Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT (INC. D&A)

REDMORLEA FARM BARNS, WATERHOUSES

JULY 2018

Site Address:
Redmorlea Farm Barns, Ashbourne Road, Waterhouses, ST13 7PT

Applicant:
HLW Developments Ltd.

Proposal:
Erection of Single Storey Extension to Barn 2
(Amendment to applications SMD/2014/0174 and SMD/2014/0175)

Planning & Heritage Statement
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy has been instructed by HLW Developments Ltd. to lodge applications for planning and listed building consent for the erection of a single storey lean-to extension to Barn 2 at Redmorlea Farm, Ashbourne Road, Waterhouses.

1.2 Planning and Listed Building Consent for the conversion of the existing barns on this site to residential use was granted under applications SMD/2014/0174 and SMD/2014/0175. A total of three barns were permitted for conversion. Barn 2 is located to the immediate northeast of the existing farmhouse, and constitutes the smallest of three dwellings. Works to implement these permissions have since been undertaken.

1.3 Over the winter the applicant arrived on site to find that the lean-to extension to Barn 2 had collapsed during inclement weather. It has subsequently emerged that it has no foundations and was built off the surface of the surrounding land. Rather than seek to re-build the extension in its current position, the applicant proposes to erect a replacement lean-to extension on the other end of the building. This is owing to concerns about the structural integrity of the adjacent farmhouse cellar and the provision of surface and foul water drainage connections.

1.4 The resultant lean-to extension occupies an identical floor area to that of the collapsed extension, with a full height glazed opening in the front elevation, and a further opening in the rear elevation. A cut away in the roof of the lean-to is incorporated in order to avoid the closing off of the existing first floor opening in the end gable of the building. This cut out will also incorporate a flat rooflight to provide additional light into the kitchen below.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The wider application site comprises a Grade II Listed 17th Century farmhouse and its associated cluster of outbuildings, which lie on the southern side of the Ashbourne Road, a short distance from the village of Waterhouses. Barn 2 is located to the immediate northeast of the farmhouse and is the smallest of the three barns which already benefit from consent to be converted into residential use. Barn 1 is located to the north of the farmhouse and Barn 2, with Barn 3 located to the west. Vehicular access to the site is taken from the north off the Ashbourne Road. The site as a whole lies within the rural area, a short walking distance from Waterhouses.

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

3.2 Policy SS1a of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' and 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 mean 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 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 restricted.*

3.3 Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Area 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. The policy goes on to state that the Council will meet essential local needs by (amongst others):

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

- *Allowing suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with policy DC2*

3.4 Policy R2 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Housing' and states that only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the towns and villages:

- *Affordable Housing;*

- *A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere;*

- *Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area;*

- *Extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area;*

- *The conversion of non-residential rural buildings where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion and it can be demonstrated that agricultural or commercial use is not viable or suitable.*

3.5 Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design. It goes on to state that new development should (amongst others):

- *be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area;*

- *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;*

- *protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping;*

- *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use; ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available.*

3.6 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 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.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sets out guidance in respect of securing high quality design and safeguarding the significance of heritage assets (amongst other matters). The content of this document is explored in more detail, where relevant, in the Planning Assessment below.

Appeal Decision 2225223 – Redmorlea Farm, Waterhouses

4.2 The above appeal related to applications SMD/2014/0174 and SMD/2014/0175 and granted planning and listed building consent for the conversion of the existing buildings to residential use. It is a material consideration in the determination of this application and is referred to within the Planning Assessment below.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 This application proposes the extension of an existing building within the rural area, and one which already benefits from consent to be converted to residential use under applications SMD/2014/0174 and SMD/2014/0175 (allowed at appeal - reference 2225223). Those permissions are currently in the process of being implemented.

5.2 The proposed lean-to extension is consistent with the provisions of policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy in that it relates to the proposed extension of a building, and the extension is furthermore of a scale which is subservient and proportionate to the existing building. The overall scale and floorspace of the extension is furthermore the same as the original lean-to extension

which has since collapsed. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Heritage Impacts

5.3 Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

5.4 The existing farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building and until recently had been in a poor state of repair having lain vacant for a considerable period of time. It is now in the process of being refurbished in accordance with application SMD/2014/0115. The existing agricultural buildings, which incorporate Barn 2, were also left vacant following the passing of the previous tenant. This caused the buildings to fall into disrepair, as evidenced by the recent collapse of the existing lean-to to Barn 2.

5.5 The proposed lean-to extension adopts a sympathetic design to the existing building, mimicking the now collapsed lean-to extension, albeit on the opposite end of the building. Its scale, massing, design and materials are sympathetic to the building and will not derive any material adverse harm to the setting of the Listed Building or the curtilage listed outbuildings.

5.6 The siting of the extension at the northern end of the building has been deliberately chosen for two principal reasons. Firstly, the original lean-to was

found to have been constructed without any foundations. It was simply constructed off the ground. In order to re-build the lean-to in the same location it would be necessary to provide modern concrete strip foundations, and this would involve considerable excavation around the building, and within very close proximity (less than 1m) of the cellar which lies below the main farmhouse.

5.7 The applicant is rightly concerned about the potential for such excavations to harm the structural integrity of the cellar, which is otherwise in reasonably good condition. The siting of the lean-to extension to the north of the building will ensure that any such concerns are avoided.

5.8 The second concern is related to surface and foul water drainage, as connections to the proposed package treatment plant are to run between the gap between the existing farmhouse and Barn 2. Whilst these will also entail some degree of excavation, it is far less intrusive than that associated with foundation construction, and with the lean-to removed, the excavations can be kept well away from the existing farmhouse, thereby avoiding any compromise to the subterranean cellar.

5.9 A third consideration, and perhaps the most significant is that of the development viability. The Local Authority had refused the original applications on the grounds that it had not been demonstrated that alternative uses could be found for the buildings. This was despite 6 years worth of marketing evidence. In appealing the decision to refuse permission viability evidence was presented on behalf of the appellant, which demonstrated that the use of the buildings for agricultural, equestrian or alternative commercial uses would not be viable. In allowing the subsequent appeal the Planning Inspector concluded that:

> *"Given the costs of converting the buildings to even a basic standard for commercial, business or office accommodation**, it seems likely that such development would not be viable, given the lack of interest for such uses as demonstrated by the marketing exercise.** In the absence of any substantiated evidence to the contrary, **I am satisfied that the location of barns, and their poor structural condition, does not readily lend the buildings to commercial use**". (my emphasis)*

5.10 The Inspector went on to note that:

> *"Unless a new use for the buildings is found, it is likely that they would fall into further disrepair/decay. If this were to occur, it would result in the **harmful loss of historic fabric and architectural interest**" (my emphasis)*

5.11 The original lean-to encompassed the kitchen and dining area of the approved two bedroomed dwelling. The resultant floor space available now that the lean-to has collapsed (52.6m^2) is insufficient to provide an appropriate area of living accommodation for future occupiers, and this significantly compromises the viability and saleability of the building. To put this in context, the DCLG Nationally Described Space Standards (for new builds) indicates that for a two bedroomed, two-storey dwelling, a minimum floor area of 70m^2 should be provided.

5.12 At 52.6m^2 the floorspace of existing building falls someway short of the required standard. However, with the proposed lean-to extension, a total floor area of 62.6m^2 is achievable, and whilst this still represents a shortfall against the adopted space standards, it represents a much more appropriate level of floorspace, and is no different to that which was previously approved.

For these reasons the proposed extension is considered essential to securing an appropriate level of accommodation for future occupiers, and in turn securing the beneficial reuse of this building, in line with the objectives of policy DC2 of the Core Strategy and paragraphs 131 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design & Amenity

5.13 The design of the lean-to extension takes its cues from the design of the recently collapsed extension, and encompasses the use of stone and Staffordshire Blue Clay Tiles to match the existing building. The extension is located in a part of the site which is well enclosed from wider public view and thus will not derive any material adverse harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal will furthermore not derive any adverse impacts to the amenity of neighbouring residential properties, the closest being Barn 1 to the north and the nearby farmhouse to the south. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies DC1 and DC2 of the Core Strategy in this regard.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is considered that the proposed lean-to extension is appropriate in principle, and is of a scale, massing, design and materials that is sympathetic of the host building and the surrounding buildings. The proposed lean-to will furthermore not derive any material adverse harm to the significance of the Listed Building as a heritage asset, and most importantly will ensure the beneficial reuse of the building by providing a viable end use.

6.2 For these reasons the proposed development is considered to accord with the provisions of policies SS6c, R2, DC1 and DC2 of the Staffordshire

Moorlands Core Strategy, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.3 The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning and listed building consent for the proposed extension.