DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2017/0304 **Valid 04/05/2017**	**BANK FARM** **ASHBOURNE ROAD** **WINKHILL**	**PROPOSED CONVERSION OF A STONE BARN INTO ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL LIVING ACCOMMODATION ASSOCIATED WITH THE ORIGINAL FARMHOUSE AND INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND REAR EXTENSION TO THE FARMHOUSE** **(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Design
- Heritage – non designated heritage asset
- Landscape and settlement character
- Sustainability of the location
- Ecology

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

A detached linear plan two storey stone farm house with farm buildings in a line. Stands prominently on brow of field slopes overlooking the main Ashbourne Road. Accessed by a private lane which is also a public footpath right of way of some 150m which climbs up at a diagonal across the slope. The farm house occupies the easterly end of the building range and appears to have a generous garden area to the front. To the left (west) of this is a hard surfaced farm yard which is in front of the proposed section to be converted. This is bounded in turn to its west with a single storey outbuilding off the west end of, and at right angles to, the main farm building. Immediately south of this and off set west so as not to be directly in front of the main farm is a 20th C portal frame style shed c.22m x 17m. There is also a lean-to metal clad shed off the rear of the building to be converted. The nearest neighbour is Winkhill Bank Farm some 130m to the west. The submitted plans show that associated with the farm house and buildings there are some 9.5hectares of grassland divided into seven fields.

PROPOSAL

To extend living accommodation into the whole of the two storey farm building range. Includes removal of the lean-to shed to the rear and a single storey rear extension alongside an existing two storey outrigger to the existing original farm house. Several amendments to the proposal have been made in response to feedback from the case officer and Conservation Officer.

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
DC2 Heritage
DC3 Landscape and Settlement
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework
Paragraph(s) 1 to 17
Section(s) 7 – Requiring Good Design

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS
None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity
Site Notice expiry date: 14th June 2017
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments
None

Town / Parish Comments
Ipstones Parish Council – support

Conservation Officer
It is crucial that there is a clear difference between the character of the original dwelling and attached outbuilding. At present the scheme incorporates too many domestic features on the barn – a porch, two very domestic first floor windows and roof lights to the front elevation (not shown on the elevation drawing). On the rear I have concerns about the two-storey extension which does not relate particularly well to the solid, robust character of the building; and the proposed new windows are certainly too large for its proportions. Other windows on this rear elevation are also too domestic in their proportions and design.

An opportunity should be taken to reinstate blocked historic doorways – such as the 2 blocked doorways to the family room.

Ecology
Preliminary survey in June 2017 found nesting Swallows present, potential for bird nesting generally and moderate potential for bats to be present leading to a

recommendation for activity surveys to be undertaken. Bat activity surveys followed in accordance with the relevant national guidelines. These identified active presence at a localised point within the building of a summer bachelor roost for a low number of common pipistrelle bats.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

In principle conversion of a non residential rural building to residential use may be accepted by reference to SS6c(1) and policies R1 and R2. The building must be suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. R2 also stipulates a requirement to demonstrate by way of a marketing exercise or other evidence that the building proposed for conversion cannot be viably used for agriculture or other commercial use or alternatively that the conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded. It is chiefly under the latter provision that this proposal is being considered.

Design

Several amendments have been sought to achieve design details acceptable for this building's age and character and consistent with the Council's design guidance for rural building conversions.

Amenity

No adverse implications for neighbour or street scene amenity would arise due to the distances of the application building from the public road or neighbours. The public footpath passing through the farm yard between the original farm building and the more modern shed to the immediate SW of these would be unaffected. Walkers using the path do however have opportunity to view and appreciate the character and setting of the farm at close quarters from the path.

Heritage

The farm was present by the time of the 1877-1887 OS map and from the stone work is judged likely to be significantly older by a century or more. Its neighbour Winkhill Bank Farm is included in the Staffordshire Survey of Historic Farmsteads and it is not known why the application site is apparently omitted. Nevertheless the heritage qualities of the application building are self evident in the stone work and particularly the surrounds to the openings and former openings. It should be noted though that the front openings in the existing house have been altered and enlarged at some time.

The open farm yard is considered critical to the setting and for example its conversion to garden use would significantly undermine the current extant evidential heritage value.

Ecology

An informative should be included in relation to nesting birds. The identified bat roost presence is likely to lead to the need for a Natural England licence to be obtained.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

This building is undoubtedly worthy as referenced in Policy R2. The site is in a rural location isolated from any significant settlement. The nearest is Winkhill listed as a smaller village (and very much at the smaller end of the range in this list) in policy SS6b but the farm stands very much apart from here – a point emphasised by the local topography and the farm's position on markedly higher ground. The situation is judged unlikely to be especially conducive to a commercial use other than something ancillary to the residential occupier of the attached farm house or a farming use associated with this site. A marketing exercise is unlikely to have resulted in any greater advancement of this assessment. The farm land is less than 10ha (c.22acres) and a serviceable farm building is separately present.

It should be noted that the proposal has been considered specifically as an extension to the living accommodation of the existing house and such factors as amenity and sustainability of the location required to be considered in the case of a separate dwelling have not been assessed.

It is appropriate that careful conditioning of the permission be applied to safeguard the identified heritage interest as it is on the basis of heritage that the development is acceptable in principle.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank
Recommendation Date: 5th December 2017

X B.J. Haywood

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council