

## DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

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DET/2022/0026  
Valid 16/06/2022

BARNES LEA FARM  
REACLIFFE ROAD  
RUDYARD

CHANGE OF USE OF  
AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS  
TO ONE DWELLINGHOUSE  
(USE CLASS C3),

(NOTIFICATION - CHANGE OF  
USE PRIOR APPROVAL)

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### MAIN ISSUES

- Whether or not the proposal can be determined under a “Class Q” Prior Notification application and if so:
  - The transport and highways impacts of the development
  - The noise impacts of the development
  - The contamination risks on the site
  - flooding risks on the site
- Whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a residential use
- The design or external appearance of the building
- Whether or not the proposal would allow in sufficient light for the occupiers of the dwelling in the interests of their residential amenities

### DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies within the open countryside (and Green Belt) to the south-west of Rushton Spencer and a short distance to the west of Rudyard Lake. It comprises a modern typical portal-frame agricultural storage building finished mostly with metal sheets above a blockwork base but with one wall being mostly timber clad. It is part of Barnslee Farm which is reached via a farm track connected to Reacliffe Road, a long narrow open lane running past Rudyard Laken North car park and onto Beat Lane, a C-class main road to the north. The building on site is on the east side of the grouping of buildings which includes a stone listed farmhouse to the west. The complex of farm buildings is surrounded by open land. The building has a footprint of approx. 28 x 13 metres. The application information states it has a floorspace of 385 sq.m. It is outside of the Conservation Area that covers the Rudyard Lake area.

### PROPOSAL

This is a resubmitted “Notification of Prior Approval” application for the conversion of the modern farm storage building into a dwelling. The previous application was refused in March 2022 for the following reason:

*“The current building, by virtue of its scale, modern storage building functional form and metal sheeted finishing materials, is considered to have a poor design and*

*appearance. Furthermore, no details or elevational drawings have been provided to show how the building can be changed into a residential use to result in an acceptable design and appearance. The proposal therefore would fail to comply with Part 3 Class Q2(1)f of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), Policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan and the design provisions of the NPPF.”*

No elevation of layout drawings were provided with the previous application (a covering letter explained the purpose of that application was to obtain a preliminary acceptance in principle of the change of use and then to enter into pre-application discussions over the design and appearance of the conversion into a dwelling).

The new application includes elevational and layout drawings (although it appears no pre-application discussions about the design were actually sought). The drawings show the building unmodified in terms of its shape, size, form and dimensions but the entire building would be clad in hit-and-miss timber boarding, including over the proposed windows created in the long elevations (west and east) where there are no openings, to give a modern contemporary look. The existing cart opening in the south side elevation would be covered in glazing (but not obscured by hit-and-miss boards) and a new glazed section of similar size and shape to the cart entrance would be created in the north side elevation. The roof would remain intact with profiled fibre cement sheeting with the rooflights also retained. There would be no extensions or demolition. The converted dwelling would have seven bedrooms. The red line plan marks out a curtilage area to the west and north of the building which would be smaller than the footprint of the building but parking areas and private outdoor amenity areas are not marked.

A Planning Statement has been submitted in support of the proposal and the chosen design.

## **RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES**

National Planning Policy Framework – Revised July 2021.

## **SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS**

DET/2022/0001: Previous Prior Approval application under Part 3 Class Q for the conversion of the building into one dwelling. Refused in March 2022.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **Publicity**

Site Notice expiry date: 21.7.22

Neighbour consultation period ends: 21.7.22

Press Advert: N/A

### **Public Comments**

None.

**Town / Parish Comments**

None.

**Local Highways Authority**

No objection.

**Environmental Health Section**

No objection subject to standard conditions applied to agricultural building conversions into dwellings.

**Staffordshire Wildlife Trust**

Requests that the standing advice for checking ecological impacts resulting from barn conversions (e.g. impact on bats) is referred to.

**Waste Collection Services**

No issues regarding waste collections.

**OFFICER COMMENTS**

Changes to the GPDO in 2015 introduced into 'Part 3 – Changes of Use' a 'Class Q' development which allows the conversion of agricultural buildings into dwellings without the need to apply for full planning permission providing the criteria listed under Class Q are met. However, a "Notification of Prior Approval" application needs to be submitted instead and the Council must determine this against the material planning considerations listed above.

This proposal meets all of the criteria/tests under Class Q(1) for applying for a conversion under Class Q of the GPDO. The building dated back to late 1980s and so was present in 2013 and has been in use for agricultural purposes with no evidence of any subsequent alternative uses. The size and number of the units and size of the overall building does not exceed the thresholds stated for a "larger dwelling" (i.e. with a floorspace exceeding 100 sq.m). There is no agricultural tenancy at the site.

The proposal would not meet the Class Q(1) tests if it was deemed to be included within the listing of the listed traditional stone farmhouse to the west. A Planning Statement was submitted with the previous application to give evidence that the building is not listed or part of the listing due to it being a "curtilage structure". As it was built after 1948 it clearly is not listed and the building is also separated from the farmhouse and the land around the farmhouse (i.e. the curtilage) by solid stone walls and a driveway/access road leading to other farm buildings to the rear. I consider that it clearly does not form part of the curtilage of the listed building as it is on a distinctly separate parcel of land and there are no traditional buildings to the other

side of it. It has clearly been placed on former open land that was unlikely to have been within the grounds of the listed farmhouse or within the traditional farm grouping or farmstead. I am therefore satisfied that the building is neither listed or is included within the listing of the farmhouse and is not within its listed curtilage.

The proposal would not qualify for Class Q development if any rebuilding was involved. There is no rebuilding required as the building has solid blockwork walls and metal frames supporting metal sheet walls and the roof and therefore only internal works to provide insulation materials would appear to be deemed necessary for the building to operate in residential use and this is not contrary to the list of works that can be undertaken under that part of Q1. The insertion of replacement cladding and internal walls to separate rooms and a new floor to support the first-floor rooms, is also not contrary to this.

The application must therefore be determined against the planning considerations listed under Class Q(2) also listed in the “Main Issues” section of the report:

The transport and highways impacts would be the same as previous (and were deemed acceptable). Although no parking area is shown there is clearly space within the curtilage to create one and due to the location of the building at the end of a private track and with adjacent yard areas, a turning area is not required. The proposal would not lead any traffic or highway safety problems, despite the narrow nature of the country lane leading to the site, which can accommodate the predicted small increase in vehicle movements (arising from one dwelling) without harming highway safety.

The noise impacts of the development, contamination risks on the site and flooding risks on the site remain the same as in the time of the previous application and these were deemed to be acceptable. With regard to whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a residential use, again the issues are the same as previous and it was considered there was nothing “impractical” or “undesirable” about the scheme.

With regard to the design or external appearance of the building, the building is a large and bulky modern storage building with corrugated metal sheeting and concrete blockwork. Although such buildings are not uncommon in rural areas, the building does not have any design merit and is considered to be a purely functional appearance which does not contribute positively to the traditional rural character and appearance of the area. Due to the elevated position of the farm surrounded by largely exposed open fields, the building is visible from long distances across the landscape particularly from the east. Due to its size and position it is prominent from A523 to the other side of the lake about 1km away. The building is considered to currently have a poor design and appearance unsuited for a dwelling. In the previous application, no details were provided to show how such a building can be converted and improved to amount to an acceptable design and appearance. This new application includes elevational drawings and these show the building clad in hit-and-miss timber boards and large areas of glazing included in the side elevations. Whilst this gives the building a more contemporary and modern appearance, it still remains in the form of a large and bulky functional modern farm building but just with a change in materials.

Although approvals have been given for the conversion of modern portal framed buildings under Class Q, each proposal should be judged on its own individual merits. The building on site due to its scale and form and large width and depth give the building an excessively large and bulky appearance akin to a warehouse and the scale and form of the building even after conversion would still in the opinion of the Council result in a poor design and appearance that continues to harm the appearance of the area, particularly as it is so visible in the landscape from long-range views. The addition of timber and glass to the external walls does not create an acceptable design and external appearance for this particularly building due to its scale, form and location prominent in the landscape. The application would therefore continue to fail to meet this particular test in Class Q(2) and therefore the application should again be refused.

Finally, with regard to light provision, each habitable room would be served by windows of adequate size and therefore the living conditions of the occupants would not be harmed.

The scheme also complies with the other parts of Part 3 of the GPDO (relating to changes of use) and the guidance for Class Q development in that the total residential curtilage areas (i.e. the areas used for outdoor private garden use and car parking) would not exceed the size of the footprint of the building.

## **CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE**

The proposal can be determined under Class Q as it meets the test in Q1 but in terms of planning-related impacts, the proposed building has an unacceptable design and appearance and therefore fails to meet all of the tests in Q2 and therefore the application should be refused. It therefore cannot be converted under permitted development in accordance with Part 3 Class Q of the GPDO and therefore a full planning application would be required for the change of use to residential.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE**

**Case Officer: Chris Johnston**

**Recommendation Date: 11.8.22**

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Signed by: Ben Haywood

**On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

