

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0221
Valid 19/05/2021

KNOWSLEY FARM
KNOWSLEY ROAD
STANLEY

CONVERSION OF A FORMER MILKING PARLOUR INTO ANCILLARY RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION. RECONSTRUCTION OF EXISTING BOOT ROOM WITH THERMAL STRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION OF A SMALL SIDE EXTENSION. THE ALTERATIONS TO THE EXISTING DWELLING SERVE TO EXTEND AND IMPROVE THE EXISTING 3RD BEDROOM AND BATHROOM ACCOMMODATION

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Green Belt
- Design
- Character and appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Modest two storey pre-1900 brick farm house cement rendered / painted with a range of single storey attached and detached brick outbuildings. Rural ridge location surrounded by fields; Knowsley Common (registered public common land) opposite; scattered similar lone-farmsteads, the nearest being at c.130m to the north and to the west.

PROPOSAL

Extension to the dwelling; conversion of attached former shippon to living accommodation. Various amended plans received in response to consultees / LPA. Supported by detailed site condition report from the appointed architects (36pp). Also, preliminary ecological appraisal and follow up bat emergence activity survey submitted.

Materials – repairs to existing retained brickwork. Application of external render to improve thermal performance of existing dwelling only. The converted Milking Parlour (shippon) will be internally insulated.

Existing roof tiles retained and repaired.

Windows to existing dwelling to be replaced with double glazed sash windows.
Windows to milking parlour to be replaced with double glazed casement windows.

An existing block work garage c.7m x 7m (dwg AS(0)11 rev P1) with mono-pitch roof is to be built up to form gables to the east and west (facing the road) allowing a dual pitch roof in traditional Staffordshire tiling to match the older farmstead buildings. Walls to be clad externally in timber boarding.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 The Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
H1 New Housing Development
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework February 2019

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14;
Section(s) 4 – Decision making; 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities; 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.

Adopted Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance (SPD/G):

- Space About Dwellings SPG
- Design Principles SPG
- Design Guide SPD adopted 21st February 2018

Local Plan Supporting Evidence Documents:

- Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

79/07767/OLDDC Re-building of replacement shed / garage – approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 13th July 2021

Neighbour consultation period ends: 9th June 2021

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

One representation in support saying the current building is an eye sore and it will be transformed into a beautiful home. Also, that the designs look in keeping with the area.

Town / Parish Comments

Cheddleton Parish Council – no objection – providing the ecological report is satisfactory.

Severn Trent Water

Minimal impact on the public sewer system therefore no objections and no requirement for a drainage condition.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objections subject to conditions

- Details of parking and turning to be submitted
- Any gates to be 5m rear of the highway edge

Having 4 bedrooms will require 3 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m each space) for residents and visitors within the curtilage of the dwelling. The application does not demonstrate parking for 3 vehicles and a turning area – based on one garage accommodating a tractor.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) report (Apex Ecology May 2021) included survey of the farmhouse and milking parlour. The latter is shown by the survey as being of high bat roosting potential. As per the report and current guidelines, a minimum of three presence/absence surveys are required to confidently rule out the presence of bats. These are missing from the application and are required prior to determination.

The proposals also include alterations to the garage (outbuilding 4) and outbuilding 2 (building numbers taken from 20-054-BPA-DR-AS(0)05 Existing Outbuilding Plans). These buildings are not included in the PRA bat report and need assessing for bat and bird nesting potential.

If bats are found to be roosting within the structure, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England will be required, in addition to a suitable bat mitigation, compensation, and enhancement plan.

Summary:

1. Further bat surveys (three presence/absence surveys) of milking parlour which has high bat potential.
2. Survey of the garage and outbuilding 2 for bats and birds.
3. If bats are found to be roosting, an EPS licence and a detailed mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement plan for bats.
4. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the wider site to check for potential impacts to other protected species and to assess Biodiversity Net Gain.

5. Confirmation of the location and construction of the proposed package treatment plant.
6. The recommendations for birds within the PRA report, replacement nesting features, a detailed landscaping plan and drainage scheme should be secured via condition.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Being within the Green Belt, extensions are supported in principle by reference to local plan policy SS10 and NPPF para 149 (c), subject to not resulting in disproportionate additions. NPPF 150(d) allows the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

The two inserted extensions add 12m² in ground plan area to the original dwelling of 54m². This equates to a c.22% increase and on that basis is not resulting in disproportionate additions. The proposed extensions are shown properly recessed or inset relative to their respective adjacent original north and south elevations. Although there is first floor accommodation over both extensions this has set-down eaves relative to the original dwelling and uses dormers to provide internal height. The extensions overall are modest and proportionate to the original dwelling and therefore acceptable in principle in the Green Belt.

As the dormer additions are to the rear and attached to roof slopes which are set down and set in from the sides, they will not be prominent features and raise no significant conflicts in terms of character and appearance for the host dwelling and its place in the local scene.

The addition of a dual-pitched roof to the existing block work garage will take its height from 3m at the higher eaves point to c.4.8m at the ridge with a new eaves height of 2.7m. It would become a more noticeable building visible from the road but in design appearance would be much improved. The volume would be increased as a result of the roof and eaves height adjustments by c. 48m³ or c.37% over the original. The alteration to the roof could be assessed as appearing a disproportionate addition but, given the design form improvements, can be considered acceptable.

It needs to be noted that the garage has at some time past been built out into the adjacent field from the farmstead curtilage. Air photos show it present at least since 2003. It appears likely it was built as a garage and has therefore been in use as a garage for in excess of 10 years and is immune from any enforcement action. Although the site red edge has been shown in the submitted site and block plan drawings as including land between the garage and the roadside boundary to the west the application description does not propose any change in its use and as it is part of a field in the open countryside and in the Green Belt a condition should be attached to make clear that this permission (if granted) does not approve the incorporation of this field into the residential planning unit.

The conversion of the attached shippon outbuilding to habitable accommodation is acceptable in principle in the Green Belt on basis that it is of permanent and substantial construction.

In terms of character and appearance the brick former shippon, although appearing largely original in plan as shown on the pre-1900 maps, has had a 20thC shippon (likely 1950s / 1960s) inserted internally along with modified windows likely also from this time. The proposal scheme largely utilises the existing openings but inserts a wider French door window in place of the boarded traditional door to the south elevation; adds a picture window to a currently blank window on the east gable, and inserts three rooflights on the north roof slope. The LPA sought amendments to reduce the size of the rooflights and to adopt the larger picture window rather than a high level horizontal window first proposed. These are all arguably compromises with the Council's adopted guidance on rural building conversion design guidance. As noted though, the building has been previously altered. Also, the farmstead building group has not been recorded on the Staffordshire Farmstead survey and, whilst it is open to regard the building or the farmstead as a non-designated heritage asset, even doing so and assessing under DC2 and NPPF para. 203 it can be concluded that the changes are not undermining a particular significance in this case. The changes would also have very limited public visibility probably confined to the roof lights alone.

Design

In part addressed under the last paragraph above but also to note that the fenestration of the farm house is kept traditional in its design basis in keeping with the building. Various other details show the design finish is intended to up-grade the existing eg black coated aluminium rain goods in place of existing plastic; improved boundary treatments etc..

Although the addition of render to a brick building is normally found to be out of character with the Staffordshire Moorlands tradition, the existing dwelling has already been rendered (with the exception of the north facing elevation and part of the east). The submitted condition report discusses render in detail at s.6 and says:

"The external walls to the main dwelling are partly rendered in a lime washed render which has been overpainted. This render and paint is peeling off the walls due to damp penetration. The render appears to be cementitious and so is not allowing the main walls to breath which is contributing to internal damp and peeling and degradation of the rendered surface.

The front elevation is described as:

"...overclad with approx. 50mm of stone facings which is painted over with a slurry render.

At 6.5 the report discusses options and proposes:

"Removal of the existing render and application of an Insulated render, it is suggested that the insulation is breathable and the render applied is also through coloured and breathable to allow moisture to move outwards. The internal wall lining could then be a plasterboard dry lining with an unvented void. This would provide a much improved U value, and result in less lost internal space.

Given the existing condition and difficulties to be resolved of damp retained and trapped in the solid walls by the existing render / facings it would not be appropriate to

resist the proposed new replacement 'breathable' render in this case. The alternative would be to simply remove the previous coverings to reveal brickwork to breath but the brick will not withstand the process as can be seen (file photos 136 to 139).

Amenity

With no near neighbours, there are no conflicts with neighbours' living conditions.

Highway Safety

Although SCC Highways raise a point about one garage space being used for a tractor, overall the LPA can accept – noting the available yard space – that sufficient turning and yard space would be retained to meet the parking needs.

Ecology

The further survey in response to the preliminary findings concludes:

A common pipistrelle bat roost has been found associated with the building [the milking parlour / former shippon] during the surveys. As the building offers high roosting potential associated gaps at the ridge tiles, gaps in the brickwork and at the eaves, then a precautionary and licensed approach to roof and wall dismantling works is advised and set out in the following chapter.

The recommendations at s.4 of the applicants' submitted ecology report need to be followed.

Further submitted drawing AA(2)201 details a proposed roof ridge tile void for new bat roost opportunities.

Also attach nesting birds informative.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above the application can be recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **approve**

Case Officer: Arne Swithenbank

Recommendation Date: 02.02.2020

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Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council