FOREFRONT
DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING
4 Ridge House, Ridge House Drive, Festival Park, S-O-T. ST1 5SJ
Office 01782 216912 WWW.FOREFRONTDC.UK

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ALTERATIONS AND CONVERSION OF FARM BUILDING TO A DWELLING AT EDGEFIELDS FARM, EDGEFIELDS LANE, STOCKTON BROOK, STAFFORDSHIRE, ST9 9NS

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

1.1 Edgefields Farm is a working farm comprising a farmhouse, 50 acres of farmland and both traditional and modern farm buildings. This Application relates to one of the traditional farm buildings which is located between the farmhouse and the nearest highway. It is annotated A on the plan below. There are modern farm building are located to the rear of the farmhouse, annotated B on the plan below. In addition, there is a third building, annotated C. which was altered to form a garage, calving and quarantine quarters for cattle.



1.2 This document accompanies a planning application for conversion and alteration of building A to a dwelling. The building lies parallel to the road. The main building has a pitched gabled roof, with a smaller lean-to section. The main building comprises two distinct section, the taller southern and lower northern element. There is a parapet detail marking the gable wall between the two sections. The southern part is two storey height with a pitched roof and a south facing gable. The northern section is slightly lower. Due to levels changes the eastern wall of the building is mainly below ground.

1.3 Edgefields Farm is a working cattle farm and the applicant, Mr E Sims, has lived here since 2002.Before his occupancy the farmland had been let and the farm buildings had not been maintained. A breeding herd of pedigree Limousin cattle has been established at Edgefields Farm since 2004. These are show winning cattle and are sold for breeding The Limousin cattle herd needed a calving shed and quarantine quarters separate from the rest of the herd and these were formed from

works to building C. Limousin calves have to be reared for 2 years and because of that the total size of the herd has grown substantially between 2004 and 2008, when the modern farm building was doubled in size, and Building C was converted. The modern farm buildings, B, were extended to provide more space for the cattle, to enhance breeding methods. The third phase addition (2012/0559) to the modern farm buildings (B) was required for cattle as well as storing feed, hay, straw, manure, farm vehicles and farm implements and machinery. That building has been commenced but not built. The concrete base has been constructed an is used for storage in the open.

1.4 The buildings are situated in a rural location off Edgefield Lane, 625m to the north of Stockton Brook and the busy A53 Leek New Road. The surrounding area is characterised by meadows and pastures bordered by dry-stone walls and hedgerows containing mature trees. Numerous copses and small woodlands occur locally, including Tinster Wood 325m to the north-east and scattered woodland and scrub between Edgefield Lane and Willfield Lane to the west. The Caldon Canal lies 335m to the south. The approximate OS grid reference for the outbuildings is SJ 91242 52375.

2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 In 2019 a Part Q prior notification application DET/2019/0011 was submitted for this building. This was refused for the following reasons;

"1. The partially completed building is the result of unlawful building operations that were involved in its construction, by reason of Article 3(5)(a) none of the permissions granted by Schedule 2 of the Order shall apply to that building.

2. In the opinion of the authority the proposed development does not comply with the conditions, limitations or restrictions specified at Part 3, Class Q specifically because:

i. The partially completed building is not in use and was not last in use as an agricultural building. The site was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit on 20th March 2013 because on the date of inspection the 'site' and the partially completed building were being used for a mix of general storage purposes.

ii. Unlawful building operations that have already been carried out and those necessary to finish the building, primarily involve extensive 'rebuilding' which exceed building operations that would have been reasonably necessary to convert the original pre 1895 farm building that has in the most part been demolished.

iii. The developer did not before unlawfully beginning and carrying out the extensive re building work, apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the items referred to in sub-paragraphs Q.2(1)(a) to (e) matters (a)–(f) and the provisions of paragraph W (prior approval) of Part 3, Schedule 2 of the order apply in relation to that application."

2.2 In 2019 a Certificate of Lawful Development was submitted for this building, mainly as a response to the refusal above. It sought confirmation that the exing building was immune from enforcement action as it was built over 4 years ago. The application was refused for the following reason.

"1. The operations carried out are 'development' for the purposes of "the Act". They are not operations included at s.55(2)(a) of "the Act" as those 'not involving development of the land' because

they have involved substantial rebuilding and have resulted in a partially completed building that has a materially different external appearance to that of the original 19th Century stone barn.

2. The building operations have resulted in a breach of planning control because they have been carried out without planning permission, enforcement action could have been taken on the date of the application because the operations are not yet 'substantially complete'. “

2.3 The decision reflects the fact that the Council took the view that the building was a dwelling, and that a completed dwelling does not exist now nor more than 4 years ago, However the LPA did not refute the information provided about the date of the building work, and presented no contrary information.

3.0 DETAILS OF THE BUILDING

3.1 The building the subject of this application is used for both agricultural uses and ancillary domestic uses. Between 2002 and 2014 a series of works took place to the building including

• rebuilding of some of the external walls in the same position;

• changes to the elevations; and

• changing a mono-pitched roof to a pitched gabled roof.

3.2 The plans of the existing building are attached at Appendix 1. The applicant has photos of parts of the building before the works the subject of this application were undertaken. These are attached at Appendix 2.

3.3 The applicant has also undertaken considerable restoration works of the building, Retained parts of the building are described below.

a. the original wall between the southern(taller) part and the northern section of the building has been retained. As evidenced by the photographs at Appendix 3. This is taken from inside the northern section of the building and shows the original stone gable wall with breather holes.
b. The external eastern wall of the southern section has been retained as shown in Appendix 4.

3.4 Google Street View images of the site are attached at Appendix 5. The first is dated August 2012 and shows the northern section of the barn. Its new pitched gable roof and gable opening is complete. It remains identical to this to date.

3.5 The northern section has had its new roof structure and tiles added by this date, and the Google Street View photo dated June 2011 indicates the new roof complete with roof tiles at that date.

3.6 The Google Street View photo from June 2008 shows the building prior to works to the roof structure.

3.7 The Street View photo from August 2012 shows the roof structure on the southern section has been removed. The northern section remains intact, supported by the original gable between the two sections.

3.8 The roof of the northern section of the building was changed from a shallow pitched monopitched roof to a gabled ridged roof in 2011. The position of the outside walls have not been altered from the original building.

3.9 The southern section was altered in 2013-14 and mainly retains its original appearance. It has not been altered in shape and size.

3.10 The building includes internal blockwork walls which have been added to protect the external stonework from damage from cattle and provide support to the original walls. The building still resembles a farm building. It has been renovated and only essential rebuilding has been undertaken. Clear evidence of the retained walls has been provided. The former monopitched roof of the northern section has been replaced with a more aesthetically pleasing tiled gabled roof. This change and the insertion of blockwork walls has made the building more suited for continued agricultural use. The building has been altered in excess of 4 years ago.

4.0 THE PROPOSALS

4.1 The plans are form the conversion of the existing building to create a dwelling. The existing walls and roof would be retained. New windows and doors would be inserted in the existing openings. No extension or rebuilding is proposed

4.2 There would be a minimum of new openings formed to allow daylight and ventilation to the dwelling. In addition, the existing unglazed rectangular openings in the upper end gable would be closed and 2 circular opening formed instead This as been planned in order to replicate the existing traditional “pitching hole” openings in the upper floor of the side elevation.

4.3 The residential curtilage of the converted building would be modest in extent. It would be constrained to the existing farmyard around the building. This is the original farmyard and lies mainly to the south west of the building. Its use as private garden and for parking will have no greater effect on the character of the Green Belt than exists at present.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

5.1 The site is located in the Staffordshire Green Belt as designated in the adopted proposals map, which originates from the 1998 Local Plan.

5.2 The adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (26 March 2014) does not change the Green Belt status of the site.

5.3 A more detailed overview of the relevant planning policy context follows below.

National planning policy and guidance

The presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

5.4 Paragraph 14 states that “At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.”

5.5 It also states that for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:

• Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole; or

• ·Specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Core Principles

5.6 Paragraph 17 sets out the core land-use planning principles that should under-pin plan-making and decision-taking. These include:

"Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth;"

"Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;"

"Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;"

Protecting Green Belt Land

5.8 Paragraph 79 states that "The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence".

5.9 Paragraph 80 states that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

• To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

• To prevent the neighbouring towns merging into one another;

• To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

• To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

• To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

5.10 Paragraph 87 states that "As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances".

5.11 Paragraph 89 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. There are 6 exceptions under paragraph 89, one of which is "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". The application complies with this policy.

5.12 Moreover, paragraph 90 lists 5 forms of development which are not considered to be inappropriate in the Green Belt.

5.13 This includes “the re-use of buildings provided that they are of permanent and substantial construction”. The application complies with this policy.

Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (March 2014)

5.15 The Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy was adopted on 26 March 2014.

5.16 The 2014 Core Strategy adopted the Proposals Map from the 1998 Local Plan in which the site is designated as Green Belt.

5.17 Policy SS6c – Other Rural Areas Strategy states that countryside and Green Belt areas outside of the town and village boundaries will provide only for development including

“…Allowing the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policies R1 and R2…” and

“Support the diversification of farm enterprises”.

5.18 Policy R2 – Rural Housing states:

“..only the following forms of housing development will be permitted in the rural areas outside the settlement and infill boundaries of the town and the villages:

- The conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use 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. In such cases there will be a requirement for a marketing exercise to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional or other evidence that the building would be unsuitable for a commercial use; or conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded.”

5.19 The application complies with the first sentence of this policy. It is a traditional rural building, and even though parts have been rebuilt they closely resemble the original building in respect of materials, character and appearance.

5.20 The second sentence in that policy requires a marketing exercise to demonstrate non residential options. This has not been undertaken but it is understood that this is no longer a pre requisite, probably reflecting the NPPF.

5.21 Emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2016-2031

5.22 The Council agreed to publish the Local Plan Submission Version for representations in February 2018. At this point, the Council agreed that the Local Plan was “sound”. Formal representations were then invited from residents, businesses and other stakeholders to provide them with the opportunity to support or challenge the soundness or legal compliance of the Local Plan. This stage in the process followed three previous public consultations since 2015 which had informed the preparation of the Local Plan alongside a comprehensive evidence base.

5.23 In June 2018, the Council subsequently agreed to submit the Local Plan Submission Version to the Secretary of State for examination. An examination in public has been held. the Local Plan is expected to be adopted in 2020. At this point, it will supersede the adopted Core Strategy and become part of the statutory development plan for the District.

5.24 In this context, the Council's position on the weight to be given to the policies contained in the Local Plan Submission Version in terms of the three criteria set out in Paragraph 48 of the NPPF is as follows:

- The stage of preparation – the Local Plan is now at an advanced stage of preparation as the Council has submitted it to the SoS for examination

- The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies – this varies depending on the policy in question. The Officer Comments section of this report identifies the level of outstanding objections to each policy and recommends the amount of weight to be given to them at this stage in the process

- The degree of consistency of policies with the NPPF – given that the Council has submitted a Local Plan that it considers to be sound, all policies are deemed to be consistent with the NPPF.

5.25 Emerging Policies

5.26 Of particular relevance to this application are the changes to Core Strategy Policies SS6 and R2. CS policy SS6 will be replaced by policy SS4 in the Local Plan, and Policy R2 will be replaced by policy H1 in the Local Plan.

5.27 Policy H1 New Housing Development

"1) New housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in Policy H3, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies.

2) In line with Government legislation the Council will maintain and update a register of those interested in acquiring self-build/custom-build housing plots across the District. Where a demand exists, residential developments of 15 dwellings (0.5 hectares) or more will make an appropriate contribution towards this need in agreement with the Council. This will be negotiated on a case by case basis.

3) All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision.

4) Housing development on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H2 will be supported as follows:

> a) Within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages, residential development and development on unidentified (windfall) sites will be permitted, subject to compliance with the Spatial Strategy and wider Local Plan policies
>
> b) Outside of the development boundaries, limited infill residential development of an appropriate scale and character for the Spatial Strategy will be supported, provided that: The development will adjoin the boundary of a larger village and be well related to the existing pattern of development and surrounding land uses, or;The development is well related to the existing pattern of development of a smaller village and will not create or extend ribbon development or lead to sporadic pattern of development; and
>
> c) In all cases the development will not lead to a prominent intrusion into the countryside or have an adverse impact of significance to the character of the countryside.

5) In the other rural areas in the open countryside, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted;

a) Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H3.

b) 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.

c) 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.

d)The conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; and where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.

e) Proposals to redevelop previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value.

f) The subdivision of an existing residential dwelling provided it is not in an isolated location.

6) When development is located in the Green Belt, national Green Belt Policy will apply."

5.28 The impact of this policy appears to be that within the Green Belt ONLY national Green Belt Policies will apply. In other words, the details at 5(d) relate only to sites beyond the Green Belt within the open countryside. This may possibly be a drafting error so the requirements at 5 (d) are addressed below.

5.30 Policy H1 (5) (d) of the emerging Local Plan supports the conversion of rural buildings to dwellings, "where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion." The reference to "worthy" is imprecise and open to interpretation. The policy does not refer to traditional rural buildings nor does it refer only to older buildings. The policy reference to "worth" is not replicated in national Green Belt Policy. Nevertheless the proposals represent a scheme which would retain a building which is traditional in appearance and scale, and the elevation changes respect the original building.

5.29 Under Policy H1 section (6) the proposed development should only reasonably need to be tested on the basis of the requirements set out in The National Planning Policy Framework for the conversion of buildings in the Green Belt, i.e. that the proposed development is not inappropriate so long as the building is of permanent and substantial construction and that it preserves the openness of the Green Belt.

5.30 This conclusion is supported by Policy SS 10 Other Rural Areas Strategy section 6 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Submission Version: which states that "Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy."

5.31 It is considered that the current planning application, which proposes to retain the existing structure in its current form, has no more impact of the openness of the Green Belt compared to its existing use. The converted building will have a modest

residential curtilage comprising the existing original farm yard. This would not have a significantly greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing use of the building as stables.

5.32 The existing building has been surveyed by a structural engineering firm. The report, which is submitted in support of the application concludes that the building is in reasonable condition and is suitable for conversion to a dwelling, i.e. that it is of permanent and substantial construction.

5.33 A Structural Appraisal was carried out by C"C Consulting Engineers in December 2019 and their report is attached to this document. The conclusions are that the building is in a relatively good structural condition with no areas of existing structure requiring rebuild to maintain the long-term structural integrity of the building. They conclude that the building is in good condition with good structural integrity and of adequate stability to be converted to a domestic dwelling without significant rebuild or replacement of the existing building fabric.

5.34 The Structural report's specific points are:

- perimeter walls are in good condition with steel lintels provided to the square openings.
- The tall openings to the right side gable have slender piers between however the block returns to the reveal should be adequate to restrain the masonry each side. If these are retained it is recommended that a wind load capacity assessment is undertaken.
- The exposed gable is also open to the underside of the roof at verge level. Given the height from 1st floor again a wind load capacity assessment should be undertaken.
- The short eaves wall plate straps are recommended to be increased to 1200mm long.
- The rear wall is noted to be damp which corresponds with the ground levels noted externally along the rear elevation. The damp is also extending into the return buttressing wall. An internal tanking with cavity drain system would be recommended across this rear wall.
- The cracking to the rear elevation of the garage is likely to be associated with the root mass of the felled tree given its close proximity. The wall will require remedial works to reinstate the structural integrity and also a capacity check is recommended given it is retaining approximately 1.5m of soil behind.

6.0 DESIGN & IMPACT ON THE LOCAL AREA

6.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands "Design Principles" SPD provides useful guidance on conversions of rural buildings. The specific design policies of the CS also seek to promote local distinctiveness and contribute positively to the area, as is also reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Policy DC1 sets out the design criteria relating to new development to reinforce local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area.

6.2 The application building is a large farm building and large sections of the traditional fabric have been retained to date. Some parts have been rebuilt using sympathetic materials in the same position as the original walls. The overall appearance is of a traditional rural building. Its pattern of openings closely resembles the original building and there are traditional external materials. The proposed conversion would be sympathetic as it would be contained within the shell of the existing without any extension.

6.3 All existing openings would be re-used and the facade alterations are minimal and these have been kept as small as possible and positioned sensitively.

6.4 The present building on the site has been partly rebuilt and some of the pre-existing elevation features have been changed as follows

1. Removal of gable feature in south west roof slope
2. Change from mono-pitched roof to gabled roof on northern section
3. Introduction of 3 upper floor level openings in south east gable

6.5 The gable feature 1. was in all likelihood not a traditional feature. It was at odds with the single rectilinear form of the main barn. It was not a strident or architecturally important feature. Its removal and the reinstatement of a simple gabled roof is arguably a reinstatement of the authentic form.

6.6 The mono-pitched roof on the northern section of the building 2. was a low pitch sloping roof of corrugated sheeting. This was not a traditional feature. However, this part of the building would have been a traditional addition to the main barn, with lower walls and a lower roof. The change to a gabled roof of a matching roof material and the same pitch as the taller southern section of the barn is, again, a reversion to the original building's traditional form.

6.7 The planning application proposes closing up the upper floor openings in the southern gable 3.and insertion of a pair of circular openings instead. These would replicate those seen in the south east elevation of that building.

6.8 Given that the application building is existing and that there would be minimal change to its external appearance it is not considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to the character of the site and the character of the surrounding area. The traditional appearance of the application building will continue to make a positive contribution to the character of this rural area.

6.9 In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with guidance contained within the NPPF and supplementary planning guidance.

7.0 PRECEDENT

7.1 Staffordshire Moorlands Council granted planning permission under SMD/2017/0699 for conversion of a barn south east of The Rocks, Uttoxeter Road Draycott in the Moors, to a dwelling. The planning report makes it clear that the building has significant elements of dilapidation necessitating areas of repair / re-building. The site is within the Green Belt. Planning permission was granted on

02/01/2018. This is comparable to Edgefield's Farm where the building has been partially rebuilt.

7,2 SMD/2018/0579 at Old Far Rownall Farm, Thornyedge Road, Bagnall is relevant to this application. Planning permission was granted on 18/01/2019. The Officer report states that:

"Green Belt policy in the NPPF allows the conversion of buildings into other uses providing they are of permanent and substantial construction. I consider that due to the brick and tile form of the building and the good structural stability of it as assessed in the structural report, the building would be suitable in respect of being a conversion in the Green Belt. Policy R2 requires rural buildings to be suitable in physical, architectural and character terms. The building is physically sound and although it does not have much character or architectural merit, the building form and materials are not out of keeping with the surrounding rural area…

..The roof of the building has recently been replaced with appropriate tiles and the only further external works would be the replacement windows and doors. The proposal would therefore not lead to any significant impact on the character and appearance of the area…"

This is comparable to Edgefields Farm where the roof has already been replaced

7.3 SMD/2018/0740 at Round Meadows Farm Barn, Rownall Road, Wetley Rocks. This application relates to a portal frame building in the Green Belt which was erected without planning permission, there is no planning history relating to this structure. Notwithstanding this, the officer report states that

"The development that would be carried out would make use of the existing building and, relevant to that, one of the exceptions at paragraph 146(d) provides for the 're use of buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction' provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. "

The initial planning application was refused because of impact of the large parking area on the Green Belt. However a resubmitted planning application was granted planning permission under SMD/2019/0144. This is comparable to Edgefields Farm as the building the subject of this application has not been granted planning permission

8. OTHER MATTERS

Biodiversity

8.1 In December 2019 Apex Ecology undertook a preliminary roost assessment An assessment of the building was made in terms of their suitability to support roosting bats. A number of factors were considered, including internal conditions, presence of features suitable for use by crevice dwelling and free hanging bats, proximity to foraging habitats/cover and potential for disturbance. The report has already been submitted but I summarise the findings below.

8.2 Staffordshire Ecological Record provided information on bats and birds that have been recorded previously in the local area. Bats have been recorded within 2km of the site on numerous occasions, with four species known to be present:. Bats have been recorded roosting less than 500m to the west of site.

8.3 The majority of the remaining records are of birds, with species recorded including 'red' or 'amber' listed species of conservation concern whose populations have declined significantly in recent years. Although no records exist from the site itself, barn owl, grasshopper warbler and willow tit have all been recorded within 300m of site. The area is likely to be used by certain bird species at least for foraging.

8.4 No signs of bats or birds were found during the survey. However, the buildings support features, such as gaps below ridge tiles and in the walls that cannot be inspected closely or internally but which could be made use of by bats and birds for roosting and nesting. Taking this into consideration, the southern taller section is considered to hold high roosting potential, with the northern lower part, holding moderate roost potential. Both sections also offer nesting opportunities for birds.

8.5 Apex Ecology therefore recommend that further survey work is undertaken. Including emergence surveys. A licence would need to be sought from Natural England should bats or their roost sites be affected by the proposals.

8.6 Works to the buildings would need to take account of the potential presence of nesting birds. The presence of nesting birds can be avoided as a constraint to the proposals by timing relevant works to avoid the bird nesting season.

8.7 In order to enhance the site for birds, bird boxes will be incorporated into the existing buildings

Landscape / Trees

The proposed development will not have any impact on existing trees or hedges.

Access

The site already has a direct access point to the highway network, which is shared with the farm house and farm business. The access ha good visibility an dits aditonal use for a single additional dewing should not give rise to highway safety or traffic issues

Sustainability

The re-use of an existing building is a highly sustainable approach to the use of land and resources.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. 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 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. It also states in the NPPF that where proposals accord with the development plan they should be approved without delay,

and where policies are out-of-date permission should only be refused where there is significant and demonstrable harm to outweigh the benefits of the development.

9.2 The submitted proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development in that it involves the re-use of an existing rural building which is considered suitable in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The structural report confirms the suitability of the building for residential conversion.

9.3 The development proposed satisfies the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework, which appears to be the requirement of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan - Submission Version.

9.4 The proposal adopts a sympathetic approach to the conversion of the building and will not give rise to any material harm to the character and appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area.

9.5 There will be no unacceptably adverse impacts on other interest of acknowledged importance.