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PLANNING STATEMENT INCLUDING MATTERS OF DESIGN AND ACCESS

PROPOSAL : **FULL APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF BARN TO FORM SINGLE DWELLING WITH ASSOCIATED OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PROVISION OF AMENITY AND PARKING SPACE AND HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING WORKS**

ADDRESS : **UPPER PARK FARM, PARK LANE, IPSTONES, ST10 2NE,**

APPLICANT : **MR & MRS S STOKES**

DATE : **SEPTEMBER 2022** **JOB No. : 2021-2662**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sammons Architectural Ltd have been appointed by Mr & Mrs Stokes to prepare and submit a full planning application for the change of use of an agricultural barn at Upper Park Farm, Park Lane, Ipstones to a single dwelling with associated alterations, provision of amenity and parking space and hard and soft landscaping works.

The application is accompanied by drawings numbered 2021-2622-01, 2021-2622-02D, 2021-2622-03, technical manufacturers details in relation to the proposed conservation style rooflights and a bat survey undertaken by Elite Ecology (July 2022) which should be read in conjunction with this Planning, Design and Access statement.

This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of these proposals, primarily on the basis that the development would involve the conversion of an existing permanent and substantial building as permitted by national and local planning policy thereby resulting in a sustainable form of development which would not harm the openness or visual amenity of the Green Belt, impact adversely on the character and appearance of the area, prejudice residential amenity, harm highway safety or harm any established ecological interests.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

Upper Park Farm is a traditional moorlands small holding which extends to just under 12 acres. It comprises of a detached farmhouse with range of traditional and more modern outbuildings which occupy a relatively isolated and elevated position on the north eastern side of Park Lane. It is accessed via a long and narrow single width track off Park Lane. The application building itself, lies to the north east of the farmhouse and comprises of a 'L' shaped building with the main element being constructed from coursed stone under a plain clay tile roof and a projecting extension constructed from breeze block and corrugated sheeting.

The site lies in an attractive rural area which is characterised by loose scatterings of dwellings and small farmsteads. For the purposes of the Development Plan the application site lies outside any designated settlement boundary and is within the open countryside.

3.0 PROPOSAL

This is a full application which seeks the change of use of an existing barn into a standalone self contained dwelling with associated operational development including alterations, provision of parking and amenity space and hard and soft landscaping works.

The submitted scheme shows that the application building would provide a kitchen, living room, with 2 ground floor bedrooms, utility and bathroom and an ensuite master bedroom above.

The application proposes to retain the shell of the existing building and convert it without any further extension. In terms of alterations a new window will be inserted into the catslide arrangement on the western elevation along with 4 conservation style rooflights and a window and 5 conservation style rooflights will be inserted into the eastern elevation. The existing gable end

window in the southern elevation is to be removed and replaced with a full height feature window whilst two small windows are proposed in the later block work addition which is to be reclad in stone and provided with a pitched roof. No alterations to the northern elevation are proposed.

The proposed unit will be served by the existing access off Park Lane which will lead to a parking and turning area at the front of the building. A small patio area will be provided to the front of the application building whilst private amenity space will be provided to the rear.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published on 27th March 2012 and revised in July 2021 replaced a significant proportion of central government planning policy advice with immediate effect. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered to be a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan.

Whilst the recently published NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making it does provide guidance to LPA's and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF also sets out requirements in respect of housing delivery and securing high quality design. The following are considered to be the most relevant chapters:-

- Chapter 2 - Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 11 - Making Effective Use of Land
- Chapter 12 - Achieving Well Designed Places
- Chapter 15 - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan which was adopted 9th September 2020. The most relevant policies contained therein are considered to be:

SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
H1 New Housing
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

5.0 KEY PLANNING ISSUES

The key issues for consideration in the determination of this application are therefore considered to be:-

- The principle of development
- Impact on openness and the five purposes of Green Belt
- Sustainability
- Design and appearance
- Residential amenity
- Highway safety

The Principle of Development

Core Strategy policies SS1 and SS1a highlight the importance of sustainable development. Policy SS10 sets out the strategy for the countryside and the Green Belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and villages. It 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". This will be achieved through a number of actions including the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H1 of the Local Plan.

Policy H1 concerns housing development and, in respect of the rural areas in the open countryside, only allows for housing development in certain circumstances including:

"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".

The achievement of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. In paragraph 11 it states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay.

The application proposes the change of use of an existing rural building which is no longer appropriate for modern day farming practices due to its overall form, low eaves, limited height, low and narrow doors and the fact that the building is on differing levels. The main part of the application building is constructed from coursed stone under a plain clay tile roof and its overall form, design and materials is traditional and vernacular. Whilst the projecting single storey extension is not considered to be sympathetic, due to its form and materials it has been present for a number of years.

The application is supported by a structural survey which confirms that the application building is in good structural condition with no serious structural remediation works required. The application building can therefore be considered both permanent and substantial in its construction and accordingly the principle of development is considered acceptable in principle in accordance with the provisions of policies SS10 of the adopted Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Sustainability of the site

The application site does not lie within any defined settlement boundary within the settlement hierarchy for the District. It is therefore considered to lie within a countryside location. However the application building, farmhouse and barns form a discernible group. This arrangement of buildings is relatively common and the form of development within the vicinity of the application site is characterised by sporadic and dispersed groups of farmhouses and their outbuildings.

Notwithstanding its rural location the application site lies just over 1.2km to the east of Ipstones, the nearest designated settlement, which provides a range of shops, services, and employment opportunities. The new single house would be in as sustainable a location as the existing dwelling. There is a distinct difference between a home in the designated open countryside and a really isolated home in the countryside and sustainability is not just reliant on location. In economic terms there would be benefits relating to the construction of the house, payment of council tax and ongoing patronism of local businesses and services once occupied. The proposed development would also result in a new dwelling at a time when the council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and there would be no negative impacts on the social or economic threads set out in the NPPF. The proposed new dwelling and its residents will help support local facilities, bus route, shops nearby and thus local employment. In conclusion therefore whilst the site may lie outside any identified settlement it is not considered that the physical location of the application site itself, makes it so unsustainable as to render it unacceptable in this particular location.

Design & Appearance

The specific design policies of the LP also seek to promote local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area as is similarly reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It furthermore states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; is indivisible from good planning; and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Developments should function well and establish a strong sense of place creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Proposals should also optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and respond to local character and history including local materials and the use of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Developments should also create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

Policy DC1 sets out the design criteria to reinforce local distinctiveness and positively contribute to the area. The recently updated NPPF advises that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help to raise the standard of design more generally within the area. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of the area.

The proposed conversion will be carried out within the shell of the existing building without any additional extension proposed. All existing window and door openings will be retained and re-used and whilst a number of new openings (both windows and rooflights) are proposed it is

considered that these are sympathetic and will retain and respect the overall character and appearance of the application building.

On balance it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the application building, its setting or the valued characteristics of the wider area including the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt. In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan as well as guidance contained within the NPPF and supplementary planning guidance.

Amenity

The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises that good design is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The NPPF also states that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area. Local Plan policy DC1 requires that all development proposals should 'protect the amenity of the area, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.' The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Space About Dwellings' details standards that should be considered and met to ensure privacy for existing and proposed residents.

Given the location of the application site and the fairly sporadic spattering of farmsteads and dwellings and the juxta position of the application building with the main farmhouse it is considered that the proposed scheme would respect the amenity of the main farmhouse and provide an adequate degree of amenity to the occupiers of the proposed unit.

The proposed conversion exceeds the minimum requirements as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards and would provide a comfortable 3 bedroom dwelling with its own curtilage and parking areas. The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF in this respect.

Highways

Paragraph 108 and 109 of the NPPF states: Plans and decisions should take account of whether: the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people and improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe is reflected in Local Plan Policy T1 Development and Sustainable Transport.

Having regard to the previous use of the application building and the fact the application proposes the creation of a single dwelling, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any material intensification of the use of the existing vehicular access. Adequate parking and turning facilities are provided within the site and replacement parking for the main farmhouse can be accommodated adjacent to that dwelling as shown on the submitted block plan. In this respect it

is considered that the proposal complies with CS policy T1 and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Biodiversity

The application is accompanied by a bat survey undertaken by Elite Ecology. This confirms the absence of bats within the application building. Notwithstanding this and in the interests of biodiversity enhancement a number of mitigation measures are proposed within the report and its considered that these can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition. Subject to such a condition it is considered that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the established ecological interests of the site and therefore the proposal is complain with Local Plan policy NE1 and guidance within the NPPF in this regard.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. It also states in the NPPF that where proposals accord with the development plan they should be approved without delay, and where policies are out-of-date permission should only be refused where there is significant and demonstrable harm to outweigh the benefits of the development.

This proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development which involves the re-use of an existing rural building which is considered suitable in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The proposal adopts a sympathetic approach to the conversion of the building and will not give rise to any material harm to the character and appearance of the existing building or the surrounding area. The proposal furthermore will not derive any significant issues in respect of highway safety nor will it be prejudicial to residential amenity. The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of policies SS10, DC1, DC3, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

USE

The application proposes the re-use of the existing rural building for residential purposes.

AMOUNT

The proposal is for a single 3 bedroomed dwelling.

LAYOUT

The layout of the proposed dwelling is shown on the submitted plans.

SCALE

The application building will be converted within the main shell of the existing building which has a gross internal floor area of 114 sq metres. The proposed conversion will be carried out within the shell of the existing building and the scale will therefore remain unchanged.

LANDSCAPING

Hard and soft landscaping works proposed as part of this application are shown on the submitted block plan.

APPEARANCE

The proposed development will retain the external character and appearance of the application building.

ACCESS

Pedestrian access will be as shown on the submitted plans. Dedicated parking provision will be provided for the dwelling as shown on the submitted plan.