

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2018/0008
Valid 14/03/2018

THE DAIRY
SHEPHERDS STAND FARM
CHEADLE ROAD
ALTON

CHANGE OF USE OF
ARGRICULTURAL BUILDING
TO ONE DWELLING HOUSE

(NOTIFICATION - CHANGE OF
USE PRIOR APPROVAL)

MAIN ISSUES

- Class Q Eligibility criteria
- Condition Q.2 (a) transport and highways impacts of the development
- Condition Q.2 (e) location or siting – whether practical or desirable
- Condition Q.2 (f) design and external appearance
- Section W (9) (a) assessments of impacts or risks
- Section W (9) (c) details of proposed building or other operations

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Shepherds Stand farm is a characterful holding with some buildings of obvious historic vernacular quality including a main farm house and some outbuildings in dressed sandstone blocks of unusually large size. The farm house is prominent from the main Alton to Cheadle road some 75m across fields to the south. The topography of the farm holding varies across the site sufficient to give interesting character to the setting. Clustered to the rear and NW of the farm house are several outbuildings of varied structural form and materials – some of timber and some with corrugated metal sheeting.

The application red edge is specific to one of the outbuildings located to the rear and NW of the main farm house and at a slightly higher level. It is of modern 20thC construction comprising solidly built walls of reproduction stone with a corrugated metal sheet roof. From photographs submitted with the application it is evident the building was previously used as a small shippon kitted out for milking including airline with vacuum pump.

Although the application building is apparently of modern 20thC construction there is no planning history record. A building corresponding in size and position does however appear on a 1970 OS map 1:2500 edition. An agricultural building at this time would not have required planning consent and may be considered lawful on this basis. The building is single storey and small in area at c. 43sq.m.

PROPOSAL

To convert the building to dwelling house (Class C3). The proposal is to utilize only existing openings and no extensions are proposed. Access would be shared with that existing to the farm. External materials would remain as existing.

The applicant states that the intention is to use the conversion as holiday let accommodation and that this would aid the viability of the farming costs of keeping a small beef herd on the c.3.5ha holding.

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
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
R1 Rural Diversification
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

SMD/2017/0640 – Joined outbuilding conversion as 2 storey extension to farm house dwelling. Reinstate window to the right of front door.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: N/A
Neighbour consultation period ends: 15th March 2018
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Alton Parish Council – No objections to this application in its present form but request that restrictions are placed on permitted development rights in the future.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objections on Highways grounds.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Subject to a series of detailed criteria set out under Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the General Permitted Development Order (2015) Class Q the conversion of a building

in use for agriculture as part of an established agricultural unit on 20th March 2013, or when last use prior to that, can be converted to a dwelling house (Class C3 use).

The Change of Use Permitted Development option would not be available if the building had been erected without consent or would otherwise have been unlawful at the time it was constructed. Due to no planning records being found this has been looked into carefully and as noted in the Description (above) it is considered that the building would not have needed consent due to it pre-dating the time when agricultural development became subject to consent procedures.

The proposal meets the various size limits such as plan area and floor area and would not involve any development outside the existing dimensions in any plane. The building as existing is fully walled to all elevations and as such, whilst further internal insulating skin walls and ceilings will be required the external elevation will not be altered.

The evident past use of the building for an agricultural purpose with no apparent subsequent non-agricultural use is considered sufficient in the case here to demonstrate its qualification for eligibility under Class Q as proposed.

The proposal is found to qualify under GPDO (2015) Schedule 2 Part 3 Class Q and therefore, subject to consideration of the prior determination criteria as set out at the head of this report: transport and highways impacts; location or siting; design and external appearance; assessments of impacts or risks and details of proposed building or other operations, the proposal can be considered acceptable in principle.

Design

The design is plain form and functional and, with no external alterations or changes, no issues arise over and above the existing impacts.

Amenity

The building is close to the existing main farm house – within 6m at the nearest adjacent building corners and within only 16m at the point of greatest separation. The buildings do not however directly face one another and in the recently approved alterations and extensions to the farm house (SMD/2017/0640) there would be no principal windows in the north and west facing elevations towards the present proposed Class Q building (drawing 05 revision B). On this basis it is considered that the proposal would fit within the Council's adopted Space About Dwellings requirement in respect of facing principal windows and is therefore acceptable on this point in terms of siting and location.

No external space is allotted to serve the building. The exterior space within the cluster of the existing farm buildings however may be considered sufficient on a general shared basis to service the accommodation adequately for holiday occupants.

No internal layout details are submitted. The gross internal floor space is 43m². For a one bedroom two person dwelling the guidance and/or previously published standards suggest a minimum in the order of c.50m² should be expected (eg. English Partnerships' Quality Standards Delivering Quality Places (revised 2007)

and 'Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standards' (DCLG/2015). However there are no legally set lower limits and no minima are set by Class Q. Again, for a holiday base the accommodation may be considered adequate. As a main dwelling however there would be a risk that the accommodation was not sufficient. Therefore an occupancy condition would be appropriate.

Highway Safety

Using existing access drives no issues arise and the farmstead clearly has sufficient space to enable the parking and turning of associated traffic on such scales as are likely to occur.

Ecology

Due to the structural form of this building which is not conducive for bats no significant protected species concerns arise. The bird nesting informative should be attached.

Heritage

Shepherds Stand Farm is included in the Staffordshire Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Character survey and as such should be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. It is described as being on an L-shaped plan that existed by the late 19thC with additional detached buildings.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Two possible concerns arise with this proposal – that its small size brings a risk that it could be too small to function adequately as a main dwelling fully independent of the farm house and, secondly, that its close proximity to the main farm house and shared farm yard space in between could result in conflicts of amenity. It is unlikely to be practical to segregate this space and to do so would also undermine the historic integrity of the farmstead. In terms of siting and location therefore it should be considered that a fully independent new dwelling would not be appropriate here. However, as one limited to holiday use or otherwise occupied in a way ancillary to the main farm house the risks associated with its small size and the limitations of the shared external space which at this site and location with its identified heritage merits should to not be segregated would be avoided.

In all other respects the proposal is found to meet the Class Q criteria tests and, save as discussed in the above paragraph, being found acceptable in those matters which the LPA is required to consider “as if the application were a planning application”, as stated at Schedule 2 Part 3 W(10) (b), it is considered the application should be approved subject to a condition that the occupancy and use of the converted building as a dwelling be limited to that of holiday accommodation or occupancy otherwise ancillary to the main farm house at Shepherds Stand farm.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : approve

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 8th May 2018

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council