PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

TO ACCOMPANY A

CHANGE OF USE APPLICATION FROM A REDUNDANT AGRICULTRURAL BUILDING TO HOLIDAY LETS

AT

SUMMERHILL HOUSE
TICKHILL LANE, DILHORNE
ST10 2PL

FOR

MR S VIRANI

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INTRODUCTION

This statement accompanies the planning application for a change of use of a former agricultural building to holiday lets and should be read in conjunction with the enclosed structural survey and architectural drawings. The content of the Design & Access element follows guidance in Circular 01/2006 Section 3.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of block built barn set on land associated with, but outside the curtilage of the detached Summerhill House. The site is separated and screened from the adjacent Tickhill Lane by a substantial stone wall and is surrounded to the west and northwest by extensive open countryside.

Adjacent former kennels and associated buildings which were disused and derelict have largely been demolished. The area is generally level with no steep gradients.

The application site has a gated access to Tickhill Lane via a private track to the north and has access to the curtilage of Summerhill House to the south. Overall the barn and its setting retain an agricultural appearance.

PROPOSAL

The submitted scheme sub-divides the existing barn into four two bedroom self-contained holiday units, designed with the needs of the less able in mind.

Where possible, existing openings have been used, with new openings being limited to that required to provide basic amenity standards to the individual units.

There is minimum change to the surroundings of the barn, being limited to areas of paving for outdoor amenity and parking bays.

Vehicular and pedestrian access is via the existing former agricultural access to Tickhill Lane, an informal surfaced track.

CONTEXT

Planning History

Previously an application (Ref: 05/00995/Ful) for the conversion of the barn to holiday lets was refused because the proposal required significant works to the barn, which would create a domestic character contrary to Policy B21 of the local plan and represented inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to Policy N2 of the local plan.

In September 2006 an appeal against the above refusal was determined and the Inspector dismissed the appeal finding that the scheme for re-use proposed major reconstruction and required extensive rebuilding works which represented inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The inspector also expressed concern that the proposed design would create a more domestic structure indistinguishable from the adjacent residential building. The domestic quality was further emphasised by the proposed use of part of the paddock as garden area creating a larger domestic curtilage than already existed.

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt is required to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances and the Inspector felt that such circumstances did not exist to outweigh the harm identified.

Planning Policies

The above history clearly identifies the relevant national and local policies that a revised scheme has to have regard for. These are:

- PPG2 Para 3.8 – which states that the reuse of buildings in the Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing that:

(a) It does not have a materially greater impact that the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.

(b) strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings, and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building which might conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it (e.g. because they involve extensive external storage, or extensive hardstanding, car parking, boundary walling or fencing).

(c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and

(d) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings. (Conversion proposals may be more acceptable if they respect local building styles and materials, though the use of equivalent natural materials that are not local should not be ruled out).

- Policy N2 – which states at (c) The conversion of Rural Buildings of permanent and substantial construction to suitable alternative uses in accordance with Policy B21 will be allowed.

- Policy B21 state that conversion of rural buildings will be permitted subject to a number of criteria. Of relevance to this application are:

A) The buildings are suitable for conversion with only limited rebuilding works necessary without significant alteration, extension or rebuilding.

B) The materials used are compatible in character and appearance with the materials of the existing building and local usage.

C) The activities generated by the proposal are satisfactorily contained within the building.

D) The use is appropriate to the scale of the buildings.

E) Traffic generated, access and parking provision does not have a significant detrimental impact on the character of the building and surroundings.

In addition to these policies which have been highlighted on the previous occasion, we believe the following are also material.

Local Plan Policies R16 and R18 concerning tourist accommodation state

'Proposals for new tourist accommodation will be encouraged, particularly where this will increase the range of size, type and quality of accommodation.

'Planning permission will be granted for the conversion of existing buildings to self catering accommodation in accordance with Policy B21.'

At Government level PPS7 at Para 17 states it is the policy to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitable constructed in the countryside.

Planning Authorities are required to set their policy criteria for permitting the conversion and re-use of buildings.

These criteria should take account amongst others of:

- Potential impact on the countryside
- Local economic needs and opportunities
- Suitability of different types of buildings for re-use

In summary, both land and national planning policies support the principle of converting redundant rural buildings and re-using them for economic purposes, particularly tourist accommodation providing the building is suitable, not requiring major and significant rebuilding and there is no damage to the surrounding countryside.

We conclude that providing we can demonstrate the sound condition of the building and that the design of the changes to the building and its immediate setting and the materials used reflect a rural character and avoids a domestic quality, it should be possible to overcome the previous refusal and failed appeal.

DESIGN

Since 2005/2006 there have been a number of changes to the application site and its surroundings.

The complex of buildings amongst which the barn was sited and which were in disused and derelict condition, have largely been demolished, thereby increasing the openness of this Green Belt site. Some former derelict kennels remain to be removed, again creating added openness. In addition the existing building with the curved asbestos cement sheeted roof to the left / west of the main barn will also be demolished and the resultant space used as amenity area for two of the holiday lets.

The barn itself has received some necessary repair and maintenance. In particular the barn and its annexes have had the former asbestos cement roof covering, which was deteriorating, replaced by a 'light weight tile effect metal roof sheeting'.

In addition small areas of stretcher bonded block work have been renewed.

The extent of repair and maintenance is identified in the accompanying structural condition survey.

The findings of that report at Para 5.1 are important in meeting the criteria for re-use and are therefore re-stated here:

'the remaining buildings are generally in good structural condition and of permanent and substantial construction such that it ought to be possible to convert them to their intended use without resorting to major rebuilding work'.

a) **Scale**

There are no proposals to increase or extend the building which is of a type and scale seen extensively in the countryside and used for animal housing or food storage.
The removal of the existing curved asbestos cement roofed building will decrease the overall mass and scale of the buildings which consequently will enhance the openness in the Green Belt area.

b) **Landscaping**

To avoid the domestic character of the earlier scheme, landscape works are proposed which consist of hard paved areas close to the building, largely on areas of existing concrete hard standings. Clearly this surfacing has no impact on openness and the paddock adjacent is enlarged with the addition of some limited tree planting. The car park area and access track will be sympathetically surfaced with an aggregate finish. The disabled car parking will have a bound aggregate or paved finish to aid wheelchair use. It should be noted here that the whole area and much of the building is screened by the substantial stone boundary wall from the public view point which is Tickhill Lane.

c) **Appearance**

Noting the concern of the Planning Authority and the Inspector, particular attention has been given to materials to be used and the treatment of openings in order to retain the rural character of the overall scheme and distance it from the domestic characteristics of neighbouring Summerhill House.

Specifically the existing roof remains unchanged being light weight steel 'Decra' sheets with a granular finish. The walls will be partially clad with vertical timber boarding from sustainable sources fixed in a manner to replicate the appearance of "Yorkshire boarding". The remaining block work at lower level will receive sand / cement render with a natural aggregate finish, rather than a painted one.

All windows, doors and shutter details will be treated timber with either a stained or painted finish. The roof windows will be from the Velux range range.

The details are fully illustrated on the accompanying drawings.

We conclude that this meets the criteria that materials used are compatible in character and appearance with the existing building and local usage.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The proposal is consistent with the additional criteria in Policy B21 in that the holiday let use of four units is appropriate to the scale of the building and can be contained in the building i.e. no extensions or ancillary buildings or open storage are required.

In respect of traffic to be generated, access and parking we say the scale of use is not a major traffic generator, probably less that when agricultural use and kennels were operating and will not adversely affect the character of the surroundings, being well screened by the barn and the boundary wall.

ACCESS

The access, car parking and turning area are on the north side of the development and dedicated to the holiday accommodation, thus having no interaction with Summerhill House to the south which has its own vehicular and pedestrian access.

There is good visibility at the exit on to Tickhill Lane and the site is flat with no major gradients, which makes it particularly suitable for the disabled.

Internally the accommodation will comply with Part M of the building regulations, but particular regard has been paid to space standards in the ground floor accommodation, ensuring that bedrooms and bathrooms can accommodate wheel chair users.

CONCLUSION

We consider that by paying close attention to policy criteria and the Inspector's decision letter we have avoided the design failings of the previous application.

We believe this proposal is an appropriate use in the Green Belt and therefore does not need to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances. With the completion of demolition of former kennels, curved asbestos roofed building and the extension of the paddock with a new area of grass, there will actually be an increase in openness of the Green Belt.

The proposals are in accord with the Tourism policies of the local plan, and are well located in respect of such attractions as Alton Towers, the Churnet Valley and the Peak Park and the urban attraction of Trentham and the Potteries. Further they will generate benefits to the local economy and provide work for personnel concerned with the care and management of the holiday lets.

In addition the application meets the criteria in Government Planning Guidance PPG2 and PPS7.

We ask the Planning Authority to approve the application.

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&

Moorland Architectural Services