Planning Statement

Back Lane Farm
Bottomhouse
Leek
ST13 7PJ

Chandler Watson Consultancy Ltd

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This Planning Statement is submitted in support of an Application for the removal of Condition No.2 on planning application 12/00285/FUL

At Back Lane Farm, Bottomhouse, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 7PJ

The application site is owned by Mr B Rowlinson ('The Applicant') and the building is currently used for agricultural storage.

INTRODUCTION

Back Lane Farm is situated within the small hamlet of Bottomhouse, approximately 2.5 miles from the village of Waterhouses and approximately 6 miles from the popular market town of Leek. The application site enjoys an elevated position within a Moorlands farmstead which has been farmed by the Rowlinson Family for over 70 years and it is the intention to continue farming on this farm and premises into the foreseeable future.

Proposal

This Statement is submitted in support of the planning application for removal of a condition restricting the use of the agricultural building outlined purple in the below plan, meaning that at no time shall it be used as a single dwelling house.

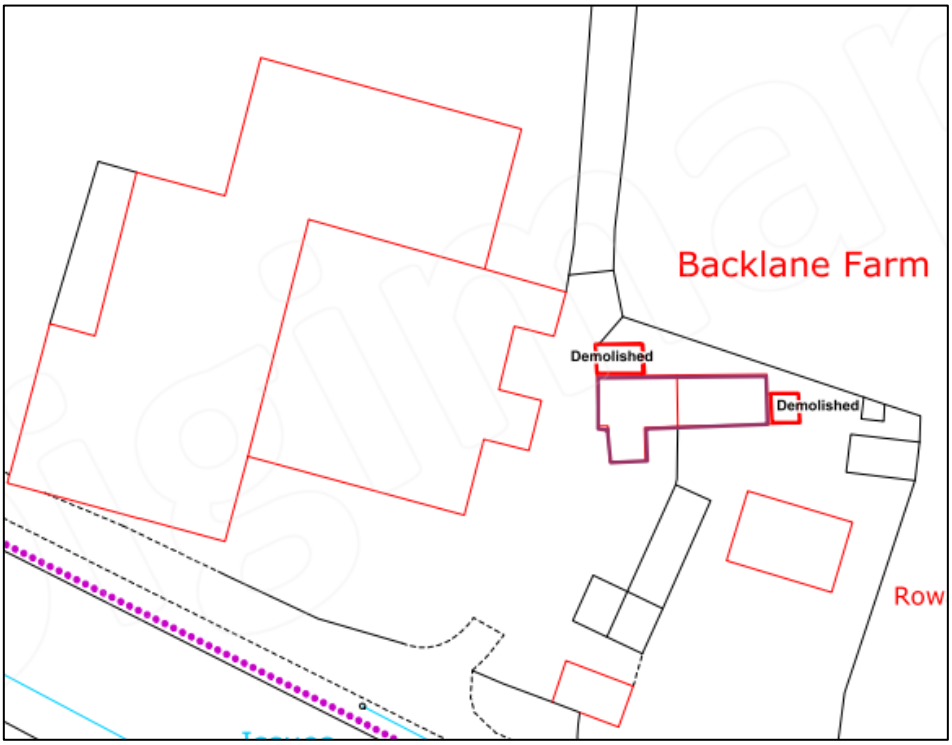


Figure 1 - Block Plan of Back Lane Farm *For illustration purposes only*

PLANNING HISTORY

The Site Planning Permission for the Retention of part of former farmhouse and detached garage for agricultural associated storage was granted in May 2012 (Application No. 12/00285/FUL)

The Area Since 2015, 1 new barn conversion has been approved within close proximity to the application site (Application No: DET/2015/0034)

PLANNING CONDITION

Condition No.2 attached to Application 12/00285/FUL states that the building shall at no time be used as a single dwelling house. The justification for this being "to avoid the undesirable fragmentation of the curtilage or the creation of a separate residential use within an area where new dwellings are not normally permitted."

However, if the removal of this condition was permitted, it would be the intention (subject to further planning consent) to create an ancillary dwelling to the main farmhouse, meaning that the curtilage would remain unfragmented and the holding would continue as one. Therefore, it is considered that this would not have an undesirable effect on Back Lane Farm or the surrounding area.

In addition, updated legislation has come into force since the condition was placed. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 aims to encourage the sustainable re-use of existing traditional farm buildings within the rural landscape through the provisions set out within Class Q, R and S.

PLANNING POLICY

This statement has taken into account The National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted March 2014) and the Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted March 2014).

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 186 places emphasis on Local Planning Authorities to encourage sustainable development by approaching "decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development." Paragraph 187 also states that Local Planning Authorities should "look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area."

Paragraph 55 states that Local Planning Authorities should "avoid new isolated homes in the countryside." However, due to the nature of the intended development in that the building would be ancillary to the main farmhouse; it is therefore considered that the proposal would not create an isolated dwelling in the countryside due to its proximity to the main farmhouse at Back Lane Farm.

Paragraph 14 recites the presumption in favour of sustainable development, meaning that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

Policy SS6b (Smaller Villages Area Strategy) supports development in these areas and recognises the importance of preserving local communities in rural areas. It is considered that the adjacent village of Winkhill provides services that are utilised and supported by the Hamlet of Bottomhouse, e.g. transport links, farm shop etc. It states that "a major issue for smaller villages is the loss of local population through the lack of housing opportunities. The proposed strategy for the smaller villages therefore seeks to allow an appropriate level of sensitive development which enhances community vitality."

Policy SS6c (Other Rural Areas Area Strategy) comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development and infill boundaries of the towns and villages, as defined in the Site Allocations DPD, including those small settlements and dispersed developments not identified in Policies SS5, SS6a and SS6b. It also outlines the support for "allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2." Policy SD1 also supports proposals relating "to the conversion or reuse of a rural building in accordance with policy R2." Bottomhouse itself is classified as a Hamlet, therefore its predominantly open character and loose-knit nature makes infilling and the definition of an Infill Development Boundary inappropriate. New housing in these settlements and hamlets will be similarly restricted to meeting the requirements set out in Policies H2 and R2.

Policy R2 (Rural Housing) sets out the forms of permitted housing development in rural areas which allows for the conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use where "the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion" and "conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded."

In addition, there is relevance with this application regarding the shortage of deliverable housing land supply within the Staffordshire Moorlands. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF states that *"Housing applications should 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 Staffordshire Moorlands 5 Year Land Supply Assessment as at 31st March 2017 demonstrates that there is 1.99 years of deliverable housing land supply in the area, which is substantially less than five years. Since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2014, the Housing Supply has been consistently less than five years as demonstrated in **Figure 2,** therefore less weight should be applied to any housing related policies within the Core Strategy as they will not be considered up-to-date**.**

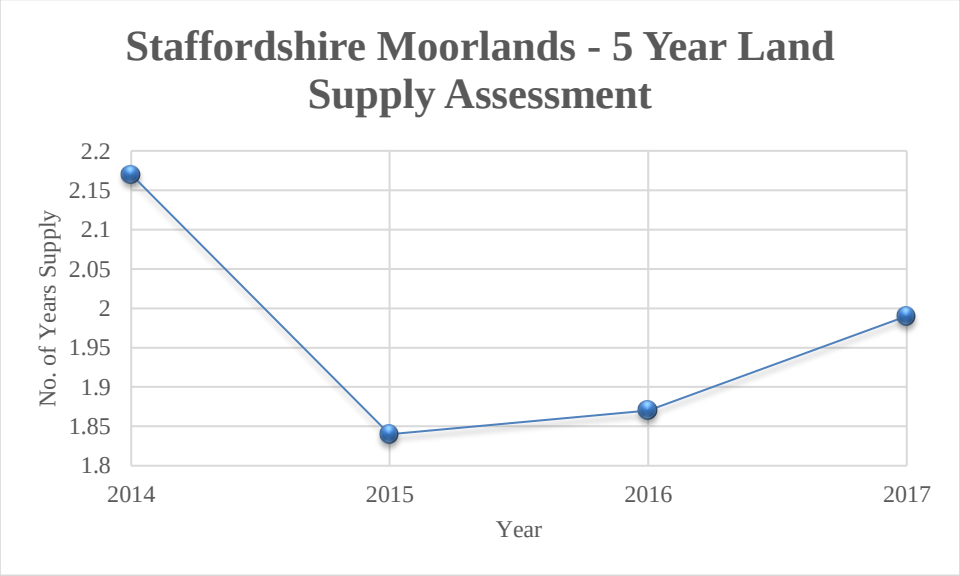


Figure 2 - SMDC 5 Year Land Supply Assessment (2014-2017)

The Supreme Court decision of *Suffolk Coastal District Council v Hopkins Homes Ltd & Anor [2017]* has provided clarity regarding the correct application of paragraph 49 of the NPPF when local planning authorities do not have a five-year deliverable land supply. The *"relevant policies for the supply of housing"* is interpreted as *"the policies by which acceptable housing sites are to be identified and the*

five-years supply target is to be achieved." Based on this ruling, it is considered that Policy SS6c is not up-to-date.

In addition, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Staffordshire Moorlands in 2017 noted that 99 dwellings were completed within the district, despite an annual target of 300 completions. In view of the housing shortfall it is contended that the proposal should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as established by Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy and in Paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

The application site is also located within the jurisdiction of the Churnet Valley Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SS7). However, Bottomhouse is not designated as a main Character Area, Gateway or Hub for which there are specific strategies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, taking into account this Planning Statement and associated supporting documents, this application should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in Paragraphs 14 and 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The justification for the Condition placed upon this building is irrelevant as it would be intended to become an ancillary dwelling to the main farmhouse, thus meaning that fragmentation of the curtilage would not occur. Should the removal of this condition be granted, a subsequent application for the conversion of this building would be submitted in due course. Therefore, it is also considered that this development would assist in fulfilling the Council's target in providing for the current housing demand in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

For the above reasons detailed within this Planning Statement, the Applicant respectfully seeks the removal of this condition.

Miss Amy L Turner

For and on behalf of Chandler Watson Consultancy