

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0220
Valid 04/05/2021

LOWER WHITEMORE FARM
CONGLETON ROAD
BIDDULPH

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT
DWELLING AND
OUTBUILDINGS

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal is acceptable in principle.
- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- Impact on amenity.
- Impact of protect species and their habitats.
- Impact on existing trees and hedgerows.
- Impact on highway safety.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises a detached two-storey dwellinghouse sited alongside the northern boundary of the plot. To the east/southeast of the dwellinghouse is a large detached outbuilding of both single storey and two-storeys.

The dwellinghouse and the outbuilding are set within a large, secluded plot that slopes downwards from north to south. The buildings are accessed via a single track driveway that exits in the southeastern corner of the site. The site is accessed from Congleton Road to the east via a single private track access road, that passes under the railway line. The access road serves one other dwellinghouse, as well as a yard.

The dwellinghouse and the associated outbuilding were formerly a farmhouse and associated farm buildings. However, the farm ceased a number of years ago and the surrounding agricultural land is no longer associated with the site. The outbuildings were used by the former owner for domestic storage and garaging associated with the dwellinghouse.

The dwellinghouse is located in an isolated position, within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and the Open Countryside.

PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to demolish the existing detached dwellinghouse and associated detached outbuilding and to construct a replacement detached dwellinghouse and a replacement outbuilding.

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
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
H1 New Housing Development

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 - 14
Section(s) 4, 5, 12, 13, 15

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 15/06/2021
Neighbour consultation period ends: N/A
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments: None

Town / Parish Comments: Biddulph Town Council recommend approval subject to not contravening Green Belt, required conditions are met and it meets current expect mitigation measures, whilst highlighting concerns about non-agricultural or potential business use and whether such use does contravene.

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

United Utilities: Recommend the applicant implements the scheme in accordance with the surface water drainage hierarchy contained in the NPPG.

SCC Highways: No objection on highways grounds to this proposal.

AES Waste: No issues regarding waste collections. Note: Dwelling will be moving to bins to be presented near road on collection days.

Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions.

Asbestos: A Demolition or refurbishment asbestos survey and risk assessment should be carried out prior to the demolition/renovation of the existing buildings. The enforcing authority for this type of work is the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and it is recommended that you contact them directly to discuss their requirements: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>

Workshop: The application form indicates no commercial or industrial plant or machinery yet the equipment proposed are industrial in size and sound power levels have the potential to impact amenity during quieter periods of the day. The nearest residential properties are approx. 160m from the proposed workshop and although daytime noise is not likely to cause an issue as background noise levels reduce if the machinery noise is audible then complaint maybe likely. If the machinery is appropriately housed and attenuated and not used during the night then no adverse impact to amenity is predicted. We would recommend conditions are imposed on any permission granted.

Land contamination: A full contamination assessment would appear to onerous, however, it would be advisable that all soft landscaped / garden areas are tested for contaminants (including Asbestos screen) to ensure suitability of use areas conditions are recommended, notably the area that has been occupied by the previous building.

Nuisance: The granting of planning permission does not in any way indemnify against statutory nuisance action being taken should substantiated complaints within the remit of part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 be received.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust:

First Response: Holding objection - Further information/amendments required.

Required prior to determination:

1. Habitat survey of grassland, trees and hedgerows proposed for removal.
2. Outline plan for enhancement of traditional orchard and replacement hedgerow to show a net biodiversity gain OR provide a metric calculation.
3. Surface and foul drainage plan.
4. Further details of level changes/ spoil placement.
5. Further information on bat impacts and mitigation, to determine whether the 3 tests under the Habitat Regulations would be met.

Secure via condition should approval be granted in future:

1. As per the bat & bird ecology report:
 - a. Nesting bird check of buildings and vegetation prior to works commencing.
 - b. RAMS for great crested newts.
 - c. RAMS for mammals.
 - d. Bird box locations and type shown on plans.
 - e. A bat friendly lighting scheme.
2. Specific replacement bat roost/loft design plans, including reuse/addition of materials from existing roosts.
3. A soft landscaping scheme/ habitat plan detailing biodiversity enhancements.
4. CEMP detailing runoff and pollution prevention during construction phases.

5. Root Protection Areas (RPAs) for retained trees and hedgerows following BS 5837:2012 – Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction’.

Second Response (following the submission of various additional information): No objection subject to a condition in respect of nesting birds. The proposed enhancements are suitable to secure a net gain. Our other concerns have been suitably covered within the additional documents. Regarding bird and bat mitigation/enhancements, perhaps the outbuildings in the western end of the site could also be used to provide additional habitat features if restored.

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 needs by inter alia:

‘Restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with Policy H 1’; and

‘Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H1’.

Part (5) of policy H1 of the Local Plan (2020) relates to the provision of dwellinghouses in the countryside and lists the forms of housing that can be acceptable in principle in these locations, including:

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.

The principle of a replacement dwelling with replacement outbuildings is therefore considered to comply with policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan (2020).

Green Belt

The application site is located in the North Staffordshire 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 construction of a replacement dwellinghouse and a replacement outbuilding. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021) states that the construction of new buildings within the Green Belt comprise inappropriate development, unless the proposed development complies with the list of exceptions. One exception of relevance to this application is:

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

The existing buildings comprise a dwellinghouse and an associated outbuilding. It is proposed to replace these with a replacement dwellinghouse and a replacement outbuilding. The outbuilding was previously used for agricultural purposes associated with the site's former use as a farm. However, when this use ceased, the outbuilding was used as domestic storage and garaging purposes, incidental to the dwellinghouse, including the storage and restoration of the former owner's classic car collection. (This took place for at least the last 20 years and has been corroborated in a letter by the former owner). The Local Planning Authority has no evidence to counteract this claim and therefore it is considered that the use of the outbuilding was latterly used for purposes incidental to the dwellinghouse.

The proposed outbuilding will be used for a variety of uses including garaging, a gym, a home office and a workshop for use by the applicant as a woodworking studio to produce bespoke, one-off pieces of furniture. These uses are considered to be incidental to the dwellinghouse. The proposed replacement buildings will therefore be in the same use as the existing buildings they will replace.

In *R (on the application of the Heath & Hampstead Society) v Camden*, the Court ruled that 'materially larger' was a mathematical exercise and not one of perception.

A comparison of the replacement dwellinghouse to the existing dwellinghouse and the replacement outbuilding to the existing outbuilding, confirms the following changes in percentage increase/size:

	Existing Dwellinghouse	Proposed Dwellinghouse	Increase/ Decrease?
Floorspace	263m ²	320m ²	+21.9%
Footprint	146m ²	190m ²	+30%
Eaves Height*	4.3m	5.5m	+1.2m
Ridge Height*	7m	8.5m	+1.5m

	Existing Outbuilding	Proposed Outbuilding	Increase/ Decrease?
Floorspace	418m ²	419m ²	+0.4%
Footprint	393m ²	419m ²	+6.8%
Eaves Height*	1.8-4m	2.3-4m	0.1-0.5m
Ridge Height*	3.5-5.4m	4-5.7m	0.4-0.5m

* Due to the sloping nature of the land, the heights of the existing and proposed buildings vary.

A size comparison of the existing versus proposed buildings indicates that the replacement buildings will not be materially larger than the buildings they will replace. The proposed development therefore complies with one of the exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt contained at paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021). The development therefore complies with policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020).

Character and Appearance of the Area

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.

Policy DC3 of the Local Plan seeks to protect and where possible, enhance local landscape and the setting of settlements, resisting development that will lead to a 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.

Policy SS10 of the Local Plan seeks to enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

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 replacement dwellinghouse will be sited further to the south than the existing dwellinghouse; further away from the northern boundary. This is to ensure that the building is sufficiently clear of the steep slope to the rear which is causing damp problems within the existing dwellinghouse. Due to the sloping nature of the land, the house will be constructed on top of a retaining wall to the front and will have level access to the rear.

The replacement dwellinghouse will have a double-fronted appearance, with the front door set centrally within an open-sided porch with a window to either side. The windows within the first floor will have half dormers above. A covered, open-sided veranda with a mono-pitch roof will be attached to parts of the western and southern elevations of the dwellinghouse. The dwellinghouse is proposed to be constructed of render above a brick plinth with a slate pitched roof. Solar panels are proposed on the southern roof slope. A chimney will be positioned on the eastern side elevation, whilst a flue for a log burner will be positioned on the western side elevation.

The existing dwellinghouse is constructed of brick that has been painted white, with a pitched roof covered in Staffordshire Blue clay tiles, and render and slate hanging tiles to the side elevation. The existing dwellinghouse is not a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area and therefore its demolition is accepted. The design of the replacement dwellinghouse is similar to the dwelling it will replace with half dormers to the front elevation and render to the exterior walls. The use of Staffordshire Blue clay tiles, which are traditionally to the area, are preferred than slates, but this can be conditioned accordingly.

The application site is secluded and therefore the existing dwellinghouse is not visible from the adjacent private access track/PRoW, and the surrounding land is heavily wooded and rises upwards from the site, preventing any long-distant views. No other properties are located in close proximity. Consequently the design of the replacement dwellinghouse does not need to reflect any existing buildings. The proposed design, scale and materials of the replacement dwellinghouse is therefore considered acceptable.

To the east/southeast of the existing dwellinghouse is a large detached outbuilding. It formerly comprised agricultural outbuildings, but has been extended sporadically over the years with a mismatch of designs and materials. Due to the sloping nature of the land, the building is constructed on a variety of different levels with internal floor levels at different heights. The building wraps around a central courtyard, with an access within the northwestern corner. The building comprises a mix of single storey and two-storey buildings, predominantly constructed of brick, some of which have been painted white, although there are also elements of more modern metal sheeting. The roofs are pitched and covered in a variety of materials, whilst the doors are a mix of stainless steel roller shutter doors and traditional wooden barn doors. The building is in a dilapidated state.

It is proposed to replace this building with a new building that occupies a similar footprint. The building will be subdivided into three sections with the section closest to the house providing garaging and stores, the middle section providing a music room and gym, and the lower section comprising a woodworking workshop for the

applicant who makes bespoke pieces of furniture. The building has been designed in three connecting sections to place each section on a different ground level.

The replacement outbuilding will be single storey with shallow pitched roofs. Solar panels are proposed on the southern roof slope of the workshop building. Although the outbuilding has a large footprint, it is similar in scale to the existing outbuilding that it will replace and its height will ensure that it appears subservient to the existing dwellinghouse.

As with the proposed dwellinghouse, the existing outbuilding is not highly visible from the adjacent private access track/PRoW as there is a steep bank that rises upwards along the eastern boundary that is highly vegetated with hedging and trees. The replacement outbuilding will improve the appearance of the countryside by removing a dilapidated building that detracts from the character of the area. Materials should be conditioned to ensure they are appropriate in terms of the building's rural location and the building's proximity to the proposed replacement dwellinghouse. Subject to such a condition being attached, it is not considered that the proposed replacement outbuilding will have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

It is for these reasons that the proposed development is considered to comply with policies DC1, H1 and SS10 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.

The application site is in an isolated location, with no neighbouring properties located in close proximity. The proposed redevelopment of the site will therefore not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring amenity in respect of light, privacy or an overbearing effect.

Environmental Health has assessed the application and noted that part of the proposed outbuilding is to be used as a workshop. The Planning Officer requested additional information in respect of this use and the type of machinery to be housed within the building. The applicant explained that the workshop will be used by himself for woodworking purposes. The applicant makes bespoke one-off items of furniture that he sells online. No-one will be employed by the applicant and no customers will visit the property. The only vehicles that will come and go from the property will be a van that will deliver the wood and another van (i.e. courier) that will infrequently pick up an item of furniture that has been made and deliver it. A list of the types of equipment that will be present within the building has been provided within the Design & Access Statement. From the information provided by the applicant, the Planning Officer is satisfied that the workshop will be incidental to the dwellinghouse and it will not form a separate business use that requires planning permission in its own right.

The nearest residential dwelling is located approximately 165 metres away from the proposed workshop. Subject to a condition in respect of noise levels for the proposed machinery and a further condition requiring the workshop to remain incidental to the dwellinghouse and not result in a separate business use requiring planning permission, it is not considered that the proposed workshop will have a detrimental effect on neighbouring amenity in respect of noise.

Part (3) of policy H1 of the Local Plan (2020) states, inter alia:

d) All new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis subject to considerations such as viability and design.

e) All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.

The proposed replacement dwellinghouse will comprise a two-storey, 4 bedroom, 8 person dwellinghouse. The Nationally Described Space Standards outlines that a property of this size should have a minimum internal floorspace of 124m². The proposed dwellinghouse exceeds this floorspace. In addition, the plot in which the dwellinghouse will be sited is substantial and therefore it exceeds the minimum garden size prescribed by the Space About Dwellings SPG. The proposed dwellinghouse will therefore provide an acceptable level of amenity to future occupants.

For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that the proposed development will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties or the amenity of future occupants. The proposed development will therefore comply with policies DC1 and H1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Highways

Part (7) of policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) seeks to provide safe and satisfactory accesses and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.

Prior to submitting their consultation response, the Highway Engineer requested additional information from the applicant in respect of the proposed workshop use and whether it will generate an increase in vehicle trips. The applicant explained that there will be no employees and that vehicle movements in respect of the workshop will be infrequent; one to deliver wood and another to pick up the item of furniture for delivery.

The Highways Engineer assessed the application and made the following comments:

'The property is located on a private access track which serves Lower Whitemore Farm (application site) and Upper Whitemore Farm. The nearest adopted highway is Congleton Road; an A class road (Road No. A0527) with a speed limit of 40mph and is a primary route from Stoke on Trent to Congleton.

;

The proposal is for the replacement of the existing 4 bedroom detached dwelling (former farmhouse), outbuilding and workshop. The replacement dwelling will have 4 bedrooms, a replacement outbuilding to provide a gym/music room, store and WC, a proposed replacement workshop which will provide an office, kitchenette and WC and the refurbishment of an existing outbuilding for storage and garage

The application form states there is parking for 6 vehicles on-site although parking and turning are not identified on submitted plans. However, it is considered that given the size and location of the property that parking, and vehicle manoeuvres will be managed within the site.

It is also noted that the proposal intends to redirect the driveway within the site, it would appear no changes are proposed to the current access arrangements onto the private access track.

Although there will be an increase in trips to the property accessing the track off/on A0527 it is considered the proposal will not cause a significant increase.

It is considered the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the adopted highway and therefore I have no objection.'

It is for these reasons that 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 supported by an Ecological Appraisal dated 13/09/2021, Supplementary Ecological Information (including GCN RAMS, Mammal RAMS, bird boxes and Bats – the 'Three Tests' and compensation strategy) dated 02/12/2021, Orchard Information, and a Construction Environmental Management Plan dated 15/11/2021.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust assessed the application and made the following comments in respect of the revised information that was submitted:

'No objection subject to a condition in respect of nesting birds. The proposed enhancements are suitable to secure a net gain. Our other concerns have been suitably covered within the additional documents. Regarding bird and bat mitigation/enhancements, perhaps the outbuildings in the western end of the site could also be used to provide additional habitat features if restored.'

Evidence of three species of bat were seen to emerge and return to roost during the activity surveys around the existing dwellinghouse; common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and natterer's bat. The demolition of the existing dwellinghouse will therefore result in the destruction of all roosts currently present in the house. To address the impacts, mitigation and compensation measures will be implemented to ensure that individual bats are protected from harm and there is no net loss of roosting opportunities in the long-term. A licence will be required from Natural England prior to the commencement of development.

A Mitigation Strategy for bats is detailed within chapter 5 of the Ecological Appraisal which states how and when the existing dwellinghouse will be demolished; the provision of temporary replacement roosting features; and the creation of a permanent roost within the loft space of the garage building.

The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places:

(a) in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment; and provided that there is:

(b) no satisfactory alternative; and

(c) no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Natural England's standing advice is that, if a (conditioned) development appears to fail the three tests in the Habitats Directive, then LPAs should consider whether Natural England is likely to grant a licence: if unlikely, then the LPA should refuse permission: if likely, then the LPA can conclude that no impediment to planning permission arises under the Directive and Regulations.

The development will result in the loss of existing bat roosts within the roof of the existing dwellinghouse as it is proposed to be demolished. The existing dwellinghouse is in a poor state of repair and is uninhabitable. The replacement of the dwellinghouse is in the public interest to meet the Government's agenda of providing more homes in England. It is also in the public interest to replace the existing dwellinghouse and provide a new roosting feature in order to provide the best possible future for the bats, as to let the roof deteriorate further will result in the bat roosts being adversely affected due to water ingress and damp. The redevelopment of the site will provide economic benefits to the economy for tradespeople and those supplying building materials. There are also social public benefits

as the former farmstead will be brought back into use and prevented from deteriorating further.

The existing dwellinghouse is suffering from subsidence; there are large cracks and the roof is in disrepair; it is water damaged and full of damp; and the external ground level is higher than the internal finished floor level in multiple areas without adequate tanking. The existing dwellinghouse is uninhabitable in its current state and it is not cost effective to undertake the necessary works. Furthermore, undertaking the remedial structural works to the dwellinghouse will impact on the bats and their roosts as the existing roof would need to be removed and replaced. There is therefore no satisfactory alternative to the proposed works.

The surveys identified the building as being used by 9no. common pipistrelle bats, 7no. soprano pipistrelle bats, and 3no. natterer's bat. These are low in number. Pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats are both common species within the UK, whilst the natterer's bat is widespread across the UK. It is proposed to incorporate mitigation and compensation measures into the development to ensure demolition works are undertaken outside of the main bat breeding/hibernating seasons; to provide a temporary alternative roost during this time; and to create a replacement roost within the loft area of the garage section of the proposed outbuilding.

Given the low numbers of bats present; the types of bat using the roof of the building; and the mitigation and compensation measures proposed, it is considered that the development will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range.

On this basis, it is considered that the development will meet the 'three tests' in the Habitats Directive and therefore it is likely that Natural England will grant a license for the required works.

Subject to the imposition of conditions requested by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and that the development is undertaken in accordance with the recommendations, mitigation and compensation measures, it is considered that the proposed development will comply with policy NE1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Trees and Hedgerows

Policy NE2 of the Local Plan (2020) seeks to protect existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows from loss or deterioration. This will be achieved by requiring them to be retained and integrated within a proposed development unless the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh their loss. It goes on to state that the Council will refer to its adopted Tree Strategy in the consideration of proposals and will seek to retain as many trees and as much hedgerow on site as possible.

Policy 2.2.6 of the Council's adopted Tree Strategy states that *'the Council will not normally grant planning permission for development proposals which directly or indirectly threaten trees of significant amenity unless there is overriding justification to do so'*.

The application is supported by an Arboricultural Report dated December 2021. The report concludes that the development will result in the removal of a small number of Category C trees and that the removal of these trees has no implications for the tree cover at the site. It states that the Category C trees are unremarkable trees of very limited merit or such impaired condition that they do not qualify in higher categories. They offer low or only temporary/transient landscape benefits.

The report goes on to state that although the replacement dwellinghouse will be sited on a new footprint, there are no issues affecting retained trees. The existing workshop building can be demolished also without any disturbance. The replacement workshop building will be away from the current embankment and its relocation will have no impact on tree retention. A new retaining wall will be required for the outbuilding but this will be constructed on the existing building's foundations and therefore has no implications for tree retention.

A method statement has been appended at Appendix B, and subject to a condition requiring the development to be undertaken in accordance with these recommendations, the proposed development will not adversely affect the wellbeing of existing trees. The proposed development will therefore comply with policy NE2 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle and will not comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt. There are no issues in respect of highway safety. Providing conditions are attached in respect of materials, ecology, amenity and trees, the proposed development will comply with the relevant policies contained in the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

An informative should be attached, should permission be granted, to make the applicant/developer aware that they will have to apply for a bat licence from Natural England prior to the commencement of development.

The application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE subject to Conditions

Case Officer: Ailsa Berry

Recommendation Date: 28/01/2022

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

