Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

SNEYD ARMS FARM, BASFORD GREEN

MAY 2018

Site Address:
Sneyd Arms Farm, Basford Green Road, Cheddleton,
Staffordshire, ST13 7ER

Applicant:
Mr. S. Dawson and Ms. M. Sasiain

Proposal:
Conversion and alteration of outbuilding to form Holiday Let / Annex

Planning, Design & Access Statement:
Date Issued: 21st May 2018
Job Reference: RDP/2018/005

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. S. Dawson and Ms. M. Sasiain to seek planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion and alteration of an existing outbuilding at Sneyd Arms Farm, Basford Green, to form a holiday let / residential annex.

1.2 Sneyd Arms Farm is a Grade II Listed building that occupies a set back position from the highway. The building proposed for conversion lies to the east of the farmhouse, a short distance from the boundary with the highway. It is constructed from coursed stone with a Staffordshire Blue plain clay tiled roof. The building has been altered over the course of its history and is understood to have been previously used as a garage.

1.3 The application proposes to convert the existing outbuilding to form a holiday let / residential annex encompassing an open-plan kitchen/diner/living room, bedroom, shower room, and further bedroom within a newly created mezzanine level. Externally no new openings are proposed, aside from one re-positioned opening in the southeastern gable end. Parking is to be accommodated on an existing area of hardstanding to the immediate southeast of the building, with a small patio area provided to its immediate northwest.

1.4 The application has been subject to pre-application discussions with the Local Authority, where it was confirmed that the principle of development is acceptable, advising that a condition would likely be imposed to prevent the building being occupied as an independent dwelling. General comments were also provided from the Conservation Officer in respect of window detailing, requirement to avoid rooflights and more.

1.5 The submitted proposal incorporates full joinery details in the interests of minimising pre-commencement conditions, and is also accompanied by the following documentation which should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement:

- Heritage Statement (David Bailey Architects Ltd)
- Structural Survey (Capstone Consulting Engineers)
- Bat & Bird Survey (Anna Davies – Ecologist)

2 Site Location

2.1 The application site comprises a Grade II Listed farmhouse that is located to the west of Basford Green Road, and which sits within a substantial curtilage. The building the subject of this application is located towards the easternmost corner of the site, adjacent to the existing site access and is considered to be curtilage listed. It comprises a visually pleasing stone and tile outbuilding that compliments the adjacent farmhouse, and has a symmetrical front elevation. Beyond the northern boundary of the site lies the domestic curtilage of the Old Court House, with further residential development located to the east beyond the existing highway. To the south, the site is enclosed by agricultural land. The site as a whole lies within the rural area.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.1 Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy states that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which means that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Core Strategy (and, where relevant, with polices in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole;*

- *or Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be*

3.2 Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. It goes on to confirm that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for

exceptions as defined by Government policy. Local needs will be met and tourism opportunities enhanced by the following actions (amongst others):

- *Allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2;*

- *Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS7;*

3.3 Policy SS7 of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Churnet Valley Area Strategy' and identifies the Churnet Valley as an area for sustainable tourism and rural regeneration. The policy confirms that support will be given to short stay and long-stay visitor accommodation within the Churnet Valley area, along with the expansion and provision of compatible new tourist facilities, and measures to enhance, protect and interpret the landscape character and heritage assets of the Churnet Valley.

3.4 Policy R1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Diversification' and states that all development in the rural areas outside the development boundaries of the towns and villages will be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the character, appearance and biodiversity of the countryside, promotes the sustainable diversification of the rural economy, facilitates economic activity, meets a rural community need and sustains the historic environment. Appropriate development should not harm the rural character and environmental quality of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved and the type and amount of traffic generated or by other effects such as noise and pollution. It goes on to state that wherever possible development should be within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion. Where new or replacement buildings are

involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside and be in close proximity to an existing settlement.

3.5 Policy E3 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Tourism and Cultural Development' and states that development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports the local economy and promotes the distinctive character and quality of the District and enhances the role of Staffordshire Moorlands as a tourism and leisure destination having regard to the Area Strategies in Policies SS5, SS6 and SS7. The policy furthermore states that new tourist and visitor accommodation, attractions and facilities should be developed in locations that offer, or are capable of offering, good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling. They should normally be located in or close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available or in areas specifically allocated for tourism development.

3.2 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that new development should be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area. Proposals should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

3.3 Policy DC2 of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Historic Environment' and states that the Council will safeguard and, where possible, enhance the historic environment, areas of historic landscape character and interests of acknowledged importance, including in particular scheduled ancient monuments, significant buildings (both statutory listed and on a local register), the settings of designated assets, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens, registered battlefields and archaeological

remains. It will seek to achieve this by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance; and preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through appropriate reuse and sensitive development, including enabling development, unless their retention is not viable or there would be substantial planning benefits to outweigh the loss.

3.6 Policy NE1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states that development should ensure that it produces a net gain in biodiversity, and ensure that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for. Proposals should also protect and enhance habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting sustainable development, and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of supporting sustainable rural tourism and safeguarding heritage assets. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of these applications and is explored in more detail within the Planning Assessment below.

Churnet Valley Master Plan SPD (2014)

3.7 The adopted Churnet Valley Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document provides a comprehensive framework for future development in the Churnet Valley area, of which this site forms part. It identifies opportunities and

measures to help regenerate and manage this important rural area based around sustainable tourism, in a manner which is sensitive to, and enhances its important heritage, landscape and ecology.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 The applications propose the conversion and alteration of the existing outbuilding to form a holiday let / residential annex. The change of use to holiday accommodation is supported by policies SS6c, SS7, and E3 of the Core Strategy, which are geared towards promoting tourism within the Churnet Valley area. The proposal also involves the reuse of an existing building, something that is explicitly encouraged by policy R1. The site is located close to the heart of the Churnet Valley and the attractions located therein, and will therefore be readily accessible by future occupants of the holiday accommodation. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the aforementioned polices in this regard.

5.2 The residential annex component of the scheme is sought in order to allow the applicants family to visit from abroad, and stay beyond the four week occupancy period that would otherwise be imposed on the holiday accommodation. The use would remain ancillary to the parent dwelling, sharing its services, parking and amenity areas, and will remain in the same ownership and be occupied by a family member. In doing so, an ancillary relationship to the host dwelling will be preserved.

5.3 We would propose that the use of the building be controlled via an adapted version of the standard holiday let condition, as detailed overleaf:

> *"The holiday accommodation hereby approved shall only be occupied for short stay lets not exceeding four consecutive weeks, except where otherwise occupied by a family member as an ancillary residential annex".*

5.4 The imposition of this condition will ensure that the building cannot be occupied as an independent dwelling, and can only be utilised for the purposes of holiday accommodation or as a residential annex. This gives certainty to the Local Authority, and provides flexibility to the applicants to accommodate their visiting relatives when required.

5.5 The existing building is furthermore of a sound structural condition, as confirmed by the accompanying Structural Survey. The survey notes that the building is a *robust structure* and has been generally well looked after. Only minor strengthening works are recommended, as detailed in the survey, and as such the building is wholly suitable and appropriate for conversion for the proposed use.

Design & Layout

5.6 The submitted proposal adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion of the existing building, making beneficial reuse of existing openings in order to avoid a proliferation of new openings. The existing windows in the southwestern elevation will be fitted with new timber casement windows to replace the poor quality existing ones in situ, with new timber doors incorporated into the northwestern elevation to replace the existing metal garage door. The size of this opening will nevertheless remain as per that which currently exists. Recessed stonework will be also be undertaken to infill the three small openings at low level in the southeastern elevation. Full details of proposed joinery for all of the windows and doors have also been submitted to accompany the application.

5.7 The only significant alteration to the external fabric of the building is the proposed re-positioning of an existing round window in the southeast gable end. The existing circular window is positioned slightly offset from centre, and it is proposed to re-site this in a central position, further up the gable end, such that its position matches that of the existing circular window in the northwestern gable end. These works are required in order to provide an escape window from the proposed mezzanine, and will not derive any significant material harm to the character and appearance of the building.

5.8 Externally, it is proposed to create a modest patio area for use by occupants of the holiday let, and this is to be delineated by moveable planters, rather than enclosing the area by any form of permanent feature. This modest patio area will be enclosed to the north by the existing dry stone wall that links the outbuilding to the farmhouse, and will be largely screened from public view by the existing outbuilding. This part of the site already forms part of the domestic curtilage of the farmhouse in any event, and thus could already be used for such purposes without the need for permission.

5.9 Parking for the holiday let is to be accommodated to the east of the building, between it and the roadside wall. This is currently laid as concrete hardstanding and tarmac, and it is proposed to remove the raised section of concrete and replace it with new tarmac to match the remainder of the driveway / parking areas. The parking of vehicles in this location will not derive any material adverse harm to the setting of the Listed Building or to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, as the applicants already use it for the parking of horse trailers.

5.10 In terms of amenity considerations, none of the existing windows will afford overlooking of any of the neighbouring properties, and there will be no conflict with the Local Authority's informal space about dwellings standards.

As a consequence the proposed development will not derive any material adverse harm to neighbouring residential amenity.

Heritage Impacts

5.11 The existing farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building, and the outbuilding proposed for conversion is considered to be curtilage listed. As discussed above, the proposal incorporates the sensitive conversion of the existing building, and will serve to enhance its external appearance by virtue of replacing the poor quality existing windows and metal garage doors, with new timber replacements of more appropriate design and appearance. The proposed re-positioning of the circular window in the gable end will also serve to achieve a more symmetrical relationship to the opposite gable end.

5.12 The works to convert the building have been carefully considered by the project architect, and will serve to ensure that the impact of the proposal on the setting and historic fabric of the building will be limited. The proposal will also secure the beneficial reuse of the existing building, thereby helping to preserve the structure into the future and reduce any potential for it to fall into dereliction in the future.

5.13 It is considered overall that the proposal will not derive any material adverse impact to the significance of the existing building and adjacent farmhouse as heritage assets, rather it will serve to enhance the appearance of the existing building to the benefit of its setting, and that of the main listed building.

Highway Safety

5.14 The application proposes to utilise the existing vehicular access onto Basford Green Lane to access the site, with two parking spaces provided for use by customers staying in the holiday let. The site benefits from a large turning in front of the farmhouse, and this will ensure that vehicles are able to exit the

site in a forward gear. The highway is not regularly frequented by traffic on account of it being a no-through road, and there is good visibility in both directions on egress from the site. As a consequence, the proposed development will not derive any severe residual impacts to highway safety, that being the test to be applied under paragraph 32 of the NPPF.

Ecological Considerations

5.15 The application is accompanied by a Bat & Bird Survey prepared by a licensed ecologist and this confirms that no bats or evidence of bats was found when the building was inspected internally. The building was also inspected externally for potential roosting features, but none were identified owing to the sound condition of the building. No evidence of nesting birds was found either. A dusk emergence survey furthermore revealed no bats emerging from the building. The survey therefore concludes that there are no roosting bats within the building, and as a consequence the proposed conversion of the building to a holiday let / annex will not give rise to harm to any protected species.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 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.

6.2 It is considered that the proposed conversion and alteration of the existing outbuilding to form a holiday let / annex constitutes an appropriate form of sustainable development having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The proposed conversion of the building to a holiday let accords with the objectives of the Churnet Valley Master Plan and associated policies of the Core Strategy geared towards promoting tourism;*

- *The proposed occasional use of the holiday let as an ancillary residential annex is an appropriate use of the existing building and can be controlled by condition to ensure that the proposal will not result in the creation of an independent dwelling;*

- *The building is structurally robust and worthy of conversion;*

- *The proposed alterations to the building will serve to enhance its existing appearance by removing the existing poor quality windows and metal garage door;*

- *The proposal makes beneficial reuse of existing openings, and will not derive any significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the area or to the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers;*

- *The proposal will not derive any material adverse impact to the significance of the adjacent Listed Building or the existing outbuilding as heritage assets;*

- *The proposal will not derive any material adverse harm to highway safety in the locality;*

- *The proposal will not derive any material adverse harm to ecological interests in the locality.*

6.3 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS6c, SS7, R1, E3, DC1, DC2 and NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.4 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission and Listed Building Consent in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out within policy SS1a of the Core Strategy, and paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework.