

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PARKFIELDS FARM
CHERRY LANE, CHEADLE**

SEPTEMBER 2021

Site Address:

Parkfields Farm, Cherry Lane, Cheadle, ST10 4QS

Applicant:

HG, PA and RJ Whitehurst

Proposal:

Conversion and alteration of former agricultural buildings to form 5no.
dwellinghouses and associated works

Planning, Design & Access Statement:

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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 HG, PA and RJ Whitehurst to seek full planning permission for the conversion and alteration of a 'T' shaped range of former agricultural buildings at Parkfields Farm, Cherry Lane, Cheadle to create 5no. dwellinghouses.
- 1.2 Unit 1 will have a gross floor area of 134 square metres, and comprise of a lounge, dining room, kitchen and study at ground floor, with stairs leading up to two bedrooms, each with ensuite bathroom, at first floor. The dwelling will have a pedestrian access off the shared courtyard to its west, with an area of private amenity space to its east that extends to 124 square metres.
- 1.3 Unit 2 will have a gross floor area of 178 square metres, and comprise of a hall / lobby, dining room, kitchen, w.c and lounge at ground floor, with stairs leading up to three bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor. The dwelling will have a pedestrian access off the shared courtyard to its west, with an area of private amenity space to its east that extends to 77 square metres.
- 1.4 Unit 3 will have a gross floor area of 131 square metres, and comprise of a kitchen / diner, w.c. hallway, study and lounge at ground floor, with stairs leading up to three bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor. The dwelling will have its pedestrian access located to the north, with an area of amenity space (47 square metres) and parking alongside. The dwelling will also benefit from a separate area of private amenity space to its south that extends to an additional 48 square metres.
- 1.5 Unit 4 will have a gross floor area of 103 square metres, and comprise of a hall / lobby, kitchen / diner, living room and bathroom at ground floor, with
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stairs leading up to two bedrooms and a bathroom at first floor. The dwelling will have a pedestrian access off the shared courtyard to its south, with an area of private amenity space to its north that extends to 74 square metres.

1.6 Unit 5 will have a gross floor area of 137 square metres, and comprise of a hallway, ensuite bedroom, and open plan lounge / kitchen / diner at ground floor, with stairs leading up to an additional bedroom and bathroom within the roofspace. The dwelling will have a pedestrian access off the shared car parking area to its south, with an area of private amenity space to its west and north that extends to some 92 square metres.

1.7 To the west / southwest of the building and its existing courtyard, it is proposed to create a shared car parking area in place of an existing portal framed building that currently occupies the site. The shared car parking area will provide 10 off-street parking spaces to serve the proposed development and will be separated from the courtyard by a brick wall. No car parking is to be provided within the existing courtyard immediately to the west / south of the building, which is to be retained as an open area, free of vehicles and any form of subdivision.

1.8 The application is accompanied by the following documentation which should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement:

- Structural Survey (Fairclough Consulting Engineers)
- Heritage Statement (Philip Heath Heritage Consultant)
- Bat and Bird Survey (Tamworth Property Services)

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site comprises a 'T' shaped range of former brick and tile agricultural buildings that lie to the north of the existing Grade II Listed Farmhouse at Parkfields Farm. The buildings are two storey in nature and along with a more modern portal framed agricultural building, enclose an existing courtyard area to the immediate south and west of the buildings.
- 2.2 Vehicular access to the site is taken off Cherry Lane via a long straight access that services both the farmhouse (Parkfields Farmhouse), a nearby bungalow (Copper Beaches), as well as the existing buildings and farmyard. A cluster of portal framed buildings lie to the east of the brick and tile range of buildings, with further buildings to the northeast. More recently constructed portal framed agricultural buildings lie more distant to the north beyond the existing vehicular access that wraps around the northern flank of the buildings.
- 2.3 The site as a whole is located within the open countryside as defined by the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan. The buildings are curtilage listed with the main farmhouse benefitting from status as a Grade II Listed Building. Approximately 10m to the southwest of the farmhouse lies a gazebo which is also Grade II Listed. The existing cluster of buildings is otherwise surrounded by open fields, with the nearest neighbouring properties being Hales Hall (Grade II*) and its adjacent Coach House and Stables (Grade II), which lie approximately 180 metres to the west on the western side of Cherry Lane.

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 this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan 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, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- *a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities*
- *quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers;*
- *easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community;*
- *increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce;*

- *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;*
- *development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.*
- *support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon*

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan 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. This will be achieved via a number of actions, including:

- *Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H1*
- *Allowing suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with Policy DC2*

3.4 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Housing Provision' and states that in the other rural areas only the following forms of housing development will be permitted:

- a) Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H3*
- b) 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.*
- c) 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.*
- d) The conversion of rural buildings for residential use 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.*
- e) Proposals to redevelop previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value.*
- f) The subdivision of an existing residential dwelling provided it is not in an isolated location.*

3.5 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan 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*
- *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, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping, as well as noise, odour and light pollution.*
- *provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.*

3.6 Policy DC2 of the Local Plan relates to 'The Historic Environment' and states that:

1. *The Council will conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets, including their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance. This will take into account the desirability of maintaining and enhancing their*

significance and will ensure that development proposals contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment.

- 2. Protection will be given to designated heritage assets and their settings and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF.*
- 3. All applications likely to affect heritage assets will require the submission of a heritage statement, including a qualitative visual assessment where appropriate.*
- 4. Where development is likely to affect archaeology, both designated and undesignated, the Council requires the submission of a desk based assessment, and where appropriate, field surveys and trench evaluation by a qualified professional.*
- 5. Where the loss of significance is unavoidable, recording should take place and this should be added to the Historic Environment Record as a minimum, held by Staffordshire County Council.*
- 6. The Council will continue its proactive approach to heritage assets at risk and welcomes development proposals which would result in the sympathetic reuse of these assets in line with NPPF policy.*
- 7. The Council will promote development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area and those interests of acknowledged importance through the use of Conservation Area Appraisals, Design Guidance and Statements, Archaeological Assessments, Characterisation Studies and Masterplanning.*

3.7 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to “Biodiversity and Geological Resources’ and states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by (amongst other measures):

- *Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. 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) here 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.*
- *Expecting all development where possible seeks 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 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The recently revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of safeguarding heritage assets, securing the sustainable reuse of buildings, delivering rural housing, securing high quality design, safeguarding highway safety and ensuring a net gain to biodiversity. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Guide SPD

- 4.2 The adopted Design Guide SPD provides advice aimed at securing the delivery of high-quality built development within the District and provides therein specific guidance in respect of conversion schemes. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Principles for Development SPG

- 4.3 The adopted Design Principles for Development SPG was the forerunner to the Design Guide SPD and is still applied as supplementary guidance by the Local Authority. It incorporates guidance on the conversion of rural buildings and has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

DCLG Technical Housing Standards

- 4.4 The Technical Housing Standards identify minimum floorspace requirements that new dwellinghouses should meet in the interests of providing a satisfactory level of residential amenity for future occupiers. The content of the Technical Housing Standards document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is referenced within the Planning Assessment section below.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 Policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan support the conversion of rural buildings to residential use where the buildings are considered to be 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 enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.
- 5.2 The existing buildings comprise of a 'T' shaped range of traditional, two storey, brick and tile former agricultural buildings that are listed by association to the adjacent Grade II Listed Parkfields Farmhouse. The buildings are of a traditional character, with a visually pleasing aesthetic, and are evidently worthy in architectural and character terms for conversion.
- 5.3 The accompanying Structural Survey prepared by Fairclough Consulting Engineers furthermore demonstrates that the buildings are worthy in physical terms for conversion, noting that they are in a good structural condition that can be adequately converted to habitable use without extensive rebuilding. Some minor areas of rebuilding works are identified where the elevations have bowed, but these represent less than 7.5% of the total area of the elevations so cannot be considered to represent 'substantial' rebuilding works. The building is consequently of a permanent and substantial construction and suitable for conversion in physical terms. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan.
- 5.4 In addition, the proposal will not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside, as the dwellings will be located in close proximity to the existing farmhouse to the south, and the nearby bungalow to the southwest,

and will furthermore lie within 1.5km of the centre of Cheadle where a full range of local day-to-day services are on offer. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 80 of the NPPF.

- 5.5 Notwithstanding the above, if the Local Authority were to disagree, and conclude that the proposal would result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside, the application is still considered to be acceptable, as paragraph 80 of the NPPF allows for the creation of isolated homes where the development would reuse redundant or disused buildings and result in an enhancement to its immediate setting, and / or where they development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset. In this case the proposal would involve the reuse of redundant buildings and would demonstrably enhance their setting by removing poor quality later additions to the south elevation, and the removal of the large portal framed building to its southwest. The proposal will also secure the viable reuse of the existing buildings which constitute heritage assets.

Design & Layout

- 5.6 The adopted Design Guide SPD states that:

“The guiding principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting should be respected and retained. This means that that in most cases the barn, mill or chapel should afterwards look like a converted barn, mill or chapel, and not like a new house or a new block of flats. When converting traditional buildings, new uses should not normally require the construction of extensions or ancillary buildings. However, if alterations are necessary and approached carefully, it may be possible to bring about a new

understanding of historic buildings by making a clear distinction between what is old and what is new”.

- 5.7 The submitted proposal embraces the above philosophy and adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion of the buildings, informed by the advice of a Heritage Consultant, so that it makes beneficial reuse of existing openings, adapting them where appropriate, and keeps new openings to a minimum. Where new openings are proposed they are of a style and character that reinforces the appearance of the existing building, with flush fitting rooflights utilised on the least conspicuous roof slopes in the interests of minimising harm to the character and appearance of the buildings. The development also works positively with the internal layout of the building to minimise the requirement for internal physical alterations wherever possible.
- 5.8 The proposal also takes the opportunity to remove a number of unsympathetic additions that have been added to the buildings over time, including the removal of a single storey extension off the southern elevation of the building to reveal its original two storey elevation, the removal of a portal framed building on the western side of the courtyard, and the removal of a portal framed lean-to on the southern/eastern side of the building. In doing so the development takes the opportunity to enhance the appearance of the building and its setting, and reveal the original building.
- 5.9 The original ‘T’ shaped layout of the buildings will be preserved by the proposed development, with the poorer quality previous additions removed as stated above. The central courtyard to the south and west of the building is to be retained and will be kept free from vehicles and maintained as a shared amenity space laid to hardstanding, enclosed by a wall on its western side. A separate parking area is to be created to the west, with two spaces for each property provided.

- 5.10 The buildings are currently surrounded by a number of more utilitarian portal framed agricultural buildings, which for ease of reference are labelled in Figure 1 below. The applicant proposes to demolish Buildings 1, 2 and 6 to provide relief to the buildings and enhance their setting. Building 3 is currently proposed to be retained, with the applicant intending to pursue a Class Q conversion in the near future. Buildings 4 and 5 are to be retained in agricultural use and will be used for the storage of agricultural implements, hay and straw. There is no livestock on the farm. The farm holding extends to approximately 111 hectares and is farmed as grassland and fodder. By resultant effect of buildings 1, 2 and 6 being demolished, the future occupiers of the dwellings will be afforded an acceptable level of residential amenity and will not be adversely affected by agricultural activities on the site.
- 5.11 Each of the dwellings will be afforded a gross internal floor area that exceeds the minimum requirement set out within the DCLG Technical Housing Standard (as required by policy H1) and will furthermore be provided with areas of private amenity space that exceed the minimum requirement of 65 square metres. The layout of the dwellings also ensures that no overlooking of private amenity spaces or conflict with the Local Authority's space about dwellings standards will ensue, and as a consequence future occupiers of the dwellings will be afforded an acceptable level of residential amenity, in accordance with policy DC1 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Impacts

- 5.12 Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a

minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

5.13 The NPPF goes on to state in paragraph 197 (reflecting the provisions of policy DC2 of the Local Plan) that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

5.14 This application has been prepared in accordance with advice and recommendations provided by the applicant's appointed Heritage Consultant (Philip Heath) who has also prepared a Heritage Statement to accompany the application. The Heritage Statement concludes that:

"The scheme will free the buildings from the 20th century additions that have gradually been engulfing them and will enable them once more to be fully appreciated as complementary to the house as part of a single-date farmstead with later additions. Existing openings and structural subdivisions are respected, and the private gardens are discreetly placed to avoid harm to the setting of the house or the surroundings in general. I consider that the buildings are

suitable for a residential scheme and that it provides an optimum viable use for buildings which have become redundant”.

- 5.15 The proposal is therefore in accordance with the provisions of policy DC2 of the Local Plan and guidance set out within paragraphs 194 and 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highway Safety

- 5.16 The buildings are served by the existing vehicular access that serves the wider farmyard as well as the nearby farmhouse and detached bungalow. The access connects with Cherry Lane at its westernmost end and has good forward visibility and opportunities for vehicles to pass one another. Its reuse to serve the proposed dwellings will not give rise to any severe residual impacts to highway safety. In addition, the application proposes a minimum of two parking spaces for each of the dwellings thereby ensuring that no demand for on-street parking will arise because of the development. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 110 and 111 of the NPPF.

Ecology impacts

- 5.17 The application is accompanied by a Bat and Bird Survey which has assessed the potential of the existing buildings for bats and birds. The survey confirms evidence of bats using parts of the buildings as a place of shelter, with potential roosting opportunities also identified. Bat Activity (Emergence) surveys were subsequently undertaken to determine if bats were emerging from a roost and to assess overall bat activity across the site.
- 5.18 The Bat Survey confirmed evidence of the building being used by bats, and as a consequence a licence from Natural England will be required before

carrying out any works of conversion. To mitigate the impact of the development it is recommended that a bat loft be created within the development, as well as the installation of a brick-built bat box into the gable apex of the building, and new bird nesting opportunities.

- 5.19 The applicant is agreeable to implementing the recommended mitigation measures which can be secured by way of an appropriately worded condition. In doing so the development will secure a net gain to biodiversity and meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural, and character terms for conversion and will not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside.
- The proposal adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion of the existing buildings, making beneficial reuse of existing openings and minimising new openings so as to safeguard the agrarian character and appearance of the buildings or the surrounding area.
- The proposed development will provide an acceptable level of residential amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling.
- The proposal will not give rise to a material loss of significance to these buildings as heritage assets.
- The proposed means of access is acceptable and sufficient off-street parking will be provided to meet the needs of the development.
- The accompanying Bat and Bird survey demonstrates that the impact of the development on protected species will be appropriately mitigated and a net gain to biodiversity secured.

- 6.2 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies SS1, SS10, H1, DC1, DC2 and NE1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the SMDC Design Guide SPD and Design Principles for New Development SPG.