

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0632
Valid 30/09/2021

SIMFIELD FARM GREENS
LANE
WERRINGTON

CONVERSION AND
ALTERATION OF
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO
FORM 1NO. DWELLINGHOUSE

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development (Green Belt)
- Design and visual impact
- Highways/parking provision
- Biodiversity and protected species
- Environmental Health including contamination

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site consists of a cluster of agricultural outbuildings sat to the south of Ash Bank Road and accessed via a lengthy farm track. The buildings are constructed from a mix of materials including bricks, tiles, timber and corrugated steel sheeting. The application subject building is constructed predominantly of brick and tile and at the time of the site visit was being used for livestock accommodation and storage.

For the purposes of planning policy consideration, the application site is located within the Green Belt. The site does not form part of any Conservation Area, there are no Listed Buildings/structures which need to be considered, nor are there any Tree Preservation Orders near to the building. It is noted that there is a Scheduled Ancient Monument to the west of the site, a former moated site which is believed to have been the residence of the de Verdon family prior to the construction of Alton Castle.

PROPOSAL

The application is for the conversion and alteration of the main brick and tile agricultural building to form a single residential property. At ground floor level there would be a lounge, dining room, WC, kitchen, utility, bedroom and shower room. At first floor level there would be a further two bedrooms and a bathroom. A parking area would be constructed, there would also be a patio area and a garden.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy

H1	New Housing Development
DC1	Design Considerations
DC2	The Historic Environment
DC3	Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1	Biodiversity and Geological Resources
T1	Development and Sustainable Transport
Appendix 2	Parking Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections;

- 2: Achieving sustainable development
- 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 6: Building a strong, competitive economy
- 9: Promoting sustainable transport
- 11: Making effective use of land
- 12: Achieving well-designed places
- 13: Protecting Green Belt land
- 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 26/11/2021

Neighbour consultation period ends: 27/10/2021.

Public Comments: No representations received within the statutory consultation period.

Werrington Parish Council: No representations received within the statutory consultation period.

Environmental Health: No objections subject to conditions.

Waste Services (SMDC): No issues regarding waste collection but note that bins may need to be presented at the end of the lane on collection days.

Conservation Officer: No representations received.

Staffordshire County Council Highways: No objections and no conditions.

Severn Trent Water: No representations received.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust: Initial holding objection. No objections following on from receipt of revised information. Conditions recommended.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Staffordshire Green Belt. Whilst the buildings are fairly secluded, they are not strictly within an isolated location. To the north is Ash Bank Road, a well established and built up residential ribbon of development on (for the main part) both sides of the road.

Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) deals with development in Green Belt areas. The NPPF is clear that Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) should ensure that substantial weight is given to any Green Belt harm and that LPA's should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless the scheme complies with one of the exceptions. One of the exceptions relevant to this application is '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. Other forms of development may also be acceptable provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.' One of the other forms of development include the 'the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.'

Local Plan policy SS10 allows for the 'conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H 1' and allows 'extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.'

Local Plan policy H1 is also relevant in that it allows for '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.

Design and visual impact

The main brick and tile section of the building occupies a roughly 'L' shaped footprint with a flat roof supported by timber posts and beams within the recessed section. This area is currently used for cattle shelter, it is clearly not part of the original building and will be removed. The original outer walls will be exposed and the space used as a garden and patio area.

The application is accompanied by a Structural Engineer's Report which concludes that 'the building is structurally suitable for conversion to habitable use without extensive re-building. The report explains that 'the elevations are mostly in a reasonable condition and will require only maintenance/re-pointing/and repair of old cracks'. There are parts of the building which are significantly bowed/distorted, the report states that these areas should be taken down and re-built, re-using the existing bricks. The report notes that the amount of re-building would be less than 10% of the total elevations of the building. It is understood

that a new roof structure will be required, that some of the foundations are shallow and underpinning will be needed. The plans also show that all of the flat roof above the brick sections of the building is to be replaced with a pitched one. In this case this course of action is considered acceptable. According to the structural report, the building will require a new roof structure anyway and in terms of visual impact, a pitched roof is much more preferable to a flat one. It is also noted that the original building had a pitched roof along both wings, but it is understood that this was removed and replaced by the flat roof for maintenance many years ago. The officer file contains a photograph of the previous 'L' shaped pitched roof; this image has been provided by the applicant. Replacing this pitched roof will undoubtedly be a visual improvement and go some way to restoring the building's original character.

In terms of barn conversion principles, the application is considered to be acceptable. A small number of roof lights (three) are proposed, serving a bedroom and a bathroom. Given the extent of roof coverage, three roof lights is not an excessive number. All new materials can be conditions, including joinery details and the re-use of bricks/tiles where necessary. Some new window openings are proposed but they are to be small and not excessive in number. The re-use of former openings is welcomed. A currently bricked up doorway within the western elevation is to be opened and re-used and two former doorways are to be fully glazed to form a floor to ceiling window (kitchen and bedroom 3).

There are no design objections to the proposed conversion subject to suitably worded conditions where necessary. There are no wider visual impact concerns. To the west of the site within a separate field, is an Ancient Scheduled Monument, a former moated site which is generally visible by the undulating land. Aerial photos show the depressions in the ground which is now simply a field. There are no significant above ground features. The proposed barn conversion would not result in any adverse historical or visual impact upon the moated site.

Highways/parking provision

The plans show two vehicles parked next to the proposed conversion building but the area appears to be large enough to accommodate three vehicles. There is land surrounding the building which could also be used for parking/turning if necessary. The proposal is for a three bedroom property, it is noted that the onsite parking provision will comply with the Local Plan Parking Standards.

The property is accessed off Ash Bank Road firstly by Green's Lane and then an unmade track leading to the application building. There are no proposals to alter this arrangement. The County Highways officer has no objections to the application and does not request any highways/parking planning conditions.

Biodiversity and protected species

A Bat and Bird Survey formed part of the initial submission. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) lodged a holding objection and required more information. An updated Bat and Bird Survey, Sewage Treatment Plant details and Site Plan (including drainage and planting scheme) have been submitted to try to address the SWT concerns. SWT have responded stating that they now have no objections to the application subject to a number of conditions.

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health officer has no objections to the application but does recommend a number of conditions. He notes that there may be some ground contamination but concludes that a full contamination assessment would appear too onerous. It is recommended that suitably worded conditions are imposed to ensure that all soft landscaped/garden areas are tested for contaminants to ensure suitability of use.

In terms of noise impact, there was initially some concern regarding the close proximity of another agricultural building which was outside the red edge of the application site. The building is however within the blue edge and, following on from enquiries, the applicant has confirmed that there is no intention of selling any of the land to a third party. In the event of the application being approved, it is considered reasonable (and agreed by the applicant) that a condition to prevent sale/let of the adjacent agricultural building is necessary. This will ensure that there are no neighbour noise issues and no conflict between the residential and agricultural uses of the site.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined within the report it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions. The proposed conversion is not inappropriate Green Belt development. According to the structural report, the building is suitable for a residential conversion without extensive rebuilding. Replacing the flat roof with a pitched one will improve the appearance of the building and will simply be replicating a roof type that has previously been in situ. A condition can control building materials. A condition to ensure that the adjacent agricultural building is not sold/let independently of the newly formed residential accommodation is necessary to ensure no residential/agricultural conflicts ie noise, as a noise assessment has not been carried out. It is understood that the adjacent agricultural shed and new residential accommodation will be within the same ownership/land control; the applicant has agreed to this condition.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Conditional approval.

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 26/11/2021

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council