

Mr. B. Heywood
Development Control
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6HQ

23rd August 2018

Dear Ben

**CONVERSION OF SHIPPON TO RESIDENTIAL USE AND ERECTION OF EXTENSIONS
RIDGEFIELDS FARM, LEEK ROAD, CELLARHEAD**

On behalf of my client Mrs. S. Shirley I would be grateful if you would find enclosed a planning application for the change of use of an attached shippon and erection of extensions at the above site.

Ridgefields Farm is a two storey brick and tile farmhouse comprising of a small kitchen, living room, lounge and utility at ground floor, with two bedrooms and bathroom at first floor. Attached to the eastern end of the farmhouse is a part stone, part brick shippon which the applicant proposes to change into residential use to provide additional living accommodation for the farmhouse. The applicant also proposes to erect a single storey front extension to provide a porch and w/c, along with a first floor rear extension to provide a new bathroom. The resultant accommodation will comprise of a lounge, hall, dining room, kitchen, utility, and ensuite bedroom at ground floor, with two bedrooms at first floor.

The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt wherein policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy allow for the extensions of buildings. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) nevertheless confirms that there is a presumption against the erection of new buildings within the Green Belt. Paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF nevertheless identify a number of exceptions, which include:

"the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building"

And:

Rob Duncan BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI
T: 07779 783521
E: rob@robduncanplanning.co.uk
W: www.robduncanplanning.co.uk
A: 70 Ferndale Road, Lichfield,
Staffordshire, WS13 7DL

“the reuse of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction”

A review of historic Ordnance Survey mapping reveals that the farmhouse as it stands today can more or less be regarded as constituting the ‘original’ structure for the purposes of assessing the impact of the proposal on the Green Belt. A modest single storey lean-to porch has been added at some point in its history, but that is to be replaced by the proposed single storey front extension. The first floor rear extension will sit atop the existing rear lean-to and will therefore not result in any increase in the footprint of the building. The proposed extensions collectively represent an increase in floorspace of less than 30% and are therefore considered to constitute an appropriate form of development in the context of paragraph 145 of the NPPF.

The proposed conversion of the shippon to form additional accommodation is also considered to constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt. The shippon is of permanent and substantial construction, as evidenced by the accompanying Structural Survey which whilst highlighting the poor condition of the building, confirms that the existing walls can be maintained. The recommended reconstruction of the roof is noted, but such works will not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt, nor would they generate any additional volume as an ‘alteration’ of the building. This element of the proposal is therefore considered to be consistent with the provisions of paragraphs 145 and 146 of the recently revised NPPF, and amounts to an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

In design terms, the proposal adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion of the shippon, making beneficial use of existing openings in order to preserve its existing external appearance. The proposed extensions to the dwelling are also complimentary to the character of the existing dwelling and achieve a subservient relationship to it. To this end the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Owing to the proposed conversion of the shippon a bat and bird survey has also been commissioned. The survey confirms evidence of bats using the buildings as a place of shelter, with evidence of nesting birds also highlighted. Emergence surveys carried out confirmed that the building is being used by a single Brown Long Eared Bat as a night roost, and by a Common Pipistrelle as a day roost. In mitigation, it is recommended that a bat box be erected to a pole or tree on the site, with a brick built bat box installed into the extensions of the dwelling. The applicant is agreeable to such mitigation measures which can be secured planning condition. In doing so the development will accord with the provisions of policy NE1 of the Core Strategy.

I trust that this proposal will be of interest, and should you have any queries or concerns in respect of the matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Rob Duncan