

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0292
Valid 23/04/2021

WILLOWSHAW FARM
CLOUDSIDE
CONGLETON

ALTERATIONS AND TWO
STOREY REAR EXTENSION

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether or not the proposal amounts to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area
- The impact on residential amenity
- The impact on highway safety
- The impact on the ecological value of the site

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies in the Green Belt and is within the open countryside between Rushton Spencer, a couple of miles to the east and Congleton to the west and is a short distance to the south-east of "The Cloud" hill and a short distance to the north of Beat Lane, the main country road connecting the village to Congleton. It comprises a complex of buildings forming part of a current working cattle farm. Willowshaw Farm and these lie adjacent to the fairly narrow country lane known as Cloudside which connects to Beat Lane a short distance to the south. The farm is on the east side of the lane and on land which slopes downwards towards the east. The south part of the farm comprises old traditional stone barns with modern blockwork pitched roof barns to the rear and a traditional stone farmhouse which directly faces the road. To the north side of the traditional stone barn lie large portal-framed modern farm storage buildings with corrugated fibre cement sheet walls and roof above concrete blockwork walls. The complex of farm buildings is surrounded by open land.

PROPOSAL

This a full application for a two-storey rear extension to the farmhouse, replacing a rear porch. This would project 2.7 metres from the back wall of the rear outrigger of the L-shaped farmhouse. It would continue the rear gable form of the outrigger and maintain the ridge along to the proposed rear wall, at the same height as existing. It would have matching stone and Staffs Blue tile finishing materials. The current 2-bed farmhouse would become a 3-bed dwelling as a result of this scheme.

The application includes a Bat Activity Survey Report and updated/revised Bat Report received in June 2021.

The application is part of an overall scheme which also includes the proposed conversion of the adjoining traditional barn into one dwelling and the conversion of

the modern portal-framed buildings to the north of it into four further dwellings under separate planning applications. However, the proposed conversion of the modern buildings, which was under a “Class Q” Prior Approval application was refused.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (Adopted September 2020)

SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy

DC1 Design Considerations

NE1 Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

Sections 12 (Design), 13 (Green Belts) and 15 (Natural Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0291: Concurrent application to convert the adjoining stone barn into one dwelling. Pending.

DET/2021/0019: Application under Class Q of the GPDO to convert the modern portal-framed storage buildings into four dwellings. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 27.5.21

Neighbour consultation period ends: 27.5.21

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments

Concerns were raised regarding the overall scheme leading to overdevelopment of the site in a rural area of a single-track road and which would result in six dwellings in total together as part of the overall scheme. The Parish Council would not raise an objection if the traditional barn was converted into additional floorspace for the farmhouse but did not comment on the particular application to extend the farmhouse.

Staffs Wildlife Trust

Initially a Holding Objection was issued due to the impacts on common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat roosts that were found within the barn and also the roof of the farmhouse to be extended.

However, in response to a revised Ecology Report (June 2021) outlining mitigation and protection measures, the objection was removed as the existing roof would not be altered and recommended conditions to retain the roosts and require a methodology statement for the works and an amphibian methodology statement, as advised in the Ecology Report in the section relating to the farmhouse extensions.

Severn Trent Water

No objection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The site is in the Green Belt and Policy SS10 requires strict control over inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Paras 145 and 146 of the NPPF list the forms of development which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt and the enlargements of buildings is listed but this is providing they would not lead to a disproportionate enlargement of the original building (i.e. before any previous extensions). The original farmhouse is L-shaped with a living room and bedroom above at the front and a former kitchen with bedroom above at the back. A single-storey side-rear extension was added where the current kitchen is now located. A porch was also added to the rear wall but this is to be removed. Floorspace calculations have been undertaken of the original floorspace, previously added floorspace and proposed extension floorspace in order to help determine if the proposal would lead to a "disproportionate" enlargement of the original building. These are as follows:

ORIGINAL FLOORSPACE:

North side of house and outrigger over two floors: 91.2 sq.m

South side of house over two floors: 28.6 sq.m

Total: 119.8

ADDITIONAL FLOORSPACE

Existing single-storey kitchen extension: 16.0 sq.m

Proposed two-storey rear extension: 28.2 sq.m

Total: 44.2

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN ORIGINAL FLOORSPACE AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSAL: 36.8%

It is considered on the basis of the 36.% increase in floorspace that the proposal would not amount to a disproportionate increase in the original building and therefore the proposal is deemed to not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not harm the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, the proposed extension in terms of its overall scale, height and form would not appear as

a disproportionate addition to the house and respects the original scale and L-shaped form of the building.

The extension would use matching materials and roof tiles and would appear subservient to the farmhouse and respect and not dominate the original farmhouse. It would appear as an enlarged outrigger when approaching the site along the country lane from the south but would not be visible when approaching from the north as it would be screened by the adjoining barn. The only new fenestration would be on the rear elevation and so would not be visible from the road, although in any case, the proposed bedroom window harmonises with the traditional windows of the farmhouse.

With regard to residential amenity, as the new windows would directly face the rear, the scheme would not lead to any harmful overlooking of the proposed residential property forming part of the barn conversion application. The extension would not lead to any harmful overshadowing of this proposed dwelling (this is further assessed in the report for the barn conversion application – SMD 2021 0291). There are no other nearby dwellings.

There is ample space in the existing rear yard and existing garage also to the rear of the farmhouse for the parking of at least two cars which is in accordance with Council off-road parking standards for a 3-bed dwelling.

With regard to the impact on the ecological value of the site, and in particular bats, as roosts were discovered in the farmhouse roof, the existing roof would not be altered and therefore those roosts would not be harmed providing details of extension methodology statement are provided to the Council for approval to ensure that the works (which would extend out from the rear gable of the roof) would not disturb the roosts. This would be applied as a planning condition.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would not harm the visual or residential amenities of the area and would not lead to any other environmental harms including biodiversity with the safeguard of conditions. The proposal would therefore comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 16.7.21

X *J. Colley*

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council