

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0231
Valid 27/06/2022

BARN CONVERSION
UPPER HOUSE FARM
SALTERS LANE
WERRINGTON

PROPOSED CONVERSION OF A
REDUNDANT AGRICULTURAL
BARN INTO A TWO BEDROOM
DWELLING.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact;
- Amenity (including neighbour amenity);
- Highways/parking;
- Coal risk area;
- Biodiversity

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Detached stone and tile out building with brick and tile lean-to extension at the rear. The building is accessed via a lengthy driveway which is shared with Upper House Farm. There is hardstanding/parking space to the front and side of the building and an open area of grassland at the rear. The existing Upper House Farm dwelling is located across the yard area to the south east of the application building and sits at a lower land level.

It is noted that the application site is within the Green Belt and it also lies within an area designated as a low-risk coal development area. The subject building is not listed and there are no surrounding listed structures which need to be considered. The site is not within a Conservation Area and is not identified as being within any flood zone.

PROPOSAL

The change of use of an existing redundant barn from agricultural use to a two bedroomed dwelling. On the ground floor there would be a boiler/store room, lounge, open-plan kitchen/dining area, utility and shower room. On the first floor there would be two bedrooms (master with ensuite and dressing room). there would be a garden and parking area (two spaces) to the rear of the dwelling. Access would be a shared arrangement, via a lengthy driveway currently serving Upper House Farm.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

SS1	Development Principles.
SS10	Other Rural Areas Strategy
H 1	New Housing Development
DC1	Design Considerations

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
- 12: Achieving well-designed places
13. Protecting Green Belt land
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2015/0031	Conversion of redundant barn into two bedroom dwelling. Approved.
SMD/2021/0394	Application for removal or variation of a condition following grant of DET/2015/0031. Pending.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 15/9/2022.
Neighbour consultation period. Expired.

Public Comments: No representations received during the statutory determination period.

Werrington Parish Council: No representations received during the statutory determination period.

Waste Services (SMDC): No representations received during the statutory determination period.

Highways (SCC): No objections subject to condition.

Severn Trent Water: No representations received during the statutory determination period.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust: No representations received during the statutory determination period.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Green Belt, accessed off Salter's Lane and is on the southern side of the Werrington settlement. The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph number 150) states 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.' Relevant to this application is part D, 'the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.'

Local Plan policies SS10 and H1 are also applicable in considering the principle of development. SS10 states there is support for 'the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H 1.' Policy H1 informs that support can be given to '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.'

This application is for the re-use of an existing building which does appear to be of 'permanent and substantial construction.' The application is accompanied by a Structural Survey (dated June 2022). The report indicates that some structural work would be needed for the conversion to take place including (but not limited to) roof maintenance, replacement of lintels where needed, some small areas of stone wall rebuilding, mortar joints repointed where necessary and foundation underpinning if required.

The works appear typical for a building of this age with the survey concluding that 'we can confirm that the building structure is capable of conversion without the need for extensive demolition and rebuilding.'

In terms of its Green Belt location, the site is outside of the Werrington settlement boundary but isn't too far from it. Another matter to consider is the planning history of the site. In 2015 a Prior approval application was approved under Class Q for the residential conversion of the building. The Class Q application unfortunately lapsed, hence the reason for the current application. It is borne in mind that another Prior approval application could be submitted (having potential for approval) without the need to consider 'in principle' matters.

For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that the application is acceptable and does not propose inappropriate Green Belt development.

Design and visual impact

The plans show that the scheme works with the character and appearance of the existing building. No extensions are proposed and existing window and door openings are maintained, again retaining character. Rooflights are proposed on the front and rear roof slopes however these do not appear to be excessive in number. The applicant proposes the addition of two solar panels. Preferably these would have been located on the rear roof slope, but practically the rear would not be a good location due to its northern facing direction. The panels are located on the left hand side of the front roof slope (when looking at the front of the building)

and is perhaps the least imposing area of the roof slope on the frontage. Visually the eye is drawn towards the main front door upon entering the site.

Where possible conditions can be added to ensure suitable materials use. With regards to windows and doors joinery details, reference is made on the drawings to possible use of the Timeless Heritage Range 'or similar flush casements' however, the application does not have any specific joinery details and a condition is recommended to secure sections details including glazing bars/opening mechanisms and the recess depths of windows within the wall openings. No details are submitted regarding the main front entrance door.

In terms of wider visual impact there are no issues. The building is not visually prominent from Salter's Lane. Footpath number 27 (Werrington) passes immediately to the west of the building. Users of the path would have good opportunity to view the building however the acceptable design of the scheme means that there are no concerns

Amenity (including neighbour amenity)

The nearest neighbouring dwelling is that of Upper House Farm to the south-east. This application is for an independent dwelling, not an annex so amenity between the two properties must be considered. There are no direct facing windows and no adverse overlooking relationships.

In terms of amenity for occupants of the proposed dwelling there would be a garden at the rear and parking area for two vehicles.

Highways/parking

The County Highways officer has no objections to the application. No alterations are proposed for the main Salter's Lane access and two parking spaces are provided at the rear of the proposed dwelling. A condition is recommended to secure the parking/turning area prior to first occupation of the proposed dwelling.

Coal risk area

The application site lies within an area designated as a low-risk coal development area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. It is recommended that in the event of planning permission being approved, that informative notes are added to the decision to remind/inform the applicant/developer of their responsibilities.

Biodiversity

The application is accompanied by a Bat Survey undertaken by Ardea Ecology LTD in September 2021. The survey reveals that the building has a low roost potential for bats and that no bat roosts were present at the time of the survey. The survey also states that no signs of bats were found internally or externally and no further survey works were considered necessary at the time.

The report goes on to say that 'the presence of bats is considered to be negligible, the re-development of the building is unlikely to impact bat roosts or foraging habitat as the development site is composed of an existing building and surrounding hardstanding and lawn; mature trees and hedgerows are located to the north and west of the building, however these will be unaffected by the proposed works. The predicted impact of development is therefore not considered to impact bats or their roosts at the current time.'

It must be noted that part of the report states that 'should a period of 12 months of inactivity pass then an updated survey is recommended,' however there is not any 'inactivity' at this site. During the site visit, the building was inspected. It is clear that there is frequent activity both inside and outside of the building. Given that the building has been identified as having a low-roost potential for bats it is considered that the findings of the survey can reasonably

still be considered relevant. In any event it is possible to add informative notes to the decision to remind the applicant/developer of their responsibilities regarding development and bats.

Land at the rear of the building (earmarked as garden use) is overgrown and at the time of the site visit had a vehicle parked upon it. A landscaping condition would be reasonable.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve with conditions**

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 16th September 2022

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council