Application for a Lawful Development Certificate
Far Rownall Farmhouse, Bagnall

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

10/00086 - CL/EXG 9 FEB 2010 - SMP

Prepared by

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Introduction
Far Rownall Farm is situated off Thorneyedge Road, near Bagnall in Stoke on Trent.
Our clients inherited the property from Mr Charlesworth in 2007 and are now seeking to confirm the residential status of the property.

Pre-Application Advice
A pre application site meeting was held with Mr Wayne Johnson, Senior Planning Officer and a follow up email dated 23rd June 2009 was subsequently received from him. The email stated that it would be worthwhile to submit an application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the original farmhouse at the main entrance to the farm taking into account the four different factors in the cases of abandonment.

A subsequent telephone conversation with Mr Johnson confirmed that a building survey was required to support the application and that a protected species survey was not considered necessary for this type of application.

Proposed Certificate of Lawfulness
In 1971 Mr Charlesworth obtained planning permission to build a bungalow next door to Farm Rownall Farm. A condition of the attached outline planning permission number 8650 dated 7th May 1971 stated that 'when occupation of the dwelling, for which outline permission is granted, takes place the existing farmhouse shall cease to be used as a dwelling.' The farmhouse was not demolished and has not had any alternative intervening use since this date. The residential use has continued in breach of the condition for more than 10 years.

Property Details
Far Rownall Farm Farmhouse is a detached brick house dating back to the mid 1800's. The property comprises an entrance hall with stairs off, lounge with fireplace, dining room with kitchen, first floor landing and three double bedrooms. There is a good sized garden to the front and west and a yard to the north of the farmhouse. The property also benefits from 12 acres of land and traditional brick and tile agricultural buildings that are largely redundant.

Factors to be taken into account in cases of abandonment:

1. **The physical condition of the property**
   A building survey has been carried out by Mr JS Wilks FRICS on Wednesday 7th October 2009. The report has suggested that there is no indication of serious foundation movement although the above ground structure needs urgent repairs to avoid further deterioration.

   The main areas of concern outlined in the report are the roof, the external walling and dampness to the property, which require immediate attention. These are briefly summarised below:

   Re-roofing – The main roof needs to be stripped and re-laid with felt inserted between the rafters and tile battens. Both chimneys need to be rebuilt. At the same time repairs are required to a small amount of exposed timber. The roof to the front part of the hall requires rebuilding and a new system of rainwater goods is required to the whole of the property.

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Repairs to walls – Re-rendering and pointing are required. There are two small areas of wall requiring repairs to the brickwork, above the right hand upstairs window and the walling between upstairs and downstairs openings.
Repairs to floors, internal finishes and fireplaces.

Rectification of all doors and windows.

Redecoration throughout, application of a lime based plaster and a damp proof course to reduce dampness.

Replacement of services – The property does have mains electricity connected but needs complete rewiring.

Although the farmhouse is in a state of disrepair it is considered that the property does not require major reconstruction work, which would be tantamount to rebuilding but instead requires a scheme of modernisation and refurbishment which is typical of many properties of a similar age, i.e. new ground floors, new windows, re-roofing, re-wiring etc. These repairs would bring the property in line with modern day standards expected of a residential property.

2. **The period of non-use**
We understand that the property has not been occupied full time since the previous planning permission was granted giving consent for a new bungalow some 60 metres to the north east of the site, approximately 40 years ago, however the retention of the house and ongoing maintenance, albeit basic, since illustrates the intention to retain its residential status.

3. **Whether or not there has been any intervening use**
We understand from the owners and evidence within the property would indicate that there has not been any intervening use of the dwelling house. The house has been secured by external doors and windows in order to prevent entry. There is evidence of furniture and fireplaces. It is clear on inspection that the house has not been used for any intervening agricultural or other use.

4. **Evidence regarding the owners intentions**
A bungalow was built next door to Far Rownall Farmhouse to provide a retirement home for Mr Charlesworth and his wife.

Our clients inherited the property in 2007 and are keen to restore the property sympathetically in order to bring it back into full use. They have been advised by both ourselves and the Staffordshire Moorlands Borough Council to regularise the breach of the original planning permission by seeking a Lawful Development Certificate prior to doing so.

Notwithstanding the requirements of the planning permission it is clear that Mr Charlesworth always intended to retain the residential status of the house and took positive steps to secure this, including undertaking rudimentary repairs to the fabric and maintaining the garden areas. In the latter years repairs were not undertaken as frequently but we believe these intentions continued throughout.

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Relevant Planning Policy

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan

D1 Sustainable Forms of Development
- Encourages the reuse of existing land and buildings
- Minimise the consumption of non-renewable resources such as agricultural land

D2 The Design and Environmental Quality of Development
- Any minor works carried out to the dwelling would be sympathetic to the character and qualities of its surrounding in location, scale and design
- To be connected to a foul sewerage system via a septic tank

NC1 Protection of the Countryside
- Works will respect the character of the countryside and have minimal impact on the environment.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

N2 & N7 Green Belt
- Re-establishment of the residential use would not injure the visual amenity of the green belt and would improve through minor works

N8 & N9 Special Landscape
- This application will not materially detract from the high quality of the landscape because of it siting, scale, design and materials and the fact that it is already in existence
- There will be minimal additional traffic generation

National Planning Policy

PPG2 Green Belts
- Small scale works to the building will not be damaging or harmful to the green belt
- Re-use of buildings should not prejudice the openness of Green Belts, since the buildings are already there
- The alternative to re-use may be a building that is left vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction, potentially creating an eyesore
- The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction

PPS7 Delivering Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- All development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness
- The Government's policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives
- Need to preserve historic buildings

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Conclusion

We believe that this is an excellent opportunity to rescue a historic building from further deterioration and to enhance the visual aspect of the property and the surrounding area. The property is susceptible to vandalism and therefore re-confirming the residential use will reduce the impact of vandalism on the property and the wider area.

Having considered the relevant planning policy and consulted with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council we believe our clients' proposals are acceptable in planning policy terms.