SAMMONS Architectural LIMITED
Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists

10 Cawdry Buildings
Fountain Street
Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 6JP
Tel / fax 01538 386002
e-mail info@sammonsltd.co.uk

PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING MATTERS OF DESIGN AND ACCESS

PROPOSAL : **FULL APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF DOMESTIC GARAGE TO ANCILLARY DOMESTIC ACCOMODATION AND CREATION OF TWO OFF ROAD PARKING SPACES**

ADDRESS : **WOODHEAD FARM, TOP ROAD, BIDDULPH MOOR, ST8 7LF**

APPLICANT : **MR M RANDLES**

DATE : **JULY 2020** **JOB No. : 2019-2430**

CONTENTS:

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

3.0 PROPOSAL

4.0 SITE HISTORY

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

6.0 KEY PLANNING ISSUES

7.0 CONCLUSION

8.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

- **8.1 USE**
- **8.2 AMOUNT**
- **8.3 LAYOUT**
- **8.4 SCALE**
- **8.5 LANDSCAPING**
- **8.6 APPEARANCE**
- **8.7 ACCESS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr M Randles to prepare and submit a full planning application for the change of use of a domestic garage at Woodhead Farm, Biddulph Moor to ancillary domestic accommodation. The application is accompanied by existing and proposed drawings numbered 2019-2430-01A, 2019-2430-02C and 2019-2430-05A which should be read in conjunction with this planning, design and access statement.

This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of these proposals, primarily on the basis that the development would result in a sustainable form of development which would not harm the openness or visual amenity of the Green Belt, impact adversely on the character and appearance of the area, prejudice residential amenity, harm highway safety or affect any established ecological interests.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application building is a rectangular, one and a half storey stone building with a tiled roof which is currently used as a domestic garage with office above. It is located within the curtilage of Woodhead Farm. Woodhead Farm is no longer used as a farm but retains the former farm buildings which have recently been granted planning permission for change of use into holiday accommodation.

The application building has a garage door with a small window above this, a large opening in the rear elevation and two window openings in the side (south elevation). The ground in front of the garage doors is concreted and can be used for car parking. Parking for the former farmhouse is currently provided by the area shown on the submitted drawings and will continue to be the case.

To the south of the application building is the applicant's house and, beyond that, the former agricultural buildings.

The site lies in an attractive rural area with extensive views. The site is one of many small farmsteads or former farmsteads scattered along this ridge on the Staffordshire/Cheshire border. For the purposes of the Development Plan the application site lies in the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

3.0 PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks to change the use of the existing domestic garage into ancillary domestic accommodation. The building which would provide an open plan living space with a kitchen in the lean on the ground floor with two bedrooms and a bathroom above.

The proposed conversion uses the existing openings, with the addition of a ground floor window to the proposed kitchen. New rooflights are provided to light the bedrooms and these will be of a conservation style. The annex will share the same access and service connections as the main house.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The application building was granted planning permission in October 2008 under reference SMD/2008/0533. A recent application to convert the building into a stand alone dwelling was refused under application reference SMD/2019/0644 on the grounds that the proposal would undermine Green Belt policy and would not provide adequate living accommodation as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards. A discussion with the case officer following the refusal of this application confirmed that conversion to ancillary accommodation would be viewed more favourably under the Council's policies.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory 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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published on 27th March 2012 and revised in February 2019 replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan.

Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also sets out requirements in respect of housing delivery and securing high quality design. The following are considered to be the most relevant chapters:-

- Chapter 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 12 - Achieving Well Designed Places
- Chapter 13 - Protecting Green Belt Land
- Chapter 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (March 2014) and the Saved Local plan Proposals Map / Settlement Boundaries (1998). The most relevant policies of the adopted Core Strategy are considered to be SS1 (Development Principles); SS1a (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development); SS2 (Future provision of Development); SS6c (Other Rural Areas Strategy); SD1 (Sustainable Use of Resources); SD3 (Carbon Saving Measures in Development); DC1 (Design Considerations); DC3 (Landscape and Settlement Setting); C1 (Creating Sustainable Communities); R1 (Rural Diversification); R2 (Rural Housing) NE1 (Biodiversity and Geological Resources); T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport) and T2 (Other Sustainable Transport Measures). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

In terms of Supplementary Planning Guidance the Space About Dwellings (September 1998 - Appendix 3 of the Local Plan [1998]) and Design Principles for Staffordshire Moorlands are also important in the consideration of this application.

6.0 KEY PLANNING ISSUES

The key issues for consideration in the determination of this application are therefore considered to be:-

- The principle of development
- Design & impact on a non designated heritage asset
- Impact on biodiversity
- Residential amenity
- Highway safety

The Principle of Development

For the purposes of planning policy consideration the application site lies within the Green Belt. Both the Council's Core Strategy and the NPPF restrict Green Belt/open countryside developments. Core Strategy policies SS1 and SS1a highlight the importance of sustainable development. Policy SS6c states that the areas within the Green Belt will only provide development which meets an essential local need, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of rural areas and promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.

Core Strategy policy R1 requires that all development in the rural areas (outside of development boundaries) shall be assessed according to the extent to which it enhances the countryside, should not harm the rural character/environmental quality of an area and most importantly notes that inappropriate development within the Green Belt needs to be justified by very special circumstances. Policy R2 states that in rural areas only certain forms of housing development can be considered acceptable including affordable housing, essential local needs housing (agricultural, forestry, rural worker), replacement dwellings, domestic extensions and the conversion of rural buildings.

The National Planning Policy Framework clearly states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. A Green Belt designation serves five purposes; 1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; 2. To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; 3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Local Planning Authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other consideration.

Chapter 13 of the NPPF states that "inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances" (para 143). Para 146 recognises that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt "provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within

it". The "re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction" is one of these categories.

The application proposes the change of use of an existing rural building, which is of solid and permanent construction to a small residential annex which would be used in conjunction with the main farmhouse. Accordingly the principle of development is considered acceptable in principle in accordance with the provisions of policies SS6c, R1 and R2 of the Core Strategy.

Design & Appearance

The specific design policies of the CS also seek to promote local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area as is similarly reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It furthermore states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; is indivisible from good planning; and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Developments should function well and establish a strong sense of place creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Proposals should also optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and respond to local character and history including local materials and the use of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Developments should also create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

Policy DC1 sets out the design criteria to reinforce local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area. The recently updated NPPF advises that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help to raise the standard of design more generally within the area. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area.

The proposed conversion would be sympathetic as it would be contained within the shell of the existing building without any extension. All existing openings would be reused and the only alteration would be the introduction of rooflights in the north and south roof planes. These have been kept as low to the eaves line and positioned above existing openings where possible. Their size has also been kept to a minimum and they would be of a conservation design so as to reduce their visual impact.

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 and appearance of the application building, its setting or the valued characteristics of the wider area including the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt. A similar view was reached by the planning officer in the determination of the previous application who confirmed that the "proposed works would not harm the appearance of the building". In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies DC1 of the adopted Core Strategy as well as guidance contained within the NPPF and supplementary planning guidance.

Amenity

The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that good design is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The NPPF also states that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area. Core Strategy policy DC1 requires that all development proposals should 'protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.' The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Space About Dwellings'

details standards that should be considered and met to ensure privacy for existing and proposed residents.

Given the relatively isolated location of the application site and the fairly sporadic spattering of farmsteads and dwellings t is considered that the proposed scheme would respect the amenity of the main farmhouse which is located 25m to the south and provide an adequate degree of amenity to the occupiers of the proposed unit.

The previous application for a stand alone dwelling considered that the size of the building failed to meet the minimum requirements for a three bedroomed dwelling as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards with a floorspace of 93 sq metres being required and just 88 sq metres being provided, resulting in a shortfall of 5 sq metres. It is confirmed that, using the calculation criteria set out in the NDSS the application building would provide an internal floors area of 62 sq metres at ground floor and 36 sq metres at first floor, resulting in a total of 98 sq metres meaning that the NDSS are met. The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with policy DC1 of the adopted CS and guidance contained within the NPPF in this respect.

Highways

Paragraph 108 and 109 of the NPPF states: Plans and decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe is reflected in CS Policy T1 Development and Sustainable Transport.

Having regard to the previous use of the application building and the fact the application proposes the creation of a residential annex, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any material intensification of the use of the existing vehicular access. Adequate parking and turning facilities are provided within the site and these will be shared between the annex and the host building. Again no highway issues were raised as part of the consultation process on the previous application. In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with CS policy T1 and guidance contained within the NPPF.

7.0 CONCLUSION

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.

This proposal represents appropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of paara 146 of the NPPF. In addition 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 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. The proposal

furthermore will not derive any significant issues in respect of highway safety nor will it be prejudicial to residential amenity. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies SS6c, R1, R2, DC1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes the re-use of the existing rural building for residential purposes.

AMOUNT

The proposal is for a single three bedroomed annex.

LAYOUT

The layout of the proposed dwelling is shown on the submitted plans.

SCALE

The application building will be converted within the shell of the existing building without any extension or enlargement. The only alteration relates to the provision of 3 roof lights in the northern roof plane and one additional rooflight in the southern roof plane.

LANDSCAPING

No landscaping is proposed as part of this application.

APPEARANCE

The proposed development will retain the external character and appearance of the application building with the only alterations limited to the insertion of rooflights within both roof planes. These are shown on the submitted drawings.

ACCESS

Pedestrian access will be as shown on the submitted plans. Dedicated parking provision will be provided for the annex and the existing parking and turning facilities for the main dwelling retained.