

Planning Statement

Conversion and alteration of former agricultural building to
form 1 no. dwellinghouse
Shawe Farm, Shawe Park Road, Kingsley,
For Mr. & Mrs. Emmett

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hewitt & Carr Services has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Emmett to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany an application prepared by Hewitt & Carr Architects for the conversion and alteration of a former agricultural building at Shawe Farm, Shawe Park Road, Kingsley to create 1no. dwellinghouse.
- 1.2. The works to convert the building include the removal of the existing corrugated sheet roof, and its replacement with a new pitched tiled roof. The application also proposes the re-construction of an existing single storey extension at the southern end of the building, along with the opening up of an existing blocked up window.
- 1.3. The resultant accommodation will comprise of an open plan lounge, kitchen and dining area, utility, hallway, two bedrooms, shower room and wet room. The total floor area of the dwelling will extend to some 117 square metres and has been specifically designed to provide a wheelchair friendly layout to meet the applicant's requirements. To the west of the dwelling, it is proposed to provide off-street parking for two vehicles, accessed via an existing field gate, whilst the land to the south and east of the building is to be utilised as domestic curtilage.
- 1.4. The applicant has provided an explanation of the rationale behind the proposal which reads as follows:

"We have lived at Shawe Farm for 30 years, but during the last four years the comfort of our house has been disrupted since my wife was informed that she had Parkinson's which has gradually gotten more severe and has required a number of aids to help her. We cannot make any further changes to our home to improve matters hence the reason for converting one of our barns and make all our living areas on one level and to incorporate as many helpful features as possible. Also, one of our sons would then live in the main house with his family so that we would have help and assistance close by. We both enjoy living at Shawe Farm and would not like to move into town even if we could find a suitable place, also this would not help with assistance on hand 24/7".

- 1.5. An application to convert this building to residential use has previously been submitted to the Local Authority (SMD/2014/0786) but was refused for the following reason:
 1. *The proposed building to be converted into a dwelling, by virtue of its form, appearance and materials is not considered to be suitable and worthy in character terms for conversion. Furthermore, the application does not include any demonstration that agricultural or commercial uses, which are preferable for rural building conversions, would not be viable or suitable for the building. The proposal therefore would not comply with Policy R2 'Rural Housing' of the Council's Core Strategy Document (adopted March 2014) which seeks to*

ensure that the provision of housing in rural areas amounts to sustainable development in line with the social, economic and environmental development aims of government guidance outlined in paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 1.6. This Planning Statement seeks to demonstrate that owing to a material change in planning policy, along with other comparable schemes elsewhere in the district, there is now a compelling case for conversion of this building to be granted.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and comprises a detached single storey former agricultural building that is constructed from red facing brickwork with a corrugated sheet roof atop. The building lies to the south of the existing vehicular access track that serves Shawe Farm, with the existing two storey detached farmhouse and a range of Grade II Listed Stables located to the west beyond a small field. A detached bungalow is located to the southwest, with its vehicular access running parallel with the southern boundary of the site. A modest corrugated steel outbuilding lies to the immediate east of the building which is to be retained. The northern boundary to the site, enclosing the proposed area of domestic curtilage, comprises of mature vegetation, as do the eastern and southern site boundaries.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance to the determination of the appeal:
- 3.2. Policy SS1 relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering (amongst other matters):
- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
 - easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community
 - a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment; development which maintains the locally distinctive character

of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings

- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

3.3. Policy SS10 relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. The policy goes on to state that housing requirements will be met by allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policy H1. The policy also states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as set out in Government guidance.

3.4. Policy H1 relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that in the rural areas, the conversion of rural buildings will be permitted where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion; or 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.

3.5. Policy DC1 relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall 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 Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance
- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution

3.6. Policy DC3 relates to 'Landscape and Settlement Setting' and states that the Council will protect and, where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements in the Staffordshire Moorlands by:

1. Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the

- setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence
2. Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence
 3. Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds
 4. Supporting opportunities to positively manage the landscape and use sustainable building techniques and materials which are sympathetic to the landscape
 5. Ensuring that development does not adversely affect the wider setting of the Peak District National Park
- 3.7. Policy NE1 relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states that the Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:
- a) there is no appropriate alternative site available; and
 - b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
 - c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
 - d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.
- 3.8. Policy NE1 goes on to state that all development will be expected to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of safeguarding the green belt, securing high quality design, delivering rural housing, safeguarding highway safety and securing a net gain to biodiversity. The NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is referenced within the Statement of Case below.

SMD/2014/0786 – Shawe Farm, Ipstones

- 4.2. The above application proposed the conversion and alteration of the same building that is subject of this application to a dwellinghouse. Planning consent was refused. The local Authority's conclusions in the determination of that application have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and are referenced within the Planning Assessment below.

Appeal Decision 3177540 - Old Furnace Farm, Greendale, Oakamoor

- 4.3. The above appeal related to an application (SMD/2016/0644) for the conversion and alteration of a utilitarian former agricultural building on the above site to residential use, including the formation of a new pitched roof. The application was refused by the Local Authority on the grounds that the building was not worthy in character or architectural terms for conversion. The appeal was allowed, and the conclusions of that appeal decision are referenced within the Planning Assessment below, as the building involved is not dissimilar in character and appearance to the one included in this application.

SMD/2017/0706 – Barns at Harveys Lane, Kingsley Moor

- 4.4. The above application related to the conversion of a utilitarian former agricultural building to residential use that is of a character and appearance that is not dissimilar to the building included in this application. The conclusions of the Local Authority in its assessment of that application are referenced within the Planning Assessment below.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Green Belt

- 5.1. The application seeks full planning permission for conversion and alteration of an existing building within the Green Belt to create a single dwellinghouse. Paragraph 150 of the NPPF confirms that the reuse of buildings that are of a permanent and substantial construction is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that the use preserves its openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 5.2. The application is accompanied by a Structural Survey prepared by SBS Structural Engineers which confirms that the building is suitable for conversion to residential use subject to the minor remedial works identified within the report.

The building furthermore appears to have been in situ on this site for approximately 100 years, first appearing on the 1924 Edition of the Ordnance Survey. The building proposed for conversion is therefore of a permanent and substantial construction. The Local Authority concluded likewise in its assessment of application SMD/2014/0786 commenting that “the building does appear to be solid and stable”.

- 5.3. Owing to the strong degree of vegetative enclosure of the land around the building, in particular the proposed area of domestic curtilage that extends to the south and east of the building, it is considered that no adverse impact to the openness of the green belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it will occur. In reaching this conclusion it is noted that the Local Authority did not raise any concerns about the impact of that development on the green belt in its assessment of application SMD/2014/0786. The proposed reuse of the existing building as a dwellinghouse therefore amounts to an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 150 of the NPPF and policy SS10 of the Local Plan.
- 5.4. The application also proposes the replacement of the existing corrugated roof with a new tiled roof, and the replacement of a small subservient section of building at its southern end. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF makes provision for the extension and alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The existing building constitutes the original building for the purposes of this assessment, and the proposed replacement roof and re-building of the southern part of the building will only modestly increase the height and volume of the building (2.5%). The extent of those works are therefore not considered to amount to a disproportionate addition to the original building.
- 5.5. As the extent of the domestic curtilage is unaltered from that which was proposed under SMD/2014/0786, and given that the building remains structurally sound, it is concluded that the proposed reuse of the existing building for residential purposes would not give rise to any adverse impact to the openness of the green belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it. The proposal therefore amounts to an appropriate form of development within the green belt that accords with policy SS10 of the Local Plan and paragraph 150 of the NPPF.

Rural Housing

- 5.6. Policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan allow for the conversion of existing rural buildings to residential use within the rural areas, provided that the building is worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. In determining application SMD/2014/0786 the Local Authority concluded that the building was worthy in physical and architectural terms for conversion, but felt the building was not worthy in character terms for conversion. Concerns were also raised that there had been no exploration of alternative commercial uses, as required at the time by policy R2 of the former Core Strategy.

- 5.7. The adoption of the new Local Plan in 2020 saw the provisions of policy R2 of the Core Strategy replaced with Policy H1 of the new Local Plan, which has removed the requirement for alternative commercial uses to be explored, and consequently that element of the previous reason for refusal can be set aside. It is also submitted that recent decisions within the District for the conversion of buildings of a similar style to the existing building have served to demonstrate that this building can be reasonably considered to worthy in character terms for conversion.
- 5.8. Attention is drawn first and foremost to the Local Authority's approval of consent for the conversion of former agricultural buildings at Harveys Lane, Kingsley Moor (SMD/2017/0706) to residential use. The principle building in question has a very similar appearance to the building within this current application, constructed from red brick with a corrugated roof above. Images of the building are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below. That permission also granted consent for the conversion of an adjacent blockwork building to provide ancillary residential accommodation to serve the proposed dwelling (see Image 3). In granting consent for the development, the Local Authority concluded that:

"In this case, it is considered that the brick building is worthy in physical and character terms for conversion. Whilst the other buildings to be retained are not of any particular merit, these would provide ancillary accommodation only (home gym, utility room, changing room, storage area and hobby room)".

Image 1 – Existing Building at Harveys Lane, Kingsley Moor



Image 2 – Existing Building at Harveys Lane, Kingsley Moor



Image 3 – Existing Blockwork Building at Harveys Lane, Kingsley Moor



- 5.9. Given the very close similarities between the building at Harveys Lane, and the building proposed for conversion at Shawe Farm (compared in Image 4 below), it is only reasonable to similarly conclude that the latter building is also worthy in character terms for conversion. Indeed, one could reasonably argue that the building at Shawe Farm is *more characterful*, exhibiting traditional hopper windows and having a historic relationship to the adjacent cluster of buildings - characteristics that the building at Harveys Lane did not exhibit.

Image 4 – Comparison of Proposed Building and Harveys Lane Building

Shawe Farm



Harveys Lane



- 5.10. Attention is also drawn to appeal decision 3177540 for the conversion and alteration of a former agricultural building at Old Furnace Farm, Oakamoor. The application incorporated the removal of an existing corrugated roof, and its replacement with a taller, steeper roof so as to accommodate roof tiles and rooms within the roofspace. The application was refused by the Local Authority on the grounds that the building was not worthy in architectural and character terms for conversion. An image of the building is shown in Image 5 overleaf. The blockwork building in the foreground was proposed for removal as part of that application, with the existing roof of the brickwork building to be increased in height as shown on the extract of the approved plans in Image 6.
- 5.11. In allowing the appeal the Planning Inspector concluded that:

"The barn is largely screened in private and public views by a block-built building attached to its side. However, it is clear from full inspection that the building's good quality pointed brickwork, varied openings and overhanging eaves denotes a building that whilst simple in design is a reasonably attractive example of an agricultural building from the middle of the last century that complements the farmhouse nearby. I therefore find that physically, architecturally and in terms of character it is suitable and worthy for conversion".

Image 5 – Existing Building at Old Furnace Farm



Image 6 – Extract of Approved Plans at Old Furnace Farm



- 5.12. The building proposed for conversion at Shawe Farm is likewise simple in design, with good quality brickwork, and represents a reasonably attractive example of an agricultural building dating from the beginning of the last century (the building first appearing on the 1924 Edition of the Ordnance Survey). It is consequently contended that the above appeal decision reinforces the conclusion that the existing building at Shawe Farm is worthy in character terms for conversion and lends substantial weight in favour of the proposed development.

- 5.13. The submitted proposal also represents an opportunity, in line with the objectives of policies SS1 and DC1 of the Local Plan, to improve the character of the building by replacing the existing corrugated sheeting with a new Staffordshire Blue tiled roof. Doing so will enhance the appearance of the building and give it a stronger visual assimilation with the adjacent buildings to the west which also have Staffordshire Blue tiled roofs. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies H1 and SS10 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.14. The submitted proposal adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion of the building, making beneficial reuse of existing openings and avoiding the requirement for any new windows, rooflights or doors. The modest increase in the height of the building is also sensitive to the character and appearance of the area and will provide the building with a traditional tiled roof that will assimilate positively with its surroundings and enhance its appearance. Traditional style hopper windows are also proposed into the existing openings to further reinforce the agrarian character of the building. A small subservient part of the building is proposed to be rebuilt, with the ridgeline increased to the height of the existing building, akin to the scheme approved at Harveys Lane (discussed above). This is not considered to be contentious.
- 5.15. The siting of the building will not give rise to any adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity, as the nearest neighbours lie sufficiently distant to avoid any conflict with the local authority's space about dwelling standards. The proposed garden area furthermore exceeds the minimum requirement of 65 square metres. The internal floor area of the building is also noted to exceed the minimum floorspace requirements set out in the DCLG Technical Housing Standards, and consequently it can be reasonably concluded that the proposed development will not give rise to any residential amenity concerns.
- 5.16. It is furthermore noted that the Local Authority did not raise any concerns in respect of the design or layout of the development in its assessment of application SMD/2014/0736 which encompassed a very similar design to that proposed in this application. The submitted proposal is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, H1, DC1 and DC3 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.17. The application proposes the formation of an off-street parking area with space for two vehicles, along with associated manoeuvring space so that vehicles can exit the site in a forward gear. There is good visibility on egress in both directions onto the existing track and consequently no adverse harm to highway safety will ensue.
- 5.18. No concerns were raised in the assessment of application SMD/2014/0736 about the location of the building in terms of proximity to day-to-day services with the site found to constitute a sustainable location. The same rings true to this present day. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the

requirements of paragraphs 110 and 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Biodiversity

- 5.19. The application is accompanied by a Bat Survey prepared by Ardea Ecology Ltd. which concludes that there was no evidence of bats roosting within the building. A subsequent evening emergence survey likewise found no evidence of emerging bats. The building has therefore been deemed to have a negligible / low value for bats and its conversion to residential will not give rise to any adverse impacts to local biodiversity.
- 5.20. Bat enhancement measures are identified within the report in the form of a crevice style bat box which is to be sited on the southern elevation of the building, as close to the apex as possible. The delivery of these bat enhancement measures can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition, and in doing so the development will accord with the provisions of policy NE1 of the Local Plan.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The submitted proposal constitutes an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt and is of a scale, massing, design and layout that will not detract from the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers. The proposal is also acceptable from a highway safety and biodiversity perspective.
- 6.2. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS10, H1, DC1, DC3 and NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.