

Planning Statement

Refurbishment and alterations to existing farmhouse together
with conversion of adjacent barn and link extension
to form a single dwellinghouse
Stone Barn Farm, Sutherland Road, Longsdon
For Mr. & Mrs. Bateman

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hewitt & Carr Services has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Bateman to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany a planning application prepared by Hewitt & Carr Architects for the conversion and alteration of a former agricultural building and formation of link extension to the existing farmhouse at Stone Barn Farm, Sutherland Road, Longsdon.
- 1.2. The application represents a resubmission following the withdrawal of application SMD/2021/0843 which had also proposed the conversion and alteration of a former agricultural building and formation of link extension, but which raised concerns with the Local Authority in respect of the size of the link extension and extent / nature of alterations to the agricultural building.
- 1.3. This revised application responds positively to the concerns raised by the Local Authority under that previous application, and incorporates the following works:
 - Blocking up of existing doorway in south elevation of dwellinghouse
 - Removal of existing lean to extension and erection of a single storey link extension connecting to the agricultural building, with a set back from the south elevation of the farmhouse.
 - Demolition of poor quality front extension to the former agricultural building. Insertion of new windows and doors into existing openings on the west elevation of the agricultural building, along with the formation of a new doorway and blocking up of existing opening.
 - Insertion of 2no. conservation rooflights to west facing roof slope of former agricultural building and 1no. conservation rooflight into east facing roof slope.
- 1.4. The resultant accommodation of the dwelling will comprise of a lounge, study, playroom, entrance hall, utility / boot room, w.c, shower room, kitchen / dining room, bedroom, snug and outside store at ground floor, with four bedrooms (one ensuite) and family bathroom at first floor.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site lies within the North Staffordshire Green Belt and comprises a detached two storey farmhouse with a rectangular form that lies on the eastern side of Sutherland Road. The dwelling is constructed from a mixture of coursed stone and red brick and has a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof. To the east of the farmhouse lies a two storey former agricultural building constructed from coursed stone with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof atop. An unsympathetic flat roofed extension projects off its western elevation. The existing farmhouse abuts up to the northern site boundary beyond which lies open fields. A post and rail

fence encloses the southern site boundary. Sutherland Road encloses the western boundary of the site, beyond which lies a row of residential properties (Claremont / Carfield / Laureston / Selwyn).

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance to the determination of this application:
- 3.2. Policy SS1 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 (amongst other matters):
 - a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
 - 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
- 3.3. Policy SS10 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. The policy goes on to state that housing requirements will be met by allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policy H1. The policy also states that strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as set out in Government guidance.
- 3.4. Policy H1 relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that in the rural areas, the conversion of rural buildings will be permitted 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.
- 3.5. Policy DC1 relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall 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 Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):

- 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, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of safeguarding the green belt, securing high quality design, safeguarding highway safety and securing a net gain to biodiversity. The NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application and is referenced within the Statement of Case below.

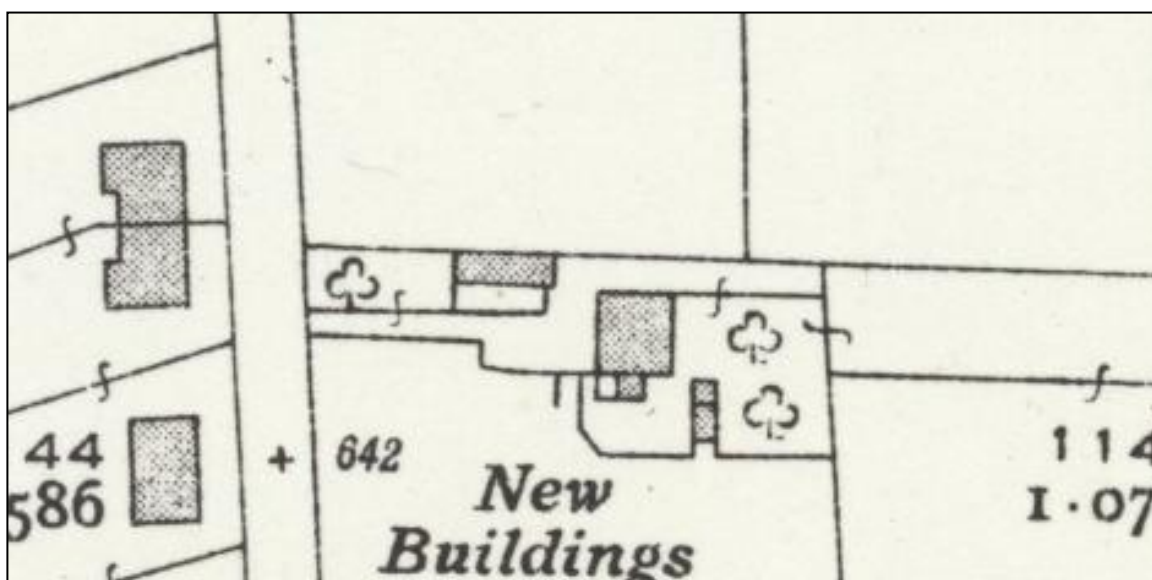
5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 5.1. The application seeks full planning permission for conversion and alteration of a former agricultural building and formation of link extension to connect it to the existing farmhouse, on a site that is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan states that strict control will be exercised over inappropriate development in the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.
- 5.2. Paragraph 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the reuse of buildings that are of a permanent and substantial construction is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided that the use preserves its openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 5.3. The accompanying Structural Survey serves to demonstrate that the existing barn is of a permanent and substantial construction and is entirely suitable for conversion to habitable use. The proposed reuse of this building to provide additional living accommodation will furthermore not derive any adverse impact to the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it. The conversion of the agricultural building therefore amounts to an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt, in accordance with paragraph 150 of the NPPF and policy SS10 of the Local Plan.

- 5.4. In terms of the link extension, paragraph 149 of the NPPF allows for 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. In this particular case there are two 'original buildings' on this site – the farmhouse and the agricultural building. The application proposes to link the two together.
- 5.5. A review of historic Ordnance Survey maps serves to confirm that the main two storey form of the existing farmhouse, *including* its taller two storey side extension, constitute the original building for the purposes of assessing Green Belt policy (see the 1937 Ordnance Survey extract in Figure 1). The only previous additions to that building are its front porch and an existing lean-to off the east elevation. The original building has a volume of 273 cubic metres, with the previous additions amounting to some 34 cubic metres (an increase in size of 12% over and above the size of the original building).

Figure 1 – Extract of 1937 Ordnance Survey (Source; National Library Scotland)



- 5.6. The same Ordnance Survey map also serves to demonstrate that the existing agricultural building constitutes the 'original' building, aside from an unsympathetic flat roofed extension off its western elevation which is proposed for removal in any event. The original volume of that building amounts to some 504 cubic metres.
- 5.7. Cumulatively the two *original buildings* on the site have a volume of 777 cubic metres. The proposed link extension (119 cubic metres) coupled with the previous additions to the farmhouse (less the lean-to off its eastern elevation which is being removed) represent a net increase in size of some 129 cubic metres. The total volumetric increase to the original buildings therefore amounts to some 16%. These figures are summarised in Figure 2 below for ease of reference.

Figure 2 – Appraisal of Volumes

Original house	273 cubic metres
Original Barn	504 cubic metres
Cumulative original	777 cubic metres
Previous Additions to farmhouse	10 cubic metres (net after demolition)
Proposed Extension	119 cubic metres
Total Additions	129 cubic metres
% over Original Buildings	16%

- 5.8. Having regard to the above, it is concluded that the proposed link extension will not amount to a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original buildings, and thus amounts to an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 149 of the NPPF and policy SS10 of the Local Plan.
- 5.9. The submitted proposal also accords with the provisions of policy H1 of the Local Plan in that the proposal involves the reuse of a building that is worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The structural survey confirms that the building is physically suitable for conversion, whilst the traditional character of the building with its coursed stone and Staffordshire blue tiled roof renders the building worthy for conversion in architectural and character terms. The principle of development is therefore acceptable and meets the requirements of policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.10. The previously submitted application had proposed a link extension that had a large, bulky two storey form that the Local Authority concluded would dominate both the barn and the farmhouse. The Local Authority was also concerned that the extension was not subservient and would be highly prominent in the streetscene. Concerns were also raised about the introduction of modern large windows and the number of rooflights (10no.) and the provision of a large dormer window on the rear roof slope of the barn.
- 5.11. It was recommended that the link extension be substantially reduced in scale and set back from the front elevations of the farmhouse and the barn and be single storey in nature so that the farmhouse and barn can still be read as two separate buildings. It was also recommended that the number of rooflights be reduced, and that the large dormer window be removed.
- 5.12. The revised proposal responds positively to these recommendations, with the link extension dramatically reduced in size such that it now encompasses a single storey form, with an eaves line and ridge line that are wholly subservient to the host buildings on either side. The link extension will also be set back from the front elevation of the farmhouse and the barn such that they will remain the dominant features within the site.

- 5.13. The elevations of the barn have also been revised, with the dormer window omitted entirely, and the number of rooflights reduced to three. The fenestration has also been revised to ensure it is less domestic in character and in the main makes beneficial reuse of existing openings.
- 5.14. By making these revisions the proposal is now of a scale, massing, design, and layout that is in keeping with the character and appearance of the host buildings and the wider surrounding area. The proposed development consequently meets the requirements of policy DC1 of the Local Plan.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The proposed conversion and alteration of the existing agricultural building to residential use, coupled with the proposed link extension and other alterations, amounts to an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. The scale, massing, design and layout of the development is also in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing buildings and the wider surrounding area. The proposal consequently meets the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, H1 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.