Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

OLD STAR FARM
COTTON

MARCH 2020

Site Address:
Old Star Farm, Beelow Lane, Cotton, Staffordshire, ST10 3BL

Applicant:
Mr. S. Watkins

Proposal:
Conversion and alteration of nissan hut to create residential annex

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 9th March 2020
Job Reference: RDP/2020/022

Report Prepared By:
Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd
70 Ferndale Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 7DL
Email: rob78duncan@gmail.com
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. S. Watkins to seek full planning permission for the conversion and alteration of a Nissan Hut hut at Old Start Farm, Beelow Lane, Cotton to create a residential annex.

1.2 The existing building occupies a floor area of 54 square metres and is located to the north west of the existing dwellinghouse, just beyond the existing boundary of the domestic curtilage. It is constructed from blockwork with an fibre / asbestos roof. The application proposes to convert the building into a residential annex comprising of kitchen, lounge, bedroom and bathroom, and is to be occupied by the applicant's mother and step-father.

1.3 External alterations are proposed in the form of a new zinc roof to replace the existing asbestos roof, incorporating the provision of rooflights on the easterly and westerly elevations. The application also proposes the insertion of replacement windows and doors in the southern elevation, along with a replacement full height opening in the northern elevation. The half cylindrical form of the building will nevertheless be preserved.

1.4 The annex will have a very modest area of amenity space to its immediate north, set within an existing enclosed area of the site, but will also share the amenity space of the adjacent dwellinghouse, along with its existing parking facilities and means of access. It will also share service connections with the host property and remain in the same ownership. A small pathway will connect the building to the garden of Old Star Farm.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the rural area and comprises a steel roofed Nissan Hut located to the north west of the applicant's existing two-storey dwelling. The building lies very close to the existing western boundary of the domestic curtilage of the property, beyond which lies a shed and detached double garage. A row of mature trees is located to the northeast of the site, with agricultural land extending to the north, west and southwest.

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 DPD (2014) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 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*

3.3 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.*

3.4 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 SPD. 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;*

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

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of securing high quality design and making beneficial reuse of existing buildings. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

5.1 Policies SS6c and R2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy allow for 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 by way of a marketing exercise. The emerging Local Plan has confirmed that the latter requirement is no longer necessary as it is

in direct conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework, and consequently no marketing of the premises for alterative commercial use has taken place.

5.2 The existing building has historically been used for agricultural purposes, and is constructed from blockwork with a fibre/asbestos curved roof. The accompanying Structural Survey demonstrates that the building is sufficiently robust to be worthy in physical terms for conversion but understandably recommends the removal of the asbestos roof. The applicant proposes to replace the asbestos roof with a new curved zinc roof – retaining the semi-cylindrical form and appearance of the building. Such works will not give rise to any materially greater harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area than the existing development, and will derive benefits by removing the asbestos sheeting from the site. The proposed alterations are therefore considered to be warranted in planning terms.

5.3 The building is also considered to be worthy in architectural and character terms for conversion. Nissan Huts were first pioneered in the early 20th Century by Major Peter Norman Nissen and were designed to provide an economical, robust structure, capable of accommodating a variety of uses. They are relatively unique in their appearance, with a low, ground hugging, semi-cylindrical form, and are somewhat of a rarity in the Staffordshire Moorlands. To this end the building is considered to be worthy in architectural and character terms for conversion and thus accords with the provisions of policies SS6c and R2 of the Core Strategy. The proposal also represents an opportunity to bring the building back into beneficial reuse, in line with the objectives of paragraph 118(d) of the NPPF.

5.4 The building is to be occupied by the applicant's mother and step-father, and will share the garden of the host property, as well as its parking area and

service connections. It will also remain within the same ownership as the dwelling. Consequently, it will have an ancillary relationship to the existing farmhouse, and will not involve the creation of an independent dwellinghouse. The applicant is happy to accept the imposition of a planning condition restricting the use of the building to a residential annex.

Design & Layout

5.5 The proposed conversion and alteration of the building is sensitive to its semi-cylindrical design, and the new roof will match the curvature and height of the existing, only with a different material. The rooflights in the eastern and western slopes of the roof will complement that roof form and not appear as incongruous, intrusive features. The existing ends of the building are already blocked up by stone and timber, and the proposed replacement of the timber in the northern elevation with new matching blockwork will serve to enhance its external appearance, tying the design in to the rest of the building.

5.6 Externally it is proposed to create a very modest area of amenity space to the north of the building within an area that it is currently enclosed on two sides by low block walls. This will enable the occupiers to retain some degree of independence, whilst also having access to the main garden of the property whenever desired. The photograph in Figure 1 overleaf shows this existing enclosed area, and also shows the very close proximity of the building to the existing domestic curtilage of Old Star Farm adjacent.

5.7 The nearest neighbouring property lies circa 65 metres to the southwest of the site (Star Green Farm) and consequently the development will not give rise to any conflict with the Local Authority's informal interface distances. Consequently, no adverse impact to residential amenity will arise. The

proposed development is therefore in accordance with policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Figure 1 – Photograph of Northern Elevation of Nissan Hut



Highway Safety

5.8 The application proposes the creation of a residential annex, and consequently will not give rise to any material intensification of the use of the existing vehicular access. The site benefits from an extensive parking area, and this will be shared between the annex and the host dwelling. Consequently no adverse impact to highway safety will arise, and the development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF.

6 Conclusion

6.1 It is considered that the proposed conversion of the existing Nissan Hut to a residential annex constitutes a sustainable form of development, as it involves the reuse of a building that is worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The proposal will furthermore be of a scale and design that does not detract from the character and appearance of the area, and will not detract from the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or give rise to highway safety concerns.

6.2 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policies SS6c, R2 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development.