DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2017/0003 **Valid 10/02/2017**	**GATE HOUSE COTTAGE** **KINGSLEY ROAD** **CELLARHEAD**	**CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO PROVIDE DEPENDANT RELATIVE ACCOMODATION** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development (Green Belt/Open Countryside)
- Design/visual impact on the character and appearance of the rural location
- Neighbour amenity
- Highways
- Ecological impact
- Environmental Health

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The building the subject of this application is a red brick and tile building with a roughly 'T' shaped footprint. The building is of a gable roof design, has arched brickwork above the window and door openings, a feature circular window and large timber doors. The submitted plans show that the building is used for storing animal feed and farm machinery and has loft storage space which can be accessed via an external, steel staircase. The application building forms part of a courtyard arrangement, at a slight angle with, and linked to, the main dwelling via a wall with single doorway. The building fronts directly on to a large hardstanding area (with small roundabout complete with planting and dovecote) used for the parking and turning of vehicles. To the south east side of the application building is a farm gate leading to a rear farmyard. Vehicular access to the site is via a lengthy driveway linking directly to the A52 Kingsley Road. Land levels within the courtyard area are relatively flat.

PROPOSAL

The application is described as 'The change of use of an agricultural building to provide dependant relative accommodation'. The application does not contain any further details about the intended occupant or whether the building would be occupied full time. However it is understood from communications with the applicant that it is for the applicant's elderly mother. Vehicular access to the accommodation would be shared with the main house, as would the parking/turning area. The plans do not show any proposed private amenity space although the red line identifying the

site does include a piece of land to the rear of the building which currently forms part of the farm yard. The conversion would take place mainly within the confines of the existing building and would generally re-use the majority of the existing window and door openings. Two new skylights would be inserted into the roof on the southern (courtyard) facing elevation and notably the large front and rear timber door openings would be re-used, fitted with glazing. Internally the accommodation would be divided between two floors. At ground floor level there would be an open plan kitchen/dining/living room, shower room and bedroom whilst to the first floor there would be a second bedroom (labelled Visitor bedroom) and a shower room.

The application is accompanied by a Bat Scoping and Nesting Bird Survey Report.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS6 Rural Areas
SS6c Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting.
R1 Rural Diversification
R2 Rural Housing
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources.
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 to 17.
Section(s)
6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes.
7 Requiring good design.
9 Protecting Green Belt land.
11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

88/00484/OLD – Internal alterations and extensions. Approved.
97/00969/OLD – Replacement Dwelling. Approved.
98/00881/OLD – New Farm building for animals and storage. Withdrawn.
99/00506/FUL – Agricultural Building. Approved.
00/00274/FUL – Domestic Garage. Approved.
05/01423/FUL – Wildlife pond (Retrospective). Approved.
05/01450/FUL – Retention of beef cattle rearing building. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity
Site Notice expiry date: 27th March 2017.
Neighbour consultation period ends: 21st March 2017.

Public Comments – None received.

Cheddleton Parish Council – Object to the application and request that the application is considered by the Planning Applications Committee. (Note: Development Services Manager informed of request. Confirmed that no elected Member had requested that the application be called in to committee and therefore the application should be determined via delegated decision).

Environmental Health – No objections subject to conditions.

Severn Trent Water – No comments received.

Ecologist - No objections on Ecology grounds. No conditions but an informative is recommended should permission be granted.

Highways – No objections or conditions.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Green Belt, to the east of the main Cellarhead settlement and to the north of the A52 Kingsley Road. The NPPF and Core Strategy policies restrict development within the Green Belt but there is some scope to allow the residential conversion of an existing rural building. Core Strategy policies R1 and R2 set out the circumstances in which a residential conversion may be looked upon favourably. The application is not for affordable housing, nor is it for an agricultural/forestry/other rural worker. Whilst the application states that the converted building would be used for a dependant relative it is, in planning terms, for permanent residential use within the Green Belt. Paragraph 90 (NPPF) clarifies that the re-use of a building (providing that it is of permanent and substantial construction) is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

It is clear within Core Strategy policies R1 and R2 that priority should be given to the commercial re-use of a building which is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The application does not present any information (such as a marketing exercise) to demonstrate that the building is unsuitable for commercial re-use. Policy R2 gives scope for consideration of any other matters which may render a building unsuitable for commercial re-use. The site visit demonstrated that the building would have very little opportunity to be used for modern day agricultural purposes. Many of the small windows and doors would not be compatible with modern day farming equipment/techniques and the character of the building is more comparable to a traditional stable block. It is considered that the

angled relationship and close proximity between the application building and the main house would render the building unsuitable for commercial re-use. Office, industrial or other commercial purposes have significant potential to increase vehicular movements to and from the site (staff, deliveries etc). The long/ narrow driveway would not necessarily be suitable for delivery vehicles and uses other than residential do have the potential to cause unnecessary disturbance to the occupants of the existing dwelling. It is considered that residential is the best use for this building. However it would be appropriate to tie the residential use of the application building to that of the main house. An independent dwelling would not be appropriate in this location, the shared parking/turning area would cause disturbances to occupiers, there is no private amenity space and to the rear of the building is the farm yard and agricultural buildings. It is also important to note that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year deliverable supply of housing. As of March 2016 the figure was 1.87 years.

Design/visual appearance

Policies DC1 and DC3 of the Core Strategy seek good design, acceptable amenity impact and resisting development which would be harmful/detrimental to the character of the landscape. The application proposes that the conversion would take place within the confines of the existing building, utilising the majority of the existing window and door openings. The large timber doors would be replaced with glazing and the brick arch feature retained. Two skylights would be inserted to provide light into an ensuite and stairwell. Three small windows within the rear elevation would be bricked up and three rear doors would be changed to single windows. One of the most notable external alterations would be the removal of the external steel staircase however this is not a feature which is particularly attractive or worthy of retention. Overall, the development would be acceptable from a design perspective and appropriately worded conditions could be added to secure details including materials and window designs.

Amenity/visual impact

The proposed occupant of the converted building is, according to the application forms, for the housing of a dependant relative. The building is quite close to the main dwelling, at an angle with it and would share the same parking and turning space. The red edge shown on the block plan includes the main house, it also includes an area to the rear of the application subject building but does not label what the area would be used for. Due to the close proximity and orientation to the main house, the shared parking space, the shared narrow access, unidentified amenity space and the fact that this is a Green Belt site, it I considered appropriate to add a condition to ensure that the converted building remains in the same ownership as the main house. It is noted that the applicant has indicated that the development would be occupied by a family member.

In terms of potential visual impact there are no planning objections to the proposal. Whilst the scheme does propose some physical alterations to the building they are fairly minimal and do not change the overall character of the building. Existing

window and door openings are to be re-used wherever possible. A few of the doors are to be partially blocked to create windows and a window on the eastern elevation and three small windows on the north elevation are to be blocked up. Two new skylights are to be inserted but these are small and the drawings show that they would fit neatly into the roof slope, proportionate to its size. Conditions could be added to secure appropriate materials and window and door types.

Highway Safety

The converted building would provide 2 bedroom accommodation, one a single room and the other a double bedroom. It is reasonable to assume that this development may attract 2-3 vehicles to the site in addition to those already connected to the main house. The County Highways officer has been consulted, has viewed the access and has confirmed that there are no objections to the development from a Highways safety perspective. No conditions are recommended and he comments that the access is reasonable and visibility is good.

Ecological impact

A Bat and Nesting Bird Survey has been submitted as part of the application. The Council's Ecology officer has commented that the building currently has a bat friendly, felt roof lining. It is recommended that an informative should be added to highlight the desirability of continuing to use bat friendly roof lining membrane. There are no ecological objections to the planning application and no conditions to be added.

Environmental Health

The Council's Senior Pollution officer has assessed the scheme and has taken into considerations matters of noise, contamination, waste, dust and asbestos. There are no Environmental Health related objections but a number of conditions and informatives are recommended to be added on to the decision notice if the application is to be approved.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The application site is located within the Green Belt where preference is for the re-use of agricultural buildings for commercial purposes. There is no submitted evidence by the applicant to demonstrate that the building is unsuitable for commercial re-use but Core Strategy policy R2 allows scope for consideration of other evidence when considering why the building might be unsuitable for commercial re-use. The reasons why the building is unsuitable for business re-use are discussed above as is the reasoning behind why a condition should be added to link the converted building to the main house. It is noted that the visual appearance of the building and surrounding landscape would not be harmed, nor are there any other planning reasons (highways, Environmental Health, Ecology) why the

application should be refused. It is therefore recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 02/05/2017

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council