JMIPlanning
Town Planning Consultants
+44 (0) 1889 566107
enquiries@jmiplanning.com
jmiplanning.com

Supporting Statement in relation to the conversion of a bunk barn to a dwelling

The Lodge, Mill Road, Oakamoor

November 2016

Project	The Lodge, Mill Road, Oakamoor
Client	Linda Moore
Reference	088
Project Team	Jon Imber
Version	1

Document Produced by:

JMI Planning Limited
62 Carter Street
Uttoxeter
Staffs
ST14 8EU

Phone: 01889 566107
Email: enquiries@jmiplanning.com

www.jmiplanning.com

Contents

1 Introduction 3
2 Site and Planning History 3
3 The Proposed Development 6
4 Planning Policy Context 7
National Planning Policy Framework 7
Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014) 9
5 Planning Considerations 11
Principle of Development 11
Impact of the Proposals upon the Highway Network 15
Impact of the Proposals upon Protected Species and their Habitat 15
6 Heritage Statement 16
7 Conclusions 17

1 Introduction

1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.

1.2 The author of this appraisal, Jon Imber, has worked as both a development control and forward planning officer in local government, and more recently as a senior planning consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and experience of the appeals process. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

1.3 This statement accompanies a detailed planning application. The application also includes:-

- Existing and proposed plans and drawings
- An ecological survey

2 Site and Planning History

2.1 The application site comprises a blockwork bunk barn partially clad in half-round timber at Mill Road, Oakamoor. The site is located on the edge of the settlement, approximately 450 metres south-west of the village centre. The village centre contains a limited range of services including a primary school, a public house and a village hall.

2.2 Surrounding land uses include a residential property to the west, and woodland to the east, north and south. The site and its surroundings lie within the Oakamoor Conservation Area.

2.3 The site is accessed via a surfaced track which emerges onto Mill Lane. The track also serves the dwelling to the east and one other residential property.

2.4 Before the bunk barn was built, a substantial lodge occupied the site. This was a substantial property with approximately 15 bedrooms built in the late 18th Century.

2.6 The site has the following planning history of relevance to this proposal:-

- SMD/1984/0584 – Proposed bunkhouse – Conditionally approved 14th February 1985
- SMD/2010/0947 – Change of use from holiday accommodation to residential and single storey extension – Refused 1st December 2010
- SMD/2011/0197 – Change of use from holiday accommodation to residential use – Refused 25th February 2011 on the grounds that "*insufficient information has been provided in order to demonstrate that the current use is not a viable commercial operation or a robust and comprehensive marketing exercise has been undertaken to consider other commercial options*".
- SMD/2015/0196 – Replacement of existing bunk barn with guest house/cookery school and two guest lodges – Refused 31st July 2015 on the grounds of increased reliance upon the private car and the visual impact of the two lodges.

2.5 The site and its surroundings are shown on the following photographs.



Figure 1 - Aerial photograph of site



Figure 2- The existing building

3 The Proposed Development

3.1 It is proposed to convert the existing building onto the site into a family home.

3.2 The proposed dwelling is a three-bedroomed property featuring an open plan kitchen, living and dining room, a utility and a bathroom. The accommodation is provided on a single level.

3.3 No extensions to the building are proposed. The building is to be subtly altered externally, with new windows and doors sensitively sited and designed. The half-round timber cladding is to be replaced with in timber boarding, and the proposal incorporates full height glazed elements and a standing seam zinc roof lending. Overall the alterations lend the building a more contemporary character and appearance, whilst maintaining its scale and massing. The use of natural materials

helps assimilate the building into its rural context.

3.4 An area of domestic curtilage commensurate with the needs of the dwelling is to be accommodated on the site. The dwelling would be accessed via the existing site entrance and car parking is to be accommodated within the curtilage.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 Paragraph 14 advises that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan; and also in circumstances where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

4.3 One of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes that the country needs.

4.4 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states that "*pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to):*

- making it easier for *jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;*
- *moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;*
- *replacing poor design with better design;*

- *improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and*
- *widening the choice of high quality homes."*

4.6 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that "housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. 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".

4.7 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there is special justification, such as where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to their immediate setting.

4.8 Chapter 7 of the Framework relates to design. Paragraph 58 advises that decision makers should aim to ensure that developments respond to local character and history, reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Paragraph 61 of makes it clear that good design goes beyond purely aesthetic considerations and also relates to how development is integrated into the natural and built environment. Paragraph 63 encourages design which raises the quality of the built environment in its setting.

4.9 Section 12 of the NPPF relates to heritage assets. Relevant paragraphs are considered in further detail in the Heritage Statement which assesses the impact of the proposals upon the character and significance of the conservation area.

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014)

4.10 The application site lies outside of the Oakamoor settlement boundary. As such, it falls within the category 'Other Rural Areas' as defined by Policy SS6c. Policy SS6c states that Other Rural Areas "*will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside*". One type of development which the policy identifies as acceptable to meet a local need is the "*conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2*."

4.11 "***R1 - Rural Diversification***

All development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment.

Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise and pollution.

Wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. Where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.

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.

Priority will be given to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses, where the location is sustainable and the proposed use does not harm the building's character and/or the character of its surroundings."

4.12 "***R2 - Rural Housing***

Other than sites allocated for housing development in the Site Allocations DPD, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the town and the villages:

- *Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H2.*

- *A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.*

- *Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.*

- *Extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.*

- *The conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use where:*

  - *the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; and*

  - *it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable. In such cases there will be a requirement for a marketing exercise to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional or other evidence that the building would be unsuitable for a commercial use; or*

  - *conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded."*

5 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

5.1 The proposals involve the conversion of a rural outbuilding to form a new dwelling. Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy allows this type of development where it would meet an identified local need, subject to compliance with Policies R1 and R2.

5.2 The proposals involve the conversion of the building to a market dwelling rather than affordable housing. However, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing. In accordance with Paragraphs 14 and 49 of the NPPF policies which restrict the supply of housing such as Policy SS6c are considered out of date. As such only very limited weight can be attached to

Policy SS6c in the determination of this application. Instead, the proposals fall to be considered against policies in the NPPF in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF identify three components to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Achieving sustainable development requires economic, social and environmental gains to be sought simultaneously.

Environmental

5.3 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF allows the residential conversion of redundant buildings in the countryside where this would lead to an enhancement to their immediate setting.

5.4 The proposals involve the re-use of an existing resource that is currently underutilised. In doing so, they would contribute towards addressing the Council's shortfall in housing land availability without involving any new-build development and without any associated impact upon the character or appearance of the countryside.

5.5 The site lies within walking distance of the village school and public houses. It is accepted, though, that future occupants of the property are likely to be dependent on the private car for access to other services and facilities. However, the lawful use of the existing building must be factored into any assessment of the sustainability of the site's location. Although currently vacant, the former use of the building as a camping barn could be resumed without requiring planning permission. It is not considered that a single dwellinghouse in this location would be any less sustainable in environmental terms than the short-term residential use associated with holiday accommodation. It is unusual for holidaymakers to remain in their accommodation for the duration of their visit. It is considered likely that they would commute to local

attractions such as Alton Towers and the Peak District, as well as public houses and restaurants in nearby villages. In this location they would be dependent upon on the private car to achieve this. It is therefore considered that resuming the authorised use of the building would generate a larger number of trips by private car when compared to a permanent residential use, and as such that a permanent residential use is more sustainable in environmental terms.

5.6 The existing building is of limited visual merit and does not currently contribute positively towards the character or appearance of the conservation area. The building is of permanent and substantial construction, but will nonetheless deteriorate if an alternative use is not found for it, harming the character of the conservation area. The proposals involve alterations and improvements to the property which enhance its appearance and bring the building back into active use ensuring that the site does not become untidy. The proposals therefore enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of the building in general.

5.7 The proposals are therefore sustainable in environmental terms.

Economic

5.8 One of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes that the country needs. Paragraph 19 of the NPPF prescribes significant weight to the economic benefits of proposals in the overall planning balance.

5.9 The proposals would deliver both short term and longer term economic benefits. In the short term the proposal would bring about the economic benefits associated with new development including supporting the construction industry both directly

through construction jobs on site and indirectly through the supply chain. The local planning authority would also benefit through the New Homes Bonus.

5.10 In the medium to long term, future occupants of properties on the site are likely to support local services and facilities, helping to safeguard their retention and potentially encourage new services in the village. The proposals would also boost the local labour supply, broadening the choice of suitable candidates for local employers.

5.11 Policies R1 and R2 of the Core Strategy infer that residential conversions will only be acceptable where every reasonable attempt has been made to secure an alternative economic use. This part of the policy does not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, and neither is it consistent with the spirit of recent changes to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, which allow the residential re-use of agricultural buildings without the need for planning permission. It is therefore considered that no weight should be given to this aspect of the policies.

Social

5.12 The proposals would contribute towards meeting the Council's housing requirement, providing quality homes to meet an identified need. The site is well related to the existing settlement, encouraging community cohesion and ensuring that new residents do not feel isolated. The proposals would therefore contribute positively towards the vitality of the local community, increasing its population with new residents that can support and enhance local services and partake in social and community activities.

5.13 The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development in environmental, economic and social terms.

5.14 In line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the broad principle of the proposed conversion is therefore considered acceptable.

Impact of the Proposals upon the Highway Network

5.15 Paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be refused on highway grounds where its impact upon the network would be severe.

5.16 The site access emerges onto Mill Lane, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. The width and alignment of the carriageway are such that vehicle speeds appear to be relatively low.

5.17 As set out in Paragraph 5.5, the proposed dwelling would generate less vehicle movements than the authorised use of the site.

5.18 The proposals would not therefore prejudice the safe or efficient use of the highway network.

Impact of the Proposals upon Protected Species and their Habitat

5.19 Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states that "the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined".

5.20 The application is accompanied by a bat and barn owl survey which concludes that the proposals will not harm protected species or their habitat.

6 Heritage Statement

6.1 The site lies within the Oakamoor Conservation Area which was designated in July 2016.

6.2 Paragraph 128 of the NPPF requires that 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 assets' importance 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.

6.3 Until the 1960s, the application site was occupied by Oakamoor Lodge, a substantial residence built by a local businessman George Kendall, who owned a tin works in the village. The Conservation Area Appraisal includes the following specific reference to Oakamoor Lodge:-

"Oakamoor Lodge (demolished in the 1960s) was, like Sunnyside, one of the earliest detached houses to be built in Oakamoor. It was occupied by George Wragge and the Wragge family during the 19th century. He was one of the partners and shareholders of the Cheadle Brass Company in 1839. The site of the house still retains evidence of the original landscaping, and it has a tied farm, Stoney Dale Farm, with a walled garden just behind, in the sunniest spot in the valley".

6.4 The site is currently occupied by two relatively modern buildings: the camping barn which is the subject of this application and an agricultural building. These two buildings are not typical of the local vernacular and do not contribute positively towards the character or appearance of the conservation area.

6.5 The proposals involve the conversion of the existing camping barn on the site without any extensions. Any evidence of landscaping associated with the former Oakamoor Lodge will therefore remain unaffected.

6.6 The proposals enhance the appearance of the camping barn, and in doing so would contribute positively towards the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, the proposals would not be prominent from public vantage points. The tree belt between the building and the highway would be retained, filtering views of the proposals and maintaining the wooded character of this part of the conservation area.

6.7 The proposals would not therefore harm the character or appearance of the Oakamoor Conservation Area.

7 Conclusions

7.1 The application proposes the conversion of an existing camping barn to form a dwelling.

7.2 The proposals are sustainable insofar as they involve the re-use of an existing resource which would result in fewer trips to and from the site. The proposals would bring about the social and economic benefits associated with new development.

7.3 The proposals enhance the appearance of the building and respect the character of its rural surroundings.

7.4 The development would not detrimentally affect the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby dwellings or the safe of efficient use of the highway network. The proposals would not harm protected species or their habitats.

7.5 The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development which accord with Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework.