

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2017/0194
Valid 10/04/2017

NEW HILL FARM
TICKHILL LANE
DILHORNE

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE
FROM AGRICULTURAL
BUILDING TO 1.NO HOLIDAY
COTTAGE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Green Belt
- Design
- Amenity
- Sustainability

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

This detached single storey stone building appears to have been larger but is in varying states of disrepair. For 8m from the western end the building is roofed and appears partially renovated. The remaining 6m length is walled to about eaves height. A further section originally included in the first submitted drawing is considered ruinous and has now been excluded from the proposal. There has been a building at about this location since at least the 1887 OS map although only by the 1925 map does the footprint appear to extend to correspond approximately with the present day layout. The Newhill farm house was present in 1887 and stands more-or-less alongside Tickhill Lane some 50m NW of the application building which stands alongside a lane which is a public footpath running ESE from a junction with Tickhill Lane alongside the farm house. The footpath lane leads to The Croft about 100m further along. Small to medium sized C20th farm buildings, again in varying states of repair, occupy ground to the immediate south of the proposal building. The farm in its present ownership is a c. 2 hectare (c. 5 acre) holding (number 37/025/0226) and has a small flock of 17 sheep (flock number 178924).

PROPOSAL

To renovate the existing building and convert it to a single holiday unit. The proposal would be contained within the existing building dimensions – notwithstanding that this will necessitate the reconstruction of a missing roof over a 6m stretch and some wall construction. As first submitted the plan proposed the construction of a building some 19m in length to create two holiday units. In response to LPA comments an amended plan 17-108-05 for a building of length 14m was substituted.

Access is shown via a gateway off the lane running along the northerly site boundary. Parking is shown inside the gateway against the eastern boundary of the red edge of the application site. The gateway would continue to serve also as shared access to the remainder of the farm yard south of the application building.

An area of some 100m² is available as amenity space immediately alongside and off the east end of the building.

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 Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
R1 Rural Diversification
R2 Rural Housing
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s): 1 to 17
Section(s): 3 – Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy; 7 – Requiring Good Design; 9 – Protecting Green Belt Land; 11 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1993/0382 (93/00493/OLD) – conversion of barn into dwelling – refused
SMD/1999/0914 (99/00560/FUL) – conversion of barn to single storey dwelling – refused

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 29th May 2017
Neighbour consultation period ends: 9th May 2017
Press Advert: N/A (*Add date if applicable)

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Dilthorne Parish Council – no objection subject to neighbour approval but request that should permission be granted, a condition be attached restricting occupancy to use for holiday let only to ensure not used as full time living accommodation in the future.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection subject to condition.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

SS6c provides for conversion of an existing rural building subject also to being in accordance with R1 and R2. Policy SS6c is to exercise strict control over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exemptions as allowed by Government Policy. NPPF paragraph 90 provides for the re-use of buildings provided they are of permanent and substantial construction and provided the development would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

To comply closely with the above provisions of SS6c the applicant has suggested a flat roof could be considered over the part of the building currently un-roofed. Whilst this would need consent due to the change it would bring to the appearance of the building, it is recognised this is likely to represent a valid fall back in principle. On this basis, and notwithstanding the additional building volume involved, it was put to the applicant that a dual pitched roof in continuation of the part already existing would be justified as a significantly better design solution.

Policy R1 refers to “all development in the rural areas outside of development boundaries”. Proposals are to be assessed according to the extent to which the countryside, its biodiversity, landscape and heritage is safeguarded and enhanced and the extent to which the proposal would support economic activity or a rural community need.

Policy R2 provides for the conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use where: (i) the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms and (ii) it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable – in which case there is a requirement for a marketing exercise to show this. Alternatively the policy provides for the conversion to residential use where a building of particular merit would be safeguarded.

Design

In design the proposal generally conforms to the Council’s adopted policy for rural building conversion by utilising existing openings. The use of a dual pitch roof in continuation of that over part of the building is a much preferred design solution to keep the character of a plain form vernacular rural building. In event of approval the development should be conditioned to use traditional Staffordshire clay tiles and to ensure suitable masonry and pointing using authentic natural stone to match and appropriately coursed and mortared.

Amenity

The proposal defines a plot giving an area of amenity space of some 100m² chiefly to the eastern end of the building and along its north elevation. This comfortably exceeds the 65 sq m minimum that would be required for a residential property though this is less a consideration for holiday unit.

There are no near neighbours to be affected by for example over-looking.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Although at its core this building has pre-20thC origins as supported by the OS map evidence, this is not a building of particular merit beyond that it is of stone and tile

and has some age. Much of the stone work in fact appears to have been clumsily re-built with poor attention to coursing. Only small sections of stone work appear likely to be original. The building can nevertheless reasonably be considered suitable and worthy in accord with R2(i). The tests of R2(ii) also apply. The applicant argues that although agricultural buildings are needed at the premises this building does not offer a suitable or useful form for their needs. A concurrent application for a more modern style farm building south of this one was submitted under reference SMD/2017/0217 but was subsequently withdrawn. Whether some other commercial use could be found has not been tested but the proposed holiday accommodation is in effect a commercial use and one which would supplement the income and diversify this very small farm business.

On balance this can be considered a practical and modest proposal which would resolve a decaying building and a dilapidated site by establishing a building of appropriate scale and character for its rural farmstead position and in design one broadly consistent with the building's likely original form. In terms of R1 the proposal is therefore bringing an improvement to the location (alongside a public footpath) and will generate an economic contribution. Although no marketing exercise has been undertaken (policy R2) this is an unlikely location for anything commercial unconnected with the farm of which it is part and is not very suitably or sustainably located.

Finally, given the proposal is for living accommodation, albeit for holiday use, consideration needs to be given as to whether permanent residential (C3) use would be appropriate or should be restricted by condition. Two factors arise: sustainability of the location and amenity in proximity to the farm activities of the site.

For a new dwelling this is not an especially sustainable location. The site is about half way along Tickhill Lane which is over a mile in length and is mainly single track. The site is over a mile from the nearest main road, the A52 Kingsley to Cellarhead Road to the north. The limited service centre of Werrington is a further two miles to the west, or the market town of Cheadle could be reached some four miles to the SW from this point. As of April 2017 a reasonably frequent bus service is operating along this route. However the general likelihood of people walking to catch this bus service will be severely hampered by the single track nature of Tickhill Lane and the linking Dilhorne Road, lack of pavement, absence of street lighting and paucity of development along the way giving a sense of remoteness and potential insecurity.

As the site is close alongside a working farm with livestock likely to be occupying buildings immediately opposite the application building there is judged a risk that the amenities of permanent residents could be unreasonably disturbed by noise and odour whereas for short stay holiday visitors the proximity of the farm may be found desirable and a benefit.

It is concluded that the proposal is appropriate as a holiday let but, due to the limited sustainability of the location and constraints on amenity of the farm environment, not as permanent residential (C3) accommodation.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve – subject to conditions including limiting to short term holiday let**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 15th August 2017

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council