DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2016/0799 **Valid 20/12/2016**	**HUNTLEY HOUSE FARM 51 HUNTLEY LANE HUNTLEY CHEADLE**	**PROPOSED CONVERSION/CHANGE OF USE OF REDUNDANT BARN/SHIPPON TO FORM DWELLING AND ALTERATIONS TO ELEVATIONS INCLUDING PARTIAL DEMOLITION (RESUBMISSION OF SMD/2016/0497)** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development and whether the proposal would result in suitable permanent residential accommodation in the open countryside having regard to local and national planning policy;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the barn and wider setting
- Impact on residential amenity; and
- Impact on highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application building comprises of a large former agricultural building constructed from brick under a plain clay tile roof. The main part of the building is two storey in nature with its axis running in a north to south direction. An original single storey element is attached to its southern gable and a number of single storey extensions have been added to the rear (eastern) elevation and northern gable. The building forms part of Huntley House farm which lies in close proximity to the north east. To the west of the site, on the opposite side of the access lies a dilapidated Dutch barn with a more modern portal framed building beyond. Whilst the building lies within a cluster of dwellings and is surrounded on all four sides by built development it lies outside any recognised development boundary within the Green Belt for the purposes of the development plan.

PROPOSAL

This is a second attempt application which seeks consent for the conversion of the existing building to form a single dwelling. The proposed conversion would be carried out within the shell of the existing building and would provide a kitchen, lounge, dining room and utility with four bedrooms and family bathroom above. A stone paved patio and private amenity area would be provided to the north of the building and it would be served by the existing vehicular access.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 Rural Diversification
R2 Rural Housing
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 1-17 & 55
Section 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
Section 3 Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy
Section 4: Promoting Sustainable Transport
Section 6: Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes
Section 7: Requiring Good Design
Section 11: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

Huntley House Farm has an extensive planning history however the only applications which are considered relevant for the purposes of determining this application are:-

SMD/2016/0497 Proposed conversion/change of use of redundant barn/shippon to form dwelling and alterations to elevations. Withdrawn.

SMD/2015/0421 Change of use of existing redundant barn/shippon to form dwelling, alterations to elevations including demolition of existing outbuilding. Application invalid and returned.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site notice posted and 6 neighbours notified

Public Comments

No representations received.

Town / Parish Comments

No Objection.

Environmental Health

No objections subject to conditions.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Verbally confirmed no objections subject to conditions to provide adequate off road parking and turning provision within the site.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development
The Local Planning Authority is required to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material circumstances which indicate otherwise and in determining these applications, it shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, in so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations. The Council's Development Plan is formed of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2014) and the Saved Local Plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (adopted 1998). Core Strategy (CS) Policy SS1a establishes a 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' as contained within the National Planning Policy NPPF (NPPF) where: (1) planning applications that accord with policies within the Core Strategy will be approved without delay and (2) where there are no relevant policies or they are out of date, the Council will grant planning permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise considering:
I. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or
II. Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Paragraph 47 requires the Council to identify a five-year supply of deliverable housing land sites, including a 5% buffer to allow for choice and competition in the market for land increased to a 20% buffer where there is a persistent under-delivery in past years. Paragraph 49 requires all housing applications to 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. The policies contained in the NPPF as supplemented by the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) are also a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Policy SS6c of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2014 sets out a strategy for "Other Rural Areas" which comprise of the open countryside and Green Belt outside of the development and infill boundaries of the towns and villages. These areas will provide only for development which meets

an essential local needs, supports rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.

Policy R1 seeks to support rural diversification and states, amongst other things, that wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion with priority being given to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprises, including tourism uses.

Policy R2 of the Core Strategy states that 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 towns and villages; affordable housing; a new dwelling that meets a local need; replacement dwellings and extensions to dwellings.

Paragraph 55 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should avoid isolated houses in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. Notwithstanding its open countryside and green belt location designation within the local plan the application building lies within a small hamlet of buildings approximately 1.5km from Cheadle Town Centre where there is a good range of services and employment opportunities. There is a regular bus service from the main road to the Town centre and other outlying destinations. hilst it is accepted that part of the route from the site to the main road is rural in character with no footways or street lighting this would be for a small section only and whilst it may discourage people walking from the site to the neighbouring Town in the evenings it is considered that the route could easily be navigated in the day and by bicycle thereby providing an alternative to the private car. In conclusion therefore whilst the site is not considered to be highly sustainable it is also by comparison not considered to be unsustainable either. Consequently it is considered that the site is not isolated in the context of paragraph 55 of the NPPF. The proposal would therefore be acceptable in principle as it accords with Policy SS1a of the adopted Core Strategy document subject to consideration of the more detailed matters set out below.

Character and Appearance

The site lies within the Green Belt outside a settlement boundary. Turning therefore to the NPPF para 90, this states that the reuse of buildings is not inappropriate provided the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Both national and local planning policies seek to ensure that the original character and appearance of a building is retained through a sensitive conversion scheme. The application building is constructed from traditional materials and is considered to be a vernacular building which is worthy of retention through the provision of an alternative re-use. It is structurally sound and the proposal makes good use of existing openings. The removal of a number of later additions/extensions is also welcomed and would result in a positive enhancement to the character and appearance of the building. The scheme does however propose a number of rooflights whilst these have been contained to the more enclosed western elevation of the building the number is considered excessive. Agreement has been reached with the agent to omit the central one of these serving the landing and have this artificially lit and this can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. The proposed dwelling would be provided with a small paved patio and private garden area to the north. This would be formed by severing the curtilage

with the main farmhouse and enclosing this with some form of boundary treatment. Whilst this would prevent through access to Huntley House Farm this is already served by a separate access further to the west approved as part of the replacement dwelling permitted under SMD/2013/0984. The scheme proposes the removal of an existing Dutch barn which is in a poor state of repair and this would also result in a positive enhancement to the character and appearance of the area. In this respect the proposal would be contrary to policy DC3 of the CS which seeks to protect and where possible enhance the local landscape and setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands and policies DC1 which require good quality design.

Alternative Uses

The proposal now seeking a change of use from a redundant barn to a dwelling also requires the consideration of CS Policy R2. The conversion of non-residential buildings for residential use will be permitted where the building is suitable and worthy in physical and architectural and character terms for conversion and it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable. A marketing exercise should be carried out by a suitably qualified professional or other evidence provided that the building would be unsuitable for a commercial use or that the conversion to residential use would enable a building or particular merit to be safeguarded. Whilst no formal marketing exercise has been submitted the agent has provided justification as to why the building cannot be put to alternative uses. Huntley House Farm is not used as a farm anymore and the former milking parlour and cattle shed have been converted to light industrial use under app ref 11/00439/FUL from where the applicant runs his refrigeration business. The total land ownership is only approx 7 acres so is not of a viable size to operate a farm and there is no farming done from the site at all. The site is otherwise surrounded by residential properties off a limited access drive and it is therefore considered that a residential conversion would be the most appropriate re-use to secure a viable re-use of this former agricultural building.

Amenity

Policy DC1 states that all new development should protect residential amenity in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping. Due to its isolated location and current use the proposed development is not considered to raise any adverse amenity issues in terms of impact on any of the surrounding residential properties or neighbouring land uses. The submitted scheme has been carefully designed to ensure that it does not have any adverse impact on the amenity of any of the adjoining properties. The properties to the rear of the building are located at a lower ground level. Windows on this elevation are existing and would be secondary in nature. In addition they would not have a direct relationship with any of the windows in either of the adjacent dwellings.

Highway Safety

In accordance with policy DC1 all new development should provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirements arising from the development. The application does not propose to make any amendments to the existing highway access and adequate off road parking provision is capable of being provided with the site. Again this can be secured via a suitably worded condition.

Biodiversity
The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a core principal of the NPPF where planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats and ecological networks. In determining planning applications permission should be refused if significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or as a last resort compensated for. The ethos of this is provided for in CS Policy NE1.

The application has been accompanied with a bat and bird activity survey. Whilst this found no evidence of bats roosting within the building the structure is rated as having a high potential for roosting bats with numerous features suitable for both crevice dwelling and void dwelling species. In addition the surveys recorded a high level of sustained foraging and commuting activity and concluded that there is moderate potential for the building to serve as a transient satellite roost for individual bats over space and time. The mitigation measures contained within the report are considered satisfactory to protect the established ecological interests on the site and these can be secured via a suitably worded condition.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF makes it clear that to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. In conclusion it is considered that the proposed scheme represents a sustainable form of development which would bring social benefits in terms of making a contribution albeit small to housing provision in the District and may have some benefits in terms of generating additional household expenditure in the area. The proposed development is considered to provide a suitable re-use for an existing redundant rural building and has been sensitively designed so that its original character is retained. The proposed development would not result in any harm to any of the occupiers of surrounding residential dwellings or neighbouring land uses. Furthermore, it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to highway safety or result in harm to any established ecological interests.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **APPROVE subject to conditions regarding statutory time limit, submitted plans, minor design modifications, highways, ecology , drainage.**

Case Officer: Teresa Critchlow
Recommendation Date: 31st March 2017

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council