

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0533
Valid 11/08/2021

SHAWE FARM
SHAWE PARK ROAD
KINGSLEY HOLT

PROPOSED BARN
CONVERSION

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- Whether the proposal is acceptable in respect of housing policies.
- Impact on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Impact on highway safety.
- Impact on ecology.
- Impact on the setting of an adjacent Listed Building.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises a detached single storey brick built former agricultural barn with a corrugated pitched roof. The barn is rectangular in shape and is sited 30 metres to the east of the farmhouse. To the north/northwest of the farmhouse is a Grade II Listed stable building. 16 metres to the southwest of the barn is a detached bungalow ('The Bungalow'). The group of buildings are surrounded by fields and woodland and are accessed via a very long single width track from Shawe Park Road to the southeast. The application site is located in the North Staffordshire Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the barn to a dwellinghouse.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

- SS1 Development Principles
 - 1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- DC1 Design Considerations
- DC2 The Historic Environment
- H1 New Housing Development
- T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 - 14

Section(s) 4, 12, 13

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2014/0786 Conversion of redundant farm building to residential bungalow
Refused 11/02/2015

DET/2015/0007 Conversion of agricultural building to dwelling
Withdrawn 14/04/2015

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 17/09/2021

Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A

Press Advert: 15/09/2021

Public Comments: None

Town / Parish Comments: Kingsley Parish Council – no objection.

Conservation Officer: Due to work commitments I do not propose to comment on this application unless required.

Severn Trent Water: No objection to the proposals and do not require a drainage condition to be applied.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2021) identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental. In accordance with policies SS1 and 1a of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, the Council will expect all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protecting, and where possible, enhancing the environment. When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF (2021).

The application site is located in the Open Countryside and Green Belt whereby policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that 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.

Part (1) of policy SS10 seeks to meet housing requirements and specific need by 'allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H 1'. The principle of the development is therefore considered acceptable, as it will comply with policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020).

Housing Policy

Part (5) of policy H1 of the Local Plan (2020) relates to new housing located in the other rural areas in the Open Countryside and states that only those types of housing development that are listed will be permitted. One such housing type that is of relevance to this application is:

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.

The previously refused application SMD/2014/0786 for the conversion of the barn to a dwellinghouse was considered against policy R2 of the Core Strategy. Policy R2 had a different criteria for the conversion of rural buildings, namely:

'The conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use 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. In such cases there will be a requirement for a marketing exercise to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional or other evidence that the building would be unsuitable for a commercial use; or*
- conversion to residential use would enable a building of particular merit to be safeguarded.'*

The 2014 planning application was refused as it was considered that the proposal did not meet policy R2 of the Core Strategy. In doing so, the Conservation Officer

noted that the building was not of any historic interest and the Planning Officer stated:

'Policy R2 allows the conversion of buildings of particular merit to be converted to dwellings. I do not consider this building falls under this category. Furthermore, although it could be argued that the building is suitable for conversion physically and architecturally (it has red brick walls and a pitched roof similar to many buildings in the area), the building does not possess much character particularly due to the modern corrugated replacement roof which deprives it of a traditional rural appearance that would make otherwise make it in keeping with the surrounding traditional agricultural buildings.'

In response to this, the submitted Planning Statement has provided two examples of utilitarian agricultural buildings that have been granted planning permission to be converted to a dwellinghouse.

The first example is application SMD/2016/0644 at Old Furnace Farm, Greendale, Oakamoor. This application was refused by the Local Planning Authority but was subsequently allowed on appeal, with the Planning Inspector stating:

'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'.



Barn approved for conversion to a dwellinghouse at Old Furnace farm.

The second example is application SMD/2017/0706 in respect of the barns at Harveys Lane, Kingsley Moor. The submitted Planning Statement outlines that the principle building in question has a very similar appearance to the building the subject of this application and is constructed of red brick with a corrugated roof. The Planning Officer stated in their report:

'In this case, it is considered that the brick building is worthy in physical and character terms for conversion.'

Shawe Farm



Harveys Lane



Comparison of the barn approved for conversion to a dwellinghouse at Harveys Lane and the barn the subject of this planning application.

Both of these previous decisions are considered to comprise material considerations in the determination of this application, particularly the barn conversion at Harveys Lane where the building is almost identical in appearance.

A Structural Survey report has been submitted with the planning application that outlines the works required to the existing structure in order for the conversion to take place. The proposed conversion is physically capable of being undertaken without extensive repair.

On this basis, it is considered that the building, whilst comprising a simple utilitarian building, does have some character and therefore its conversion to a dwellinghouse would comply with policy H1 of the Local Plan (2020) as it will involve the conversion of a building that is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms.

Green Belt

The application site is located in the Green Belt whereby policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) and chapter 13 of the NPPF (2021) are applicable. Part (6) of policy SS10 states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

The proposal is for the conversion of a former agricultural building to a dwellinghouse. It will also involve the demolition of an existing single storey outrigger

to the southern end of the building and its replacement with a single storey extension, and the re-roofing of the building.

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021) states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it complies with a number of exceptions. One such exception is:

(c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Paragraph 150 of the NPPF (2021) outlines that ‘*certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it*’. One such exception is:

(d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

The demolition of the single storey southern outrigger and its replacement with a single storey extension will not result in a disproportionate addition. The footprint of the proposed extension will be the same as the outrigger to be demolished, with only a minor increase in volume due to the increase in the eaves and ridge height of the extension’s roof. The re-roofing of the building from corrugated sheeting to plain clay tiles will not result in an increase in the overall height of the building or alter the roof pitch. This will therefore also not result in a disproportionate addition.

The proposed conversion will utilise the existing building. As previously stated, a structural survey has been submitted with the planning application that demonstrates that the building is of permanent and substantial construction. The minor increase in the eaves and ridge height of the proposed replacement extension will not significantly increase the bulk of the building nor will it adversely affect openness. The proposed conversion will utilise an existing area of hardstanding for the parking of vehicles and any boundary treatments will comprise timber post and rail fences that are synonymous with the countryside and therefore they will not affect the openness of the Green Belt.

Whilst domestic gardens can have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt from garden paraphernalia, this will have a similar impact on openness than the outside storage that is usually associated with an agricultural building.

The proposed dwellinghouse’s garden and parking area will not lead to encroachment, as the land is associated with the current use of the barn with an area of hardstanding already in-situ where the parking and patio are to be located and an existing agricultural building positioned on part of the garden. Its change to garden/parking area will therefore not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, as identified at paragraph 134 of the NPPF (2019).

Permitted development rights for extensions and alterations to the existing building, outbuildings and hardstanding within the curtilage and the erection of gates, walls and fences should be removed, in order to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

It is for these reasons that the proposed development will meet an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and it will comply with policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) and chapter 13 of the NPPF (2021).

Design

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2021) requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture.

The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that the guiding principle behind the design of any conversion should be that the character of the original building and its setting be respected and retained. This means that in most cases the barn, mill or chapel should afterwards still look like a converted barn, mill or chapel, and not like a new house or a new block of flats.

The existing building was constructed at the beginning part of the 20th century. The building is single storey, rectangular in shape and constructed of brick with a corrugated sheeting pitched roof. A single storey outrigger with a lower eaves and ridge height is attached to the southern elevation of the building that is also constructed of brick with a corrugated sheeting roof. The building has a number of openings within its western and eastern sides, whilst the northern end is blank and a window is positioned in the southern end. Adjacent to the western and southern sides of the building is an area of hardstanding with grass beyond that is accessed via a metal 5-bar gate and is separated from the adjacent farmhouse and bungalow by a wooden post and rail fence. To the east of the barn is a grassed area on which there is constructed a detached, open-fronted corrugated metal agricultural building.

The proposed development will involve the demolition of the single storey outrigger and its replacement with a single storey extension of the same footprint. The eaves and ridge height of the roof will be increased to match the remainder of the existing building. The extension will be constructed of brick to match. The corrugated sheeting roofing material will be replaced with Staffordshire blue plain clay tiles. The existing openings within the building will be re-used with no new openings proposed within the building to be converted. The replacement extension will have the same configuration of openings as the existing structure. The windows and doors will be constructed of timber.

The use of Staffordshire blue plain clay tiles will improve the appearance of the existing barn and the proposed timber windows and doors will maintain the character of the building. The proposed development will maintain the character of the barn and will not significantly alter its original appearance. Conditions should be attached in respect of materials and the removal of permitted development rights to ensure that the building's appearance is not eroded in future by any unsympathetic additions.

The land to the west of the building will be reduced in size with a timber post and rail fence erected to demarcate the existing area of hardstanding that will be used for vehicle parking, and a further area closer to the gate to provide a turning area. The existing gate will be replaced. A small patio area will be provided to the south of the building that will again be demarcated by a post and rail fence. The building's private amenity space will be located to the east of the building. It will comprise an existing grassed area and the area occupied by an existing open-fronted corrugated agricultural building that is to be retained. Again, the garden area will be demarcated by a timber post and rail fence.

The relative size of the amenity space is not significant and is considered to be proportion to the size of dwelling proposed. It will comply with the size detailed within the Space About Dwellings SPG. The use of post and rail fencing for the boundary treatment will be in keeping with the rural area in which the building is sited. Conditions should be attached regarding the submission and implementation of a landscaping scheme and boundary treatments, and the removal of permitted development rights for gates, walls and fences and outbuildings in order to preserve the character of the building and its rural setting.

Subject to the imposition of such conditions, the proposed development is considered to comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Heritage

Policy DC2 of the Local Plan (2020) states that the Council will safeguard and where possible, enhance the historic environment by resisting development which would harm or be detrimental to the special character and historic heritage of the District's towns and villages and those interests of acknowledged importance; promoting development which sustains, respects or enhances buildings and features which contribute to the character or heritage of an area; and preventing the loss of buildings and features which make a positive contribution to the character or heritage of an area through appropriate re-use and sensitive development.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF (2021) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2021) states any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Approximately 30 metres to the northwest of the building is a Grade II Listed Building that comprises a red brick stable block dating from the late 18th century with minor 20th century alterations. Given the minor changes proposed to the existing building and the surrounding land, it is not considered that the proposed development will harm the setting of the Listed Building. The proposed development will therefore comply with policy DC2 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Amenity

Policy DC1 and paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF (2021) seek to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

To the west of the building is the farmhouse which has its front elevation facing towards the western side elevation of the barn. A distance of approximately 30 metres will be maintained between the two properties, exceeding the separation distance outlined within the Space About Dwellings SPG. The private amenity space associated with the dwellinghouse will be located on the eastern side of the building, thereby not affecting the farmhouse's amenity. The parking area for the dwellinghouse will be to the western side of the building, adjacent to the farmhouse's front elevation. However, a two-bedroom dwellinghouse is unlikely to generate a large number of trips; the parking area will be sited a significant distance from the farmhouse; and the farmhouse's own parking and turning area is sited in close proximity. It is for these reasons that the proposed development will not adversely affect the amenity of the farmhouse.

To the southwest of the application site is 'The Bungalow'. No openings within the proposed barn conversion will directly face the windows within the neighbouring property. The proposed patio area to the south of the barn will be sited adjacent to the driveway that leads towards 'The Bungalow' and therefore it will not result in an adversely impact on amenity. The proposed increase in the eaves and ridge height of the replacement extension to the south of the building will be marginal and no higher than the existing building and, given the separation distance between the two properties, will not adversely affect the amenity of 'The Bungalow'. The proposed parking area will lead to some vehicle noise disturbance and light pollution however, the number of vehicle trips will be low for a property of this size and the neighbouring property's own driveway and parking/turning area is sited closest to the application site. It is for these reasons that the proposed development will not adversely affect the amenity of the 'The Bungalow'.

It is for these reasons that the proposed development will comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021) in respect of amenity.

Highway Safety

Policies DC1 and T1 seek to achieve a level of parking and an access that is appropriate to the development it serves.

The dwellinghouse will utilise the existing access onto Shawe Park Road and the existing driveway that is currently used by both the farmhouse and 'The Bungalow'. An increase in the number of dwellings from two to three is not considered to raise any highway safety issues.

Appendix 2: Parking Standards of the Local Plan (2020) requires a dwellinghouse with up to three bedrooms to provide 2no. off-street parking spaces. The proposed dwellinghouse will have two bedrooms and 2no. parking spaces will be provided to the western side of the dwellinghouse.

Subject to a condition requiring the parking and turning area to be in-situ prior to the occupation of the dwellinghouse, the proposed development will not have a detrimental effect on highway safety and it will comply with policies DC1 and T1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Ecology

Policy NE1 outlines that the biodiversity of the District will be conserved and enhancement by positive management and the strict control of development by (1) protecting and enhancing habitats and species of principal importance for conservation; (2) ensuring development produces a net gain in biodiversity and; (3) any unavoidable impacts are mitigated.

The planning application is accompanied by a Bat Survey produced by ARDEA Ecology Ltd. The report outlines that bats are known to be present in the surrounding area but an emergence survey concluded that no bats were using the building to be converted and an internal inspection of the building did not find any evidence of bats.

In order to gain a net increase in biodiversity, the Bat Survey recommends that enhancement features suitable for roosting bats are incorporated into the scheme. Subject to a condition requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations contained in the Bat Survey, it is considered that the development will comply with policy NE1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021). As such the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to Conditions

Case Officer: Ailsa Berry

Recommendation Date: 17/11/2021

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

