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PLANNING / HERITAGE AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



PROPOSAL : ERECTION OF A FARMWORKERS DWELLING

ADDRESS : RUDYARDHALL FARM, RUDYARD, LEEK, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST13 8PT

APPLICANT : MR & MRS ROBINSON

DATE : JULY 2016 **JOB No. : 2015-2108**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr & Mrs Robinson to prepare and re-submit a planning application to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the erection of a farmworkers dwelling. This follows the submission of SMD/2015/0822 that was withdrawn on 6th April 2016. The application was withdrawn when it became apparent that the Council had concerns in relation to the principle of the proposal and the agricultural justification and the impact on the setting of the Listed Building.

This new application is considered to have taken into account the comments from the Council and this re-submission is now accompanied by a revised Agricultural Need Assessment prepared by Brown Rural Partnership further clarifies the principle of the proposal and demonstrates that an agricultural need does exist. In addition, this statement will demonstrate that the alternative options that have had to be discounted and the reasoning behind this submission.

2.0 USE

The application proposes the residential development of the site.

3.0 AMOUNT

The application proposes the erection of a single dwelling.

4.0 LAYOUT

The application proposes the erection of the dwelling in a croft to avoid harming the heritage assets on the site. The building has been positioned within the croft so as to maximise sunlight in the living rooms of the building.

5.0 SCALE

The proposed dwelling is a family home and proposes three-bedroom accommodation.

6.0 LANDSCAPING

The application is capable of accommodating landscaping on the site.

7.0 APPEARANCE

The application proposes a single storey building of brick with stone quoins and a plain tile roof.

8.0 ACCESS

The proposal will use an existing access track that connects to the A523.

9.0 PLANNING POLICY

As you will be aware Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Given this obligation, this chapter therefore considers national guidance relevant to the application as well as the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014). The following is considered relevant:

Core Strategy,

SS1 – Development Principles
SS1a – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c - Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
SD1 – Sustainable Use of Resources
DC1 – Design Considerations
DC2 – The Historic Environment
DC3 - Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 – Rural Diversification
R2 - Rural Housing

National Planning Policy Framework

There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development. The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Core Strategy. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

Within the NPPF it is also worth noting the following relevant paragraphs:

- Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (para 2).
- Plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas, (para 10)
- Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, (para 11).
- At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LPA's should approve proposals which accord with the development plan without delay (para 14).
- The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future (para 18)
- The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (para 19)
- Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting (para 21)
- Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. Support rural tourism that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors that respect the character of the countryside (para 28)
- Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there

are special circumstances such as: the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside (para 55)

- Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (para 129).

10.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Rudyard Hall Farmhouse is described in the Listing Register as: -
"Manor house. Mid-C17 with mid-C19 additions. Rough-faced coursed stone with smooth dressed quoins and cavetto strings at floor levels and plinths. 'T'-shaped plan (with later additions) of hall range and parlour cross wing; side stack to rear of hall. Entrance front: 2-storey and attic; projecting gabled cross wing to right with single range of windows. 2-light chamfer mullion to attic over stone cross mullion windows to ground and first floors; set-back hall range with similar range of cross windows to left of centre; boarded door with segmental head under massive block lintel to right. Projecting, gabled, blind C19 wing part-attached to left and connected to further wings. Garden front: of 1 x 3 bays, 2-light cross-mullion windows, plain mullioned to attic with labels, 3-light range to centre of flanks, continuous label strings to ground and first floors. Interior: 3 principal rooms oak panelled";

the gates and gate piers as: -
"Gates, gatepiers and garden walls. Mid-C19 and C20 re-using some C17 material. Ashlar. Walls run north and north-west of Hall (q.v.) enclosing a small lawn, approximately 1.8m high and with re-used C17 lintel to entrance immediately north-west of Hall; pitched coping; height of wall doubled circa 1960. Mid-C19 gatepiers approximately 2.5m high of cruciform plan run up to consoles and brought in square to frieze, moulded surbase and ball finials, wooden gates with curved upper rails";

and the outbuilding as: -
"Outbuilding, used as stable, possibly not built as such. Mid-C17. Coursed and dressed stone; tiled roof. Single storey and attic. 2-window front; symmetrical layout of 2 cavetto labelled 4-light chamfer mullion windows to sides, gabled dormer with cavetto labelled 3-light chamfer mullion to centre over corniced central door".

The application first examined the possibilities of using one of the existing farm buildings as a dwelling partly to avoid the need to erect a new building on the site and partly to introduce a long-term residential use to a building that would thereafter be maintained at a higher level. The analysis is set out above and has concluded that there is no scope to provide the accommodation in an existing building. The application then moved on to examine the areas of the site that are near enough to the farm buildings in terms of convenience and animal safety, and far enough away from the listed buildings to avoid harming their setting.

The farm has two crofts- the small croft on the other side of the garden wall to the Hall garden and the large croft further away. The application proposes the use of the large croft because of its limited impact on the heritage assets.

The application proposes a bungalow form for two reasons. Firstly, a lower form of development will have a lower impact on the landscape setting and on the heritage assets. Secondly, there is already a bungalow off the access track (Highgate Cottage Farm). It is considered that the chosen location and design of the proposed dwelling will not harm the heritage assets, as it is further away from the Listed Building and closer to the dwellings off the farm track.

This assessment of significance has been assessed the proposal against the Council's planning policies and the NPP Framework. The assessment concludes that the proposal does not conflict with development plan policy and does not harm the setting or character of the Listed Building. The assessment has analysed the character and value of the application building and its setting and has concluded that the proposal does not harm the historic and architectural asset. It is considered that the nature of the proposal and the understanding of the asset do not require expert intervention. On this basis the proposal is considered to have been favourably assessed against the criteria and is acceptable from a planning and historic viewpoint.

11.0 SUMMARY

This proposal seeks to address the previous concerns raised under planning application SMD/2015/0822 that was withdrawn on 6th April 2016. The concerns mainly surrounded the agricultural need for dwelling and its siting and location. The agricultural need for the dwelling is covered in more depth through the Agricultural Need Assessment prepared by Brown Rural Partnership that clearly demonstrates the agricultural need for the dwelling.

Rudyard farm extends to 173.32 acres and the farmstead, buildings and land are owned by Robinson Partners. A further 84 acres near Thorncliffe is rented. Robinson Partners comprises of family members David and Christina Robinson and their sons James and Andrew. David, James and Andrew all work full time on the farm and Christina works part time. Whilst there is no immediate exact time or date decided, given David's age it is realistic that he will be looking to reduce his hours in the future. This will then mean that the full time and key worker roles will fall on James and Andrew. It is therefore essential that James and Andrew remain on the holding. This proposed dwelling is required to house James Robinson. Other options have been considered, such as converting existing farm buildings and sub-dividing the farmhouse itself. However, it is considered that there are constraints to this approach with regards to the operational requirements of the farm and Listed status of Rudyard Hall farm itself.

Rudyard Hall: Whilst this building relatively large in scale and form, it is also a highly regarded mid 17th Century Grade II* Listed manor house. This building has been assessed and due to the intrinsic character, it is considered that the building could not be sub-divided to provide a separate dwelling with its own curtilage without causing demonstrable harm to the external and internal fabric of the building and its setting.

Listed Stable: The design of this building would require additional openings and this would harm the character and appearance of the building that has good historic features. Furthermore, the domestication of this building would detract from its historic character. In addition, the building is in very close proximity to the existing farming operation.
The stone barn (to the north of the yard): Whilst this building is not listed in its own right, it is curtilage listed. The building would again require additional openings and has good historic features. However, the building backs directly onto the farming activity.

The brick barn (adjacent to the entrance of the farmstead): Whilst there is more flexibility than the other buildings for converting this barn as it is not as old, it still has constraints. The building would require significant extensions and alterations to convert it into a family home. The close proximity to the farmhouse and the fact that it appears to be attached to a historic boundary wall provide concerns with regards to the setting of Rudyard Hall. However, the close proximity of the slurry / muck store would not be conducive for a residential property.

All of the agricultural buildings suitable for conversion are currently utilised in the everyday farming activities. Furthermore, the more modern portal framed structures are also in operation too. The farmstead has expanded organically over time, but it has done so in a contained manner restricting overall sprawl. The loss of any of these buildings would require replacement buildings to be erected and more so a significant re-design of the farmstead that would be too costly. In this instance and after careful examination of the other options through conversions etc , the erection of a new farm workers dwelling is not only the preferred option, but is the most realistic.

12.0 CONCLUSION

The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Paragraph 18 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity in the UK. It goes on to state in paragraph 28 that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. In addition, it states that support should be given to the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas. If the Council fail to support this proposal, it will have an adverse impact on the operation of the farm and in turn the rural economy.

The application is considered to accord with the Development Plan Policies and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. It is considered that the principle for a new farm workers dwelling has been demonstrated. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that due to the physical constraints the other buildings present are not suitable for residential conversion for either their historical importance, functionality or poor location. There are no other properties available for a skilled stockman and key worker Mr James Robinson and his family to reside. The building has been sensitively located, close to the other dwellings to the south of the access track. The design of the building is traditional and the scale and massing that echoes the design and appearance of Highgate Cottage Farm. The visual impact on the wider visual amenities and on the setting of the Listed Building will be kept to a minimum due natural screening. The building is an essential requirement for this rural business and therefore the Local Authority is politely requested to endorse this re-submitted application and grant planning permission accordingly.