Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

PLANNING STATEMENT

OLD STAR FARM
COTTON

JUNE 2020

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

Applicant:
Mr. S. Watkins

Proposal:
Extension of detached garage to form ancillary residential annex

Planning Statement:
Date Issued: 26th June 2020
Job Reference: RDP/2020/106

Report Prepared By:
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1 Introduction

1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. S. Watkins to seek full planning permission for the erection of a single storey extension to an existing detached double garage at Old Star Farm, Beelow Lane, Cotton to create a residential annex.

1.2 The application represents a resubmission following the withdrawal of application SMD/2020/0133 which had proposed the conversion and reuse of a nearby nissan hut to create a residential annex. The Local Authority were not supportive of that proposal, and consequently the applicant has been looking at alternative proposals in order to achieve an annex on the site.

1.3 The proposed annex will occupy a footprint of 62 square metres and will stand to a maximum height of 4 metres. The garage to which it will be attached stands to some 5 metres and is to remain in use as a garage. The proposed annex is to be occupied by the applicant's mother and stepfather, and will comprise of a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and lounge. The annex will furthermore share the same domestic curtilage, access, parking area and service connections as the main house.

1.4 The application has been subject to pre-application discussions with the Local Authority, who following some suggested revisions to the scale and design of the proposal so that the height of the extension does not exceed 4 metres, have advised that the proposal is likely to be supportable. It was highlighted at that time that conditions would likely be imposed to ensure that the garage is retained for garaging purposes only, and that the annex is tied to the main dwelling. The applicant has no objections to such conditions.

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site lies within the rural area and forms part of the established domestic curtilage of Old Star Farm. The existing detached double garage off which it is proposed to construct the annex is located centrally within the plot and is located to the immediate north of the existing two storey dwellinghouse. Garden area extends to the north, east and west, with a large area of hardstanding located to the south and southeast. The existing Nissan Hut lies to the west of the garage just outside the domestic curtilage. Vehicular access to the site is taken via an existing track that connects with Beelow Lane to the east.

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 R1 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Rural Diversification' and states that 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.

3.4 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.*

3.5 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 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

4.1 Policy SS6c of the Core Strategy confirms that the rural areas, of which this site forms part, will provide only for development which meets an essential local need, and makes provision for the conversion, extension or replacement of an existing rural building, in accordance with policies R1 and R2. Policy R1 confirms that development 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. It goes on to confirm that development should not harm the rural character of the area, and that where new or replacement buildings are involved, development should have minimal impact on the countryside. Policy R2 furthermore makes provision for the extension of existing dwellings within the rural provided that the extension is appropriate in scale and design and does not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.

4.2 The National Planning Practice Guidance confirms that the need to provide housing for older people is critical, noting that by mid-2016 there were 1.6 million people aged 85 and over. By mid-2041 this is projected to double to 3.2 million, and with that comes an attendant need to provide appropriate accommodation to help them live independently for longer and to help reduce costs to social care and health systems. The guidance goes on to recognise that the health and lifestyles of older people will differ, as will their housing needs, which can range from accessible and adaptable general needs housing to specialist housing with high levels of care and support.

4.3 The proposed annex will not provide a dwelling per se, but will provide an appropriate form of residential accommodation to meet the needs of the applicant's mother and stepfather and enable them to live on site with some degree of independence, with help nearby when they need, particularly in their later years. The proposed annex will therefore meet an identified rural community need.

4.4 The proposed extension is wholly subservient to the existing double garage to which it is attached and owing to its modest form and height (4m max) and location within the existing domestic curtilage of the property, will not have any material adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It will also be constructed from materials to match the existing garage. The annex will furthermore share the garden, parking and access areas, and have shared service connections with the main house. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle, in accordance with the provisions of policies SS6c, R1 and R2 of the Core Strategy.

4.5 In support of this conclusion I draw attention to the Local Authority's recent grant of consent for a detached triple garage with accommodation in its roofspace under application SMD/2020/0122. That application site was also located within the rural area and was found to be acceptable in principle in the context of policies SS6c, R1 and R2 of the Core Strategy. Similar conclusions can reasonably be reached in respect of the submitted proposal, which occupies a not dissimilar amount of floorspace, but which is much lower in height, and also located within the rural area.

Design & Layout

4.6 The proposed extension is to be constructed from blockwork with a pebbledash finish and a grey tiled roof to match the existing garage to which it will be attached. The extension is set back from the front elevation of the garage and has a narrower plan form which enables a lower ridge height to be achieved – the extension sitting some 1m lower in height than the garage. The design of the extension is simple, and respects the character of the existing site, and owing to the absence of any nearby properties, will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

4.7 Views of the site from Beelow Lane are largely screened by an existing portal framed agricultural building located to the east of the site, with views further softened by existing boundary vegetation. The development will not have any notable adverse impact on public views, with any glimpses of the building being seen against the backdrop of the taller garage and detached dwelling beyond. Consequently the proposed extension will not appear strident or incongruous within its surroundings. The proposed development is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policy DC1 of the Core Strategy.

Highway Safety

4.8 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.

5 Conclusion

5.1 It is considered that the proposed extension of the existing detached garage to create a residential annex is an appropriate and sustainable form of development within the rural area and will not give rise to any adverse impact to the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of any neighbouring residential properties.

5.2 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policies SS6c, R1, 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.