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Planning Statement

Retrospective planning application for change of use of agricultural storage building to a stable with lean-to hay store

At

Oak Cottage, Green Dale,
Nr Oakamoor

July 2019

Document Control Sheet

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning Design Practice is a town planning and architectural design consultancy consisting of chartered town planners and an architectural design team. The practice operates across England and Wales and, with over 50 years combined experience in the team, the company has an excellent record of success.

1.2 We have been instructed by the owner of the site to submit a retrospective planning application for the change of use of an existing agricultural storage building to a stable with lean-to hay store at Oak Cottage, Green Dale, near Oakamoor. It will provide an introduction to the site and its planning history; details of the existing development; an examination of the planning policy context followed by a detailed discussion of the key planning issues. In support of the planning application and to be read in conjunction with this statement, the following comprises the submission:

1.3 Also submitted to accompany the report are the following:

- Application form;
- Site location plan;
- Existing site plan;
- Elevation drawings of the building as existing;

2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PLANNING HISTORY

Site Location

2.1 The site is located near to the small village of Oakamoor in north Staffordshire and close to the B5417. The site is part of land and outbuildings belonging to Oak Cottage. Oak Cottage was built following the grant of planning permission in 2005 (ref. 05/01368/FUL) for a replacement dwelling.

2.2 The building to which this application relates is a metal framed agricultural storage building which was constructed in 2006 following the granting of planning permission REF SMD/2006/1374. The building lies 25m north east of Oak Cottage and has a total footprint of approximately 200 sq. m. The applicants have been using the building as a stable for their horses since 2008 and in 2012 a lean-to was erected to the north elevation of the building which is used for the storage of hay, bedding and general land maintenance equipment.



Figure 1 shows the location of the site outlined in red



Figure 2 shows the existing building currently being used as a stable and lean-to for storage



Figure 3 shows the front elevation of the building



Figure 4 shows the loose boxes located inside the building



Figure 5 shows the interior of the building



Figure 6 shows the south and eastern elevation of the building which is well screened by existing trees

Relevant Planning History

2.3 The house was built following the grant of planning permission in 2005 (ref. 05/01368/FUL) for a replacement dwelling. It was extended following the grant of planning permission in 2013 (ref. 13/00473/FUL) with the erection of a single storey oak framed side conservatory:

Single storey oak framed side conservatory. Approved REF SMD/2013/0228 -05/07/13

Proposed Single Storey Front Extension (oak framed conservatory). Refused REF SMD/2012/0579-12/07/12

Agricultural equipment store. Approved REF SMD/2006/1374 - 14/12/06

Demolition and rebuilding of dwelling. Approved REF SMD1987/0671 - 10/06/1987

Planning policy designations

In planning policy terms, the site is located in the open countryside and designated as being within a Special Landscape Area.

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposal is a retrospective planning application for the change of use of agricultural storage building to a stable with lean-to. The building contains three loose boxes, one tack room and one small workshop room. The stable has been used by the applicants for their own private horses and the lean-to has been used for the storage of hay and other general farming instruments. Oak Cottage has approximately 11 acres as part of the smallholding and their horses graze on this land. The applicants intend to continue the use of the building as a stable to give shelter to the horses and as a secure storage space for their equestrian equipment.

3.2 Equestrian use is considered a rural activity which requires a rural location and horse grazing on land does not require planning permission. Whilst the construction of a new stable building would require planning permission, in this case the applicants have utilised an existing building on the property. Although there are other livery options within the district the applicants are keen to keep the horses at their property so to avoid unnecessary trips by the private car, and this situation is normal for many rural properties across the Staffordshire Moorlands District.

3.3 In addition to this the external appearance of the building is that of a regular agricultural building which can be found in any rural location. The building in this location sits into side of the hill and is well screened on the other three sides. It is considered that the building is not prominent in the landscape nor does it have any adverse impact on the character of the countryside or the appearance of the Special Landscape Area.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The new National Planning Policy Framework was published on 24th July 2018 and provides an updated version to the original released in 2012. The framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

4.2 At the heart of the Framework there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.

4.3 The three objectives of Sustainable development are;

a) economic – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) environmental – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.4 For decision-taking this means:

4.5 approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

4.6 The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

4.7 The Development Plan represents the starting point for the determination of this application, which in this instance is the Core Strategy. The guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant, in particular the following Chapters:

- Requiring good design

4.8 Paragraph 124 states that 'The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.'

4.9 Paragraph 127 states that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments;

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

4.10 The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy DPD (March 2014) and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Submission Version which has undergone consultation and is in the final stages adoption. Although the submission version is not yet adopted its near completion status means due weight should be given to the policies as outlines by the NPPF.

4.11 The following policies are of relevance to the determination of this application.

Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy Development Plan Document Adopted 2014

R1 - Rural Diversification

4.12 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. 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. Within the Green Belt, inappropriate development which is otherwise acceptable within the terms of this policy, will still need to be justified by very special circumstances.

4.13 Priority will be given to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses, where the location is sustainable and the proposed use does not harm the building's character and/or the character of its surroundings.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Submission Version 2018

Policy SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.14 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 this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.15 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.

DC1 Design Considerations

4.16 All development shall 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 Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

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

2. be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance;

3. create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design;

4. incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development;

5. protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, overbearing development, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution;

6. promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate;

7. provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use;

8. require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links;

9. ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed;

10. ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community;

DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting

4.17 The Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have an adverse impact of significance to the character of the countryside or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;

2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence;

3. Supporting development which maintains the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds;

4. Supporting identification and implementation of natural flood management measures that will contribute towards delivering a reduction in local and catchment-wide flood risk and impacts of climate change and other multiple benefits;

5. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape;

6. Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park, and ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the National Park.

5 KEY PLANNING ISSUES

Principle of Development

5.1 Reducing the need to travel, and reducing the reliance on the car is a well-established planning principle stemming from concerns at combating climate change. The stables are used for private use by the applicants and will negate the need for them to find and travel to another livery located elsewhere. The existing building is well designed and has the appearance of an agricultural building that fits well within its countryside context and has no negative impacts to the setting of The Special Landscape Area. It is considered that the proposal adheres to policies DC1 and DC3 of the local plan and represents sustainable development which is supported by both the Core Strategy and the NPPF. It is contended that no material changes will occur due to the proposal and that there are no adverse impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Impact on neighbouring residents

5.2 The nearest neighbouring properties to the proposal are approximately Old Furnace Farm 250m to the west and Spring Cottage approximately 130m to the east. The location and appearance of the building means that the building is well screened from both properties and does not cause any negative impact on the visual amenity of the residences. Old Furnace Farm is located off the same access track of the building however it is not envisaged that any additional traffic movements will be caused by regularising the development so that property should not be affected in any negative way.

Impact to highway safety

5.3 The amount of traffic generated by the proposal is negligible as the horses will generally remain at the site and not be moved often. Regularisation of the development would not generate any additional traffic movements and therefore will not have a significant impact on the local highway network. Furthermore, the alternative to having the stables at the site is to rent or build stables elsewhere, which would be less sustainable in this situation as it would require many more unnecessary journeys.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 To conclude the proposal is a retrospective planning application for the change of use of an existing agricultural storage building to a stable with ancillary lean-to for hay storage. The existing appearance of the building is that of an agricultural building and as such fits well within its countryside location and has no adverse impacts to the Special Landscape Character Area complying with policies DC1 and DC3. The regularisation of the use of the building as a stable will enable the applicant to continue to keep their horses at the site and eliminate the need for unnecessary trips to alternative accommodation by the private car. As such the proposal represents sustainable development which is supported by NPPF and SMDC development plan directives. It is therefore respectfully requested that the proposal is approved without delay.

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