to the north and east which is utilised predominantly for agricultural purposes.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 There is a detailed planning history to this site which is set out below.
- 3.2 Permission was first obtained to convert these barns under planning permission SMD/1992/0270 (92/00853/OLD) and listed building consent SMD/1992/0308 (92/00853/OLD) to provide five dwellings. Prior to this, planning permission had been refused for a similar scheme under reference SMD/1991/0095 (91/01291/OLD) and listed building consent SMD/1991/0096 (91/01292/OLD).
- 3.3 This permission was later renewed under planning permission SMD/1999/0901 (99/00144/OLD) and listed building consent SMD/1999/0939 (99/00145/OLD), which again sought permission to convert the barns to provide five dwellings.

- 3.4 Permission was then obtained under planning application SMD/2001/0626 (01/00448/FUL) and listed building consent SMD/2001/0760 (01/00449/LBC) for a scheme which proposed to convert the barns to provide seven dwellings.
- 3.5 A further listed building consent was obtained under SMD/2005/0342 (05/00119/LBC) in relation to alterations to facilitate the conversion of the building to provide seven dwellings.
- 3.6 The most recent applications relating to the site, namely planning application SMD/2011/00664 (11/00578/FUL) and listed building consent SMD/2011/0601 (11/00672/LBC) to provide seven dwellings was submitted by the previous owner of the site who in turn sold the site to the applicant. That scheme identified that the modern agricultural building in the western portion of the site would be demolished. The applicant consequently formally submitted a conditions application which discharged all prior to commencement. This discharge of conditions application was determined under reference DOC/2014/0065, thus enabling a material start to be made to lawfully commence this development.
- 3.7 The planning history for this site clearly demonstrates that there have been a number of obstacles in place to enable the barns to be converted since planning permission was first obtained in 1992. The site due to its historic nature and techniques and materials that are required to develop the site are too expensive and outweighs the saleable value of the plots once complete. We believe three developers have attempted to develop the site since 2001 and have failed due to the above reasons. This has resulted in the buildings becoming derelict and the costs further running out of control due to the dilapidation of the building structure over time.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Following the granting of planning application 11/00578/FUL and listed building consent 11/00672/LBC (and the consequent commencement of development), it has now become apparent that the scheme as currently approved would not be a viable development and as such will not be able to be fully completed with the current quantum of development that is proposed. Following the production of a viability assessment by Mounsey Chartered Surveyors it has been identified that in order to make the scheme viable (and therefore delivered), it would be necessary to generate five more residential units from the site. This could be partly done by reorganising Units 5, 6 and 7 of the approved barn conversion and by providing an additional 3-bed dwelling (shown as Unit 8). The landscaping scheme will therefore be altered to accommodate the additional car parking and garden areas associated with these properties. Slight alterations to the previously approved external openings of the barns would be required to accommodate this sub-division, namely:

- The repositioning of a number of rooflights (following advice taken from a Conservation Structural Engineer to lessen the impact on the Oak structure which resulted in the need for new rooflights as a consequence of the revised layout).
- Creating a new door opening on elevation 2 which is to replace a new window opening approved on the 2011 consent (this part of the building had the existing door that had been closed up due to the block work structure that was installed to store silage and has been opened back up when the building was rebuilt back to its original form after seeking permission to take down and rebuild this section of safety reasons as it was falling).
- Partially building up a section of an existing door on elevation 4 to form a window (it is proposed to put a stable door on this opening but block up the bottom half so it does not impact on the barn aesthetics).

4.2 It will also be necessary to provide four additional 3-bed dwellings within the site; as a consequence it is proposed that an element of new-build is provided within the western portion of the site which would replace an existing modern farm building, which covers the majority of this portion of the site measuring 450 square metres in footprint. These new dwellings would be two storey in height and arranged in a row of three terraced dwellings positioned along the western boundary and a fourth dwelling located along the northern boundary orientated 90 degrees to be situated adjacent to the end elevation of the existing barns. Each unit would provide 2 car parking spaces and private garden areas within the site. The new buildings would be designed of a simple agrarian character to respond to the existing appearance of the wider complex of barns.

4.3 Wood Goldstraw Yorath have based their design of the terraced block on a former livestock, barn tractor store, piggery / hayloft which has been converted into a

residential development. The detached dwelling concept has been based on 2 existing farmworkers dwellings, and side store extension, on being converted into 1 dwelling.

5. THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The most important material consideration at this stage is the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which was published on 27 March 2012.
- 5.2 At the time of writing, the development for Staffordshire Moorlands District Council comprises the Core Strategy which was adopted on 26 March 2014 as well as the Peak District National Park Core Strategy which was adopted in October 2011. The latter document relates to areas within the District Council which fall within the Peak District National Park boundaries and are therefore not relevant to the application site.
- 5.3 The Council are now in the process of reviewing their Core Strategy through the production of a new Local Plan which when adopted will guide new development during the period of 2016 to 2031. This plan incorporates work that had already been undertaken in the production of Site Allocations development plan document whose findings will now be included within the production of this new Local Plan. The Council have also recently undergone a public consultation on the draft version of the Local Plan has recently which was undertaken between 6 July and 14 September 2015.

Core Strategy

- 5.4 The Core Strategy was adopted in March 2014 and provides both the strategic management planning policies which will inform the determination of planning applications through to the year 2026.
- 5.5 The relevant policies to this application are as follows:
- Policy SS1 - Development Principles
 - Policy SS2 - Future Provision of Development
 - Policy SS3 - Distribution of Development
 - Policy SS4 - Managing the Release of Housing Land
 - Policy SS6 - Rural Areas
 - Policy H1 - New Housing Development
 - Policy H2 - Affordable and Local Needs Housing
 - Policy DC1 - Design Considerations
 - Policy DC2 - The Historic Environment
 - Policy R1 - Rural Diversification

- Policy R2 - Rural Housing
- Policy T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport

5.6 Policy SS1 sets out a number of policies which seek to positively deliver social, economic and environmental benefits to the District. This policy sets out a number of objectives, those relevant to this planning application are summarised below:

- Provide a mixture of types of housing to meet the needs and aspirations of existing and future communities.
- Insists that new development maintains the distinctive character of the District's towns and villages.
- Seeks new development to secure high quality and sustainable environments which make efficient and effective use of resources.

5.7 Policy SS2 requires provision to be made for 6,000 new dwellings to be provided within the District between 2006 and 2026.

5.8 Policy SS3 identifies that 28% of all housing should be provided within Rural Areas with the remaining focus of development divided between the main towns of Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek.

5.9 Policy SS4 seeks to restrict the levels of new housebuilding within the Green Belt through the careful phasing in the release of unidentified windfall sites so not to undermine the renaissance of the North Staffordshire conurbation.

5.10 Policy SS6 divides the rural area into three categories; Larger Village, Smaller Villages and Other Rural Areas. A total of 1,680 new dwellings will be required within these areas. Caverswall (and Cookshill) is identified in this third tier of 'Smaller Villages'. These villages are considered to have a poorer range of services and facilities compared to the Larger Villages but it has been recognised that there is a need to meet local housing needs within these settlements. The policy instead seeks to direct a larger proportion of new housing towards the twelve Larger Villages. The policy goes on to support a limited number of new housing outside the Larger and Smaller Rural Areas under a number of circumstances including *"allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of and existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2"* and *"allowing suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with policy DC2"*.

5.11 Policy H1 requires that new housing development should provide a mixture of housing sizes, types and tenure (particularly if the scheme proposes more than 10 dwellings) and should be designed to meet a density appropriate to its size and location (generally between a density of 30 - 40 dwellings per hectare in suburban areas and villages and a density of 20 - 30 dwellings per hectare in remoter rural areas). The policy goes on to support large windfall housing sites where they provide

overriding benefits including conservation. The policy also requires new dwelling to be of a sufficient size to provide satisfactory amenity for future occupiers whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing residents.

- 5.12 Policy H2 requires affordable housing to be provided for residential developments of 5 dwellings (0.16 hectares) or more with the aim of providing 33% affordable housing on-site unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances which dictate otherwise.
- 5.13 Policy DC1 requires all new development to be well designed in order the complement the special character and heritage of the area. The policy goes on to set out nine key design criteria which need to be considered. Most notably new developments are required to *“be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area”* and *“be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity though its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance”*.
- 5.14 Policy DC2 promotes the safeguarding and (ideally) enhancing of the historic environment, in particularly listed buildings and the setting of conservation areas. Development will be resisted where it would be seen to be harmful or detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the particular heritage assets. The policy seeks to promote development which *“sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of the area”* as well as seeks to *“prevent the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of the an area through appropriate reuse and sensitive development, including enabling development, unless their retention is not viable or there would be substantial planning benefits to outweigh the loss”*.
- 5.15 Policy R1 requires all new development outside settlement boundaries to be assessed to ensure that it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promote sustainable diversity of the rural economy, facilitate economic activity, meet the needs of the rural community and sustains the historic environment. The policy goes on to say that *“wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversation [but] where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement”*. The policy goes on to state that *“within the Green Belt, inappropriate development which is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy, will still need to be justified by very special circumstances”*.
- 5.16 Policy R2 sets out a number of instances where new housing (aside from those otherwise specifically allocated) can be supported within rural areas. These instances include the provision of the conversion of non-residential rural buildings where the building is of suitable construction to facilitate its conversion and where it

can be demonstrated that an agricultural or commercial use is neither viable or suitable.

- 5.17 Policy T1 requires all new development to be located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate the predicted traffic generation as well as provide sufficient on-site car parking.

Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

- 5.18 The Framework supersedes all previous planning policy guidance notes and statements upon which the policies of the extant Local Plan are based. The Framework carries with it a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is defined as having a social, economic and environmental role.
- 5.19 The Framework at paragraph 14 states that for decision taking, development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.
- 5.20 Paragraph 17 sets out the 12 core planning principles of the Framework which include the need to *“proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs”* [bullet point 3], *“always seek to secure high quality design”* [bullet point 4], to *“encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value”* [bullet point 8] and to *“conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”* [bullet point 10].
- 5.21 Chapter 6 ‘Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes’ (paragraph 49) of the Framework states that *“housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development”* and that *“relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered to be up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites”*.
- 5.22 Chapter 7 ‘Requiring good design’ confirms the importance of good design and in paragraph 59 requires local planning authorities to focus on the *“overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development”* as opposed to being unnecessarily prescriptive.
- 5.23 Chapter 9 ‘Protecting the Green Belt’ sets out in Paragraph 87 that *“inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”*. Paragraph 88 goes on to state that *“when considering planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt”* and that *“very special circumstances will not exist unless the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations”*. Paragraph 89 provides a number of exceptions there the construction of new buildings are not considered to be inappropriate, these include;

“limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed site (brownfield land), whether redudtant or in continuing use, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it than the existing development”.

- 5.24 Chapter 12 ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ requires applicants to set out the significance of any heritage assets that would be affected by a development proposal as well as demonstrate how such a proposal would be impacted upon the heritage asset. Local planning authorities are advised to assess how the new development contributes towards the local character and distinctiveness of such heritage assets, with those heritage assets of the most significant having the greatest weight attributed towards them. Paragraph 134 goes on to state that *“where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use”.*

Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places

- 5.25 This document was published on 30 September 2008 by English Heritage and sets out clear parameters whereby new development which would normally be considered harmful can be considered acceptable should of the resulting benefits of the scheme outweigh the harm.

6. ASSESSMENT

Key Issues

6.1 The consideration of this planning application relies on a number of issues being considered. These are principally the following topics:

- Principle of development
- Impact upon heritage asset
- Design and appearance
- Highway safety and transport considerations
- Residential amenity

Principle of Development

6.2 The application site is located within the Green Belt on the fringe of the village of Caverswall. New development in the Green Belt is strictly controlled in line with Paragraphs 87 - 90 of the Framework which states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt is harmful by definition and can only be supported in very special circumstances where it can be demonstrated that any harm to the Green Belt can be clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraphs 89 and 90 list uses which are considered not to be inappropriate in the Green Belt; these include the reuse of buildings (provided that they are of permanent and substantial construction), limited infill of previously developed sites that would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, and the replacement of a building (provided that the new building is the same use and not materially larger).

6.3 One of the elements of this application relates to the reorganisation of Units 5, 6 and 7 of the recently approved barn conversion scheme and the provision of an additional 3-bedroom dwelling (shown on the Unit 8). It has already been established through planning application SMD/2011/00578/FUL that the conversion of this building is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It will also be demonstrated later in this report that the conversion of this element of the building would not have a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, Policies SS2 and SS3 of the Core Strategy identifies that 28% of the 6,000 new houses required within the District will need to be provided within the rural areas (outside the main towns of Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek) during the plan period. Policy SS6 of the Core Strategy, ranks Caverswall (and Cookshill) in the third tier of the settlement hierarchy wherein the provision of housing to support local needs is supported particularly if they can secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in line with Policy DC2.

6.4 It has clearly been demonstrated through the previous planning application for this site as well as the recent consent for 11no. new dwellings at Churchcroft (LPA

reference SMD/2013/0497) to the east of the application site that Caverswall is a sustainable location for new development. As a consequence it is considered that the provision of an additional dwelling within the existing barns is acceptable in principle.

- 6.5 The other element of the scheme proposes the erection of 4no. new dwellings in the western portion of the site in place of an existing agricultural building. This form of development falls outside the list of developments that is considered not to be inappropriate in the Green Belt and therefore it is necessary for very special circumstances to be demonstrated to outweigh this and any other harm in accordance with Policy R1 of the Core Strategy and Paragraph 89 of the Framework.
- 6.6 As set out in the planning history section of this report it is clear that, despite the renewal of a number of planning applications which obtained consent to develop this site through conversion alone, the project has failed to get off the ground for a period of thirteen years. The reason for this is that the scheme has proved to be financially unviable which has resulted in the property changing hands a number of times and until the applicant finally purchased this property in 2014, other developers were dissuaded from taking the financial risk involved to implement the scheme.
- 6.7 Dove Farm Barns are listed by associated to the Grade II listed farmhouse and are therefore clearly a positive heritage asset to the village of Caverswall. Paragraph 014 of NPPG 18a 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' states that *"disrepair and damage and their impact on viability can be a material consideration in deciding and application"* (providing that this neglect is not deliberate). Accompanying this planning application is a viability report that has been produced by Mounsey Chartered Surveyors which clearly demonstrates that the conversion of these buildings alone would be unviable and that the only way for a viable return to be made at this site is for the addition of a further 4no. dwellings. The viability report confirms that only with this additional development could a development realistically generate an acceptable developer's profit of 15% which is considered to be an acceptable rate of return for the investment that would be put into developing this site.
- 6.8 Paragraph 131 of the Framework goes on to state that local planning authorities should take into account *"the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness"*. Paragraph 132 of the Framework goes on to state that *"when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation"*. Policy DC2 of the Core Strategy confirms that enabling development can be supported where it would prevent the loss of a heritage asset. The listed barns are clearly a heritage asset that are worth preserving as the previous consents granted relating to their conversion to provide residential uses confirms that the Council accept that providing a residential use on this site

constitutes a viable means of preserving this asset, in order to ensure that it continues to provide a positive contribution to the wider area.

- 6.9 The provision of four 3-bedroom new-build properties on this site, which is normally restricted under Green Belt policy (unless it complies with Paragraph 89 of the Framework), would act as an 'enabling development' to ensure that the project remains viable and is therefore the only realistic means by which the site can ultimately be developed in the current market climate. Furthermore, the longer these listed barns remain undeveloped, the more risk there is of them falling into further disrepair. Should this happen, the cost associated with restoring the buildings could become even more unviable and there would be a risk of some of the significant features of the buildings being further degraded. In light of the above, the benefits of retaining this heritage asset for a viable use now is considered to constitute significant weight in favour of the proposed scheme. The Heritage Impact Assessment element of this Planning Statement (set out in Paragraphs 6.18 to 6.31) demonstrates that the design of the new buildings alongside the conversion of the existing barns would preserve the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 6.10 Paragraph 134 of the Framework states that *"where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use"* and this is further reinforced by guidance set out by English Heritage. The previous planning permission involved the removal of a dilapidated agricultural building which is of a steel framed construction and is considered to have a negative impact on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings as well as having a negative impact on the character of the wider street scene. The agricultural building has a volume of 450 square metres whereas the volume of the four new buildings have a combined volume of 262 square metres. The replacement of this agricultural building with an appropriately designed new build (of significantly lower visual impact) is therefore considered to result in significant benefits, not only in terms of the visual improvements to the site and surrounding area but also in terms of providing additional family housing to the village of Caverswall, which would in turn benefit the existing services and facilities in the village.
- 6.11 The accompanying Viability Assessment produced by Mounsey Chartered Surveyors (which incorporates costings from Wood Goldstraw Yorath) identifies the 'conservation deficit' which is set out in a simplified version in the table below:

Conservation Deficit:

Gross cost of barn conversion	£2,2632,908.00
Gross value of development	£1,873,000.00

Conservation deficit	£390,908.00
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Enabling Development Total Costs:

Gross cost of barn conversion	£2,263,908.00
Gross cost of new build	£1,016,751.00
Gross total cost of development	£3,280,659.00
Gross value of development	£3,281,000.00
Surplus from development	£341.00

6.12 Without the enabling development that is proposed as part of this application (as justified by the viability assessment produced by Mounsey Chartered Surveyors) it would not be financially viable for these listed barns to be preserved and restored through conversion to provide residential development alone as the conservation deficit is £390,908. As a consequence, the proposed new build development (alongside the reorganisation of Units 5 - 7 and provision of a further 3-bedroom dwelling) offers the only feasible route to preserve these heritage assets. Without this enabling development, there is a real chance that these heritage assets could decline to an extent that they could be lost for perpetuity. Whilst the provision of residential buildings in the Green Belt would constitute and inappropriate development which causes some (minimal) harm to the open character of the Green Belt, the retention of these listed barns is considered to constitute very special circumstances of significant weight, that is considered to clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness by definition and other harm.

6.13 In addition to the enabling development benefits that would result from this proposed development, there are also further benefits which add further weight in favour of the scheme when balanced against the harm to the openness of the Green Belt; namely the combined benefits of the retention and viable re-use of the heritage asset, the provision of new housing in a sustainable location, the replacement of an existing modern agricultural building (which has a negative impact upon the setting of the listed barns) and the provision of high quality new buildings results in significant economic, social and environmental benefits which should be attributed significant weight. This weight attached to these benefits, when added to the enabling development benefits of retaining these heritage assets for enjoyment of future generations, is considered to add further weight which further outweighs the harm (which is considered to be minimal) on the character and openness of the Green Belt.

- 6.14 When undertaking the balancing act in this regard, it is considered that the benefits mentioned above represent very special circumstances which significantly outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt by way of harm through inappropriateness by definition and any other harm. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle as it conforms with the guidance contained in the Framework and the Core Strategy.
- 6.15 The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing supply (with the most recent figures suggesting that the Council can only provide a 2.07 year housing supply, which is considered to represent a significant shortfall. As a consequence, in accordance with paragraph 49 of the Framework *“relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites”*. As such, as set out within paragraph 14 of the Framework where relevant planning policies are considered to be out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless *“any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”*.
- 6.16 Whilst footnote no.9 of the Framework states that Green Belt policy overrides that fact that the development plan is out-of-date, it is nevertheless clear that the Local Planning Authority are in drastic need for deliverable housing schemes that can contribute to the Council's five year housing supply, and the provision of five additional housing units will clearly provide an additional wider benefit which should be considered in the round. Furthermore, should these additional five dwellings not be supported, the previously approved seven units would not be able to come forward, thus resulting in a further deficit of seven dwellings.
- 6.17 In light of the above it is therefore considered that an increase in the number of new residential units by five (including four new-build units) bringing the total number of dwellings on this site to twelve is acceptable in principle in this location, as it complies with the guidance contained within the Framework (in particular Paragraphs 87 to 90) and the planning policies SS3, SS6, DC2 and R1 of the Core Strategy. The subsequent paragraphs explore the more detailed planning considerations which require to be justified including consideration of the impact of the heritage asset.

Heritage Impact Assessment

- 6.18 The National Planning Policy Framework states:

“In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's significance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the relevant Historic Environment Record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary...”

6.19 A Heritage Impact Assessment needs to cover the following three main points:

(1) Assessment of heritage significance

This involves an assessment of the significance of the heritage asset or assets which may be affected by the proposal development, including their setting.

(2) Assessment of Impact

This involves an assessment of the likely impact of the proposed development of the heritage assets and their setting.

(3) Mitigation

This involves a statement outlining a mitigation strategy to address any impacts of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset(s). This might include modification of methods, materials chosen or design and/or archaeological or architectural investigation and recording.

6.20 These three stages are considered in detail in the following paragraphs of this report.

Assessment of heritage significance

6.21 The application site falls entirely with the Caverswall Conservation Area, however no conservation area appraisal has been prepared for this area. The application building is designated as a Grade II listed building as demonstrated in Figures 1 and 2 with a number of other listed building located in the immediate surrounding area as set out in paragraph 2.3 of this report. There are no records of archaeological significance within the site.

6.22 The barns which form the application site are curtilage listed as they form part of the Dovehouse Farmhouse which is a Grade II listed building. The building has the list entry 1038004 following the receipt of its listed status on 8 August 1986. The listing description states:

12/14 Dovehouse Farmhouse

Farmhouse. Early C19. Red brick; tiled roof; end stacks. L-shaped plan. Two-storey, three-window front; glazing bar sashes with painted wedged leads; central entrance with painted stone Tuscan doorcase; diagonal glazing bars to overlight; C20 part-glazed door.

6.23 The barns themselves are not specifically mentioned in the listing however given that they are listed by association, their agrarian characteristics in line with their original

use as barns used in association with the wider agricultural holding is nevertheless a key aspect of the historical context of the site.

Assessment of impact

- 6.24 The proposed alterations to the existing barn, which would result from the reorganisation of Units 5, 6 and 7 to provide an additional 3-bedroom dwelling (Unit 8), would result in the reorganisation works to unit 7 & 8 will result in few cuts through the existing trusses. The original layout incorporated a scheme which would have resulted in two of the original trusses being cut through for the scheme to work. These alterations followed on from the advice that was taken on board from a Conservation Structural Engineer, Chris Pike. This revised scheme only requires one of the original trusses to be cut through for the scheme to work. The new door opening on elevation 2 is a new opening; however the Local Planning Authority have already approved a new window opening in this position. These alterations are not considered to be significant as they will result in alterations to existing openings within the building as opposed to the creation of new openings. As a result of this, the impact on the existing agrarian character of the barns would be negligible.
- 6.25 With regards to the impact of the proposed 4 new dwellings in the western portion of the application site, these buildings would replace a modern agricultural building which, whilst agrarian in character, is of a modern steel-framed construction. It is considered to represent an incongruous element of the site which does not relate well to the more historic characteristics of the site and the wider area.
- 6.26 Clearly, the introduction of new-build dwellings on to this site, in place of the existing agricultural building, has the potential to dilute the agrarian character of the site. It has therefore been considered imperative that the design, siting and scale of these buildings are in keeping with the predominant agrarian characteristics of the site.
- 6.27 The Council has produced a document entitled 'Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands' which was produced in the 1990s to support the Local Plan of the time provides some further guidance which is of relevance for planning applications for new residential developments. This document stresses the importance of the siting and relationship of new dwellings in relation to the context of the existing buildings on site in terms of their scale, proportion, massing and materials. Traditional elevations are promoted in the rural area which provide a simple and uncomplicated arrangement including having due consideration to fenestration details. The careful use of materials are also promoted in order to ensure that the choice of materials for new buildings are appropriate in the locality and sensitive to the local tradition. This document then goes on to consider barn conversion schemes. The guidance states that *"the provision of new door and windows openings will be discouraged [but] where essential these should relate closely to the position, size and appearance of the existing openings"*.

Mitigation

- 6.28 In order to ensure that the potential impact on the setting of the listed buildings and the character and appearance of the openness of the conservation area is preserved, care and consideration has been undertaken to ensure that the new development is appropriately designed and sited. The alterations to the existing barns will also follow the guidance on the conversion of agricultural buildings as set out in the document entitled 'Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands'.
- 6.29 The proposed 4 dwelling development would be constructed of complementary materials and a simple agrarian styling to ensure that they complement the existing barns (which have received consent for their approval to residential). This is proposed to be undertaken in a way as not to mimic the adjacent barns but instead to pick up cues from their construction i.e. through the use of similar brickwork, timber cladding and sandstone on the elevations. and plain clay roof tiles.
- 6.30 The proposed buildings are also to be laid out in elongated plots to continue the layout of the existing barns around the central courtyard with the buildings displaying an almost 50:50 ratio of walls-to-roofs on the elevations to emphasise the scale of the wider development. The proposed window and door detailing has also been considered with opening reflecting those of the adjacent barns with particular emphasis of the openings that mimic full height barn doors, stable doorway and smaller windows serving the first floor. Window and door detailing would be simple and cast iron rainwater goods will complement those on the farmhouse. Details on the design are expanded further in the 'Design and Appearance' section of this report.
- 6.31 In light of the above, it has been demonstrated that the proposed design of this scheme would preserve character and appearance of the Caverswall Conservation Area in accordance with Policy DC1 and DC2 of the Core Strategy and the guidance contained within Chapter 12 of the Framework.

Design and Appearance

- 6.32 As stated in the previous paragraphs, it is considered that the erection of four new dwellings and the subdivision of Unit 7 of the previously approved barn conversion scheme could be accommodated in principle without harming the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or adversely affecting the setting of the nearby listed buildings. Notwithstanding this, it remains imperative for the final appearance and scale of the proposed dwellings to be designed so that the scheme fits in within the existing vernacular of the area. As stated previously in this report, Wood Goldstraw Yorath have based their design of the terraced block on a former livestock, barn tractor store, piggery / hayloft which has been converted into a residential development. The detached dwelling concept has been based on 2 existing farmworkers dwellings, and side store extension, on being converted into 1 dwelling.
- 6.33 Policy DC1 'Design Considerations' of the Core Strategy requires new development to be of a high quality that adds value to the character of the local area whilst promoting a sense of place and identity. The guidance goes on to state that new

development should have consideration with regards to the scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance of the site. Paragraph 64 of the Framework states that *“permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area and the way it functions”*.

- 6.34 Policy DC2 ‘The Historic Environment’ of the Core Strategy stresses the importance of enhancing the historic environment. Consideration of this policy along with elements of Policy DC1 which stipulates that the character and appearance of the area should be fully considered has already been set out within the ‘mitigation’ section of the Heritage Impact Assessment and this justification will not be repeated here in order to avoid duplication. Instead the following paragraphs focus upon consideration of the scale, density, layout, siting and landscaping.
- 6.35 With regards to scale, the subdivision of Unit 7 would have no impact on the existing scale of the development as this would utilise the existing building and proposes no extension to that building. The proposed four new dwellings (shown as Units 9 - 12 on the submitted block plan) would be two storeys in height which is comparable to the existing barns and farmhouse. The proportions of the roof in relation to the ratio with the wall height are close to 50:50 in order to promote a steep roof slope and reinforce the style of the existing barns. Simple gable features have been incorporated on to two of the dwellings to add interest to the scheme as the development turns the corner around the courtyard. Furthermore the block of three terraced units would have narrow set back on either end to reduce the bulk of the property and add further interest into the character of the front elevation.
- 6.36 With regards to the density of the scheme, the provision of an additional 5 net units on the site would result in a density of 44 dwellings per hectare across the whole site (when taking the total of 12 units proposed within the wider site which measures 2,690 square metres). This is considered to be consistent with the housing density within the village and whilst the recently constructed new build scheme directly to the east of the application site under planning permission SMD/2013/0497 provides a density of 23 dwellings per hectare, those dwellings are predominantly larger detached new-build properties which did not have the constraints in their design that would be associated with a barn conversion scheme of this nature. The previous approval provides a compacted scheme that made efficient use of the land available whereas the additional dwellings proposed (which would result from the demolition of the modern agricultural building) now have the opportunity to develop out the remainder of the site to a similar density.
- 6.37 The layout has been considered through the siting of the new units to continue to form around the enclosed courtyard. Unit 12 is positioned to be detached but nevertheless sited close to the end gable of Unit 1 in order to reinforce the buildings that are positioned along the northern boundary of the site. The siting of the proposed three attached dwellings would be brought forward of the western boundary of the site in order to ensure that rear gardens can be provided within the site but

without diluting the open courtyard appearance at the centre of the site. Car parking is instead proposed at the front of these three units through a similar layout as has been the case within the approved development.

- 6.38 Landscaping has been carefully considered in line with the details that were previously submitted to discharge the condition for planning application SMD/2011/060. This proposal extends the landscaping proposal to incorporate the scheme new units within the wider development. The scheme would incorporate the car parking at the front of Units 9 -11 and provide an access into the northeast corner of the site providing car parking at the rear of Unit 12. The layout of the courtyard would remain open with landscaping incorporated to delineate car parking in an informal pattern. Rear gardens would be simple in form and there is an existing masonry wall to the rear of the terraced blocks which will remain. Between the dwellings it is anticipated that these will be timber post and panel fencing, final details of which are expected to be dealt with by way of conditions. In doing so, this will reinforce the agrarian character of the area.
- 6.39 The proposed development would therefore provide a high quality design, taking guidance from the Council's Design Guidance, which would be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area in accordance with Policies DC1 and DC2 of the Core Strategy and guidance contained within Chapter 7 of the Framework.

Highway Safety and Transport Considerations

- 6.40 Policy T1 of the Core Strategy requires new development to be located where the scale of the development can be satisfactorily accommodated by the highway network and for the appropriate level of car parking can be accommodated on site. The proposed development provides a net increase of 5 dwellings of which the fifth dwelling (Unit 8) resulting from the reduction in size of Units 5, 6 and 7 to enable an additional 3-bedroom dwelling within the existing barns). The scheme provides 2 car parking spaces per dwelling across the site which is considered to satisfy the Council's parking standards. Furthermore the existing access to the site (as approved under SMD/2011/0601) is considered to provide suitable visibility and access width to accommodate the anticipated increase in vehicular movements whilst ensuring that vehicles can access and egress the site in a forward gear.
- 6.41 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development would satisfy the highway safety requirement and therefore is in accordance with Policy T1 of the Core Strategy.

Residential Amenity

- 6.42 The proposed dwellings would be sited so that the windows serving principal rooms do not overlook other units that were approved under SMD/2011/0601 nor the adjacent farmhouse. Furthermore the reorganisation of Units 5 - 7 would not introduce any additional conflicts in residential amenity into the scheme. The four

new dwellings would provide their own private garden areas at the rear of the properties which are of considered to be a size commensurate with 3-bedroom dwellings of this scale and which, unlike the informal amenity arrangement for Units 1 - 8, provide a more standard garden arrangement.

- 6.43 In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development would not materially harm to the amenities of residents of adjoining properties.

Ecology

- 6.44 It has already been established through the ecological surveys that supported the most recent planning permission SMD/2011/00578/FUL at this site that the conversion of the existing barns and the demolition of the modern agricultural buildings would not result in any adverse ecological issues (most notably the bat surveys that were produced at the time). The current planning application does not introduce the conversion of demolition of any further buildings or structures and therefore no further ecological reports are considered to be necessary.

Affordable Housing

- 6.45 Whilst Policy H2 'Affordable Housing' states that the Council will seek affordable housing for scheme of five dwellings or more. Whilst this development seeks a net increase of five units, the accompanying viability assessment demonstrates that the scheme approved under planning application SMD/2011/0601 is not viable. As a result is it is necessary for a further five market residential units, as an enabling development, to be provided on site in order for the scheme to become viable one. The reduction in the value of the site as a result of any on-site affordable housing (or indeed for any off-site contribution) would render the site unviable.
- 6.46 It is therefore considered wholly justified for this scheme to provide no affordable housing as this is the only way by which the scheme can be viably developed.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This planning statement has been submitted by Knights on behalf of Mr S Beaumont to accompany a full planning application and listed building consent seeking planning permission for the erection of 4no. 3-bedroom dwellings and the reorganisation of Units 5, 6 and 7 (which was approved under SMD/2011/0601) to provide an additional 3-bedroom dwellings (Unit 8) at Dove House Farm Barns, Caverswall.
- 7.2 The proposed development follows on from the recent approval of planning application SMD/2011/0601 which sought to convert the existing listed barns to provide 7 residential units. The accompanying viability assessment demonstrates that the development that was approved under SMD/2011/0601 is unviable and that in order for the scheme to become viable in the current economic market it is necessary for these additional residential units to be created. The viability assessment also justifies why no affordable housing is proposed as part of this scheme.
- 7.3 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing supply, which is currently set at 2.07 years of housing. This scheme would deliver much needed family housing to the Borough, providing significant benefits to the local community.
- 7.4 Whilst the provision of 4 new-build dwellings is considered to be an inappropriate development within the Green Belt, this report has demonstrated the existence of very special circumstances exist which clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt (by way of harm through inappropriateness and any other harm), namely that:
- This scheme will ensure that the listed barns can be re-used as a viable redevelopment (as demonstrated within the accompanying viability report).
 - The site is located in a sustainable location whose future occupants would be able to support the existing facilities in Caverswall and Cookshill villages.
 - The development will involve the removal of a large agricultural building of modern construction which currently has a harmful visual impact upon the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
 - The proposed development will provide a high quality development that will result in an enhancement of the conservation area as well as improve the setting of the adjacent listed buildings.
 - The scheme will contribute towards Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's housing demand.
- 7.5 The reorganisation of Units 5, 6 and 7 to provide an additional 3-bedroom dwelling (Unit 8) is considered to constitute an appropriate form of development in the Green

Belt and has also been designed so that it does not materially affect the open character of the Green Belt.

- 7.6 The Heritage Impact Assessment element of this statement makes a full assessment of the heritage significance of the application site and considers the potential impact of the proposal (which is considered to be minimal). Furthermore, this statement demonstrates that any potential harm to the heritage asset can be mitigated through a suitable design and layout of the scheme.
- 7.7 The statement also considers the issues of design, highways, residential amenity and ecology which are all considered to be in accordance with the policies contained within the Core Strategy, the Council's design guidance and the guidance set out within National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.8 The proposal would comprise sustainable development, and as such, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, that planning permission and listed building consent ought to be granted.

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