

Planning Statement

Conversion, extension, and alteration of former agricultural
buildings to from 1 no. dwellinghouse, external alterations
and extension to existing farmhouse, and the
formation of new vehicular access
Rakeway Farm, Rakeway Road, Cheadle
For the Estate of Mrs. Martha Doris Beardmore Alcock
(Deceased)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Hewitt & Carr Services Ltd. has been instructed by the estate of Mrs. Martha Doris Beardmore Alcock (Deceased) to prepare a Planning Statement to accompany a planning application for the conversion, extension, and alteration of two former agricultural buildings at Rakeway Farm, Rakeway Road, Cheadle to form 1 no. dwellinghouse. The application also proposes alterations and an extension to the existing farmhouse, along with the formation of a new vehicular access off the Rakeway Road.
- 1.2. There are two former agricultural buildings on the site, located to the east of the existing farmhouse. The application proposes a small link extension to facilitate their conversion to form 1 no. dwellinghouse. The resultant gross internal floor of the dwelling will extend to some 159 square metres. An existing lean-to structure on the southwest elevation will be removed as part of the proposed conversion works.
- 1.3. The proposed accommodation will comprise of a lounge, entrance hall, w.c., dining room, kitchen and porch / utility, with two separate sets of stairs serving the first floor areas of the buildings, which will accommodate a master bedroom with ensuite and dressing room, a landing area, and two further bedrooms and a family bathroom. Externally it is proposed to provide an area of private amenity space to the northeast / rear of the building, with further amenity space to be accommodated within the courtyard in front of the building, and to its southeast (side).
- 1.4. The application also proposes alterations to the existing farmhouse, encompassing the provision of obscure glazed windows into some of the existing openings and / or the building up of openings on the southeastern elevation of the building, the provision of new window openings into the northwest elevation of the building, the demolition of existing porch structure, the replacement of existing windows, along with the erection of a utility room extension to replace an existing structure.
- 1.5. A new vehicular access is also proposed within the application, served off the Rakeway Road. The access will be located to the northwest of the farmhouse, and will loop in behind the existing dwelling, and provide off-street parking for both it, and the new dwelling that is to be formed via the conversion of the existing buildings. Two off-street parking spaces will be provided for both the farmhouse and the converted barn. The access will be 5 metres in width and have radius kerbs on either side, with visibility splays to be created in each direction so that drivers leaving the site will be able to clearly observe oncoming traffic.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is located wholly within the rural area as defined by the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and comprises a detached two storey farmhouse, along with two adjacent former agricultural buildings.
- 2.2. The former agricultural buildings are located to the east of the farmhouse and are both two storeys in scale. They are arranged in a 'L' shaped layout around an existing courtyard in front of the buildings and are connected in one corner.
- 2.3. To the southeast of the farmhouse lies a solid portal framed agricultural building, with open fields extending beyond that. The southwestern site boundary comprises of a drystone wall and raised hedgerow, beyond which lies the carriageway of Rakeway Road.
- 2.4. Open fields extend to the north / northeast of the existing buildings, with a large field located to the northwest of the farmhouse through which the new vehicular access is proposed to run.
- 2.5. The site does not lie within close proximity of any statutorily listed buildings, nor does it lie within a Conservation Area. There are no public footpaths which cross the site,

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act require that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Local Plan (Adopted 2020) of which the following policies are of relevance to the determination of this application.
- 3.2. Policy SS1 of the Local Plan 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, in partnership with other agencies and services:
- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
 - quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers
 - easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community
 - increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce
 - 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
 - development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations
 - support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions
- 3.3. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that the other rural areas comprise the countryside and the green belt outside of the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages and the open countryside surrounding the smaller villages. 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 Council and its partners will achieve this through a number of actions, including:
- Restricting new build housing development in the countryside to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with policy H1

- Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H1
- Allowing extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The Council will assess schemes having regard to the original dwelling, in cases where cumulative change has occurred
- Allowing suitable development which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset in accordance with Policy DC2
- Allowing rural exceptions housing (in accordance with Policies H1 and H3)
- Allowing community facilities where that need cannot be met in a settlement within the hierarchy. In such cases the development should be in a sustainable location close to an existing serviced settlement.
- Giving priority to the need to protect the quality and character of the area and requiring all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
- Limiting uses which generate a substantial number of regular trips in areas that are not well served by public transport
- Encouraging measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity, geological resources and heritage of the District.

3.4. Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that:

- All new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis subject to considerations such as viability and design.
- All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.

3.5. Policy H1 also confirms that in the other rural areas in the open countryside, only the following forms of housing development will be permitted:

- a) Affordable housing which cannot be met elsewhere, in accordance with Policy H3.
- b) A new dwelling that meets an essential local need, such as accommodation for an agricultural, forestry or other rural enterprise worker, where the need for such accommodation has been satisfactorily demonstrated and that need cannot be met elsewhere.
- c) Proposals for replacement dwellings, provided they do not have a significantly greater detrimental impact on the existing character of the rural area than the

original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area.

- d) 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.
- e) Proposals to redevelop previously developed land provided it is not of high environmental value.
- f) The subdivision of an existing residential dwelling provided it is not in an isolated location.

3.6. Policy DC1 of the Local Plan 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:

- 1. be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area
- 2. 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
- 3. create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design
- 4. incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development
- 5. 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
- 6. promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate
- 7. provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use
- 8. require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links
- 9. ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed

3.7. Policy NE1 relates to 'Biodiversity and Geological Resources' and states that the Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or

indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) there is no appropriate alternative site available; and
- b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
- c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
- d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.

3.8. Policy NE1 goes on to state that all development will be expected to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

3.9. Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:

- 1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.
- 2. Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.
- 3. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.
- 4. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes

4.0 MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development, and sets out guidance in respect of various matters, including making beneficial reuse of existing buildings, securing high quality design, safeguarding highway safety and ensuring a net gain to biodiversity. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Guide SPD

- 4.2. The adopted Design Guide sets out guidance aimed at securing high quality design within the Staffordshire Moorlands. The content of this document has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 5.1. The Town and Country Planning Act requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The application proposes the conversion, extension and alteration of the existing former agricultural buildings on the site to form 1 no. dwelling, along with alterations / extension of the existing farmhouse and the formation of a new vehicular access.
- 5.2. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan confirms that the rural 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 restricting new build housing to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside in accordance with policy H1.
- 5.3. Policy H1 of the Local Plan confirms support for the conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The accompanying Structural Survey demonstrates that the existing buildings are worthy in physical terms for conversion, concluding that the barns are in a robust structural condition and there is no structural reason why they should not be converted to habitable use. Their traditional scale and appearance furthermore renders the buildings wholly suitable and worthy in architectural and character terms for conversion.
- 5.4. Support for the proposal is also afforded by paragraph 120 of the National Planning Policy Framework which confirms that planning decisions should:

“promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained”.
- 5.5. The Local Authority's Housing Land Supply Statement (up to April 2022) confirms that the Local Authority is unable to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (3.71 years supply) and consequently there continues to be an unmet need for new housing within the District. The submitted proposal will make beneficial reuse of the existing buildings to deliver 1 no. dwellinghouse, in accordance with the objectives of paragraph 120 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.6. The proposed alterations to the existing farmhouse are also concluded to be acceptable in principle, with policy SS10 of the Local Plan specifically supporting extensions to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.

- 5.7. The proposed extension to the farmhouse is very modest and replaces an existing structure already in situ. The other alterations do not give rise to any increase in the size of the building, and by virtue of their sensitive design, will not detract from the character and appearance of the existing dwelling or the wider surrounding area.
- 5.8. The formation of the new vehicular access is also considered acceptable in principle as it will derive a betterment to highway safety within the locality (discussed in more detail below) whilst in turn facilitating the beneficial reuse of the existing buildings. The proposed development as a whole is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design & Layout

- 5.9. The application adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion of the existing buildings, making beneficial reuse of existing openings, and restricting the provision of new openings to the insertion of new rooflights on the less conspicuous elevations of the buildings (northeast and southeast). The application also proposes the retention of the existing ventilation holes to further preserve the agrarian character of the building.
- 5.10. The proposed extension to the building is required in order to link the two existing buildings together as a single dwelling, and has been deliberately designed to have a modest, subservient relationship to the host buildings. The extension is to be located away from public view, tucked away to the rear of the two buildings where it will not be seen, and owing to its subservient scale and appearance will not detract from the character of the existing buildings.
- 5.11. To the rear (northeast) of the buildings it is proposed to create an area of private amenity space for use by the occupiers of the new dwelling, with further amenity space accommodated within the courtyard in front of the building. The proposed parking for the dwelling will also be located to the rear where its impact on the character and appearance of the area will be minimal.
- 5.12. The alterations to the existing farmhouse are sensitive to its character and appearance, incorporating new openings that are of a similar size / proportion to the existing openings within the building. Matching header and cill details are also incorporated in order to further reinforce the character of the host dwelling. The proposed utility room extension is a modest, subservient addition and will replace an existing poor quality structure already in situ. The resultant appearance of the dwelling is one that is firmly in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 5.13. The proposed new vehicular access will derive a modest degree of impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, but that impact will be mitigated by the replacement hedgerow planting that is to be undertaken behind the new visibility splays. As discussed within the highway safety section below, the

existing access serving the farmhouse has poor visibility, so the opportunity is being taken to improve the access for the farmhouse, and to facilitate the delivery of a new dwelling within the existing buildings. The resultant betterment to highway safety is concluded to outweigh any harm that may be caused by the formation of the new vehicular access.

- 5.14. Having regard to the considerations set out above it is concluded that the proposed development will not detract from the character and appearance of the existing buildings, nor the wider surrounding area, and as a consequence meets the requirements of policies SS1, and DC1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF and adopted Design Guide SPD.

Residential Amenity

- 5.15. The alterations to the farmhouse, in particular the provision of obscure glazing and / or blocking up of existing openings has been introduced so that the courtyard area in front of the agricultural buildings will remain free from overlooking by the occupants of the farmhouse. By resultant effect the new dwelling within the outbuildings will not cause overlooking of the farmhouse either. No harm to neighbouring residential amenity will therefore ensue.

- 5.16. Both dwellings will be afforded an acceptable level of private amenity space, and the new dwelling within the barns will have a gross floor area that will far exceed the required floorspace for a three bedroomed dwelling, as set out in the DCLG Technical Housing Standards (102 square metres required – 159 square metres provided). The proposed development will consequently provide an acceptable level of residential amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling and meets the requirements of policies H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Highway Safety

- 5.17. The existing farm house and the proposed dwelling to be formed through the conversion of the existing buildings are to be served by a new vehicular access point off the Rakeway Road located to the northwest of the site. The existing vehicular access serving the farmhouse, outbuildings and adjacent portal framed agricultural building is narrow and has very poor visibility on egress onto Rakeway Road. Any intensification in the use of that access is therefore likely to give rise to adverse harm to highway safety within the locality.
- 5.18. The proposed new access will ensure that the occupiers of the farmhouse and barn conversion have good visibility of any oncoming traffic, with visibility splays of 2.4m x 120m to be provided on either side, which is sufficient for a 40mph road. At 5m in width, the proposed access will also be wide enough for two vehicles to pass one another. The resultant betterment to highway safety weighs in favour of the proposed development. The existing site access is to remain available solely to serve the portal framed building located to the east of the access.
- 5.19. The existing farmhouse and the proposed dwelling will each be provided with two off-street parking spaces which is sufficient to meet the Local Authority's adopted car parking standards for three-bedroomed dwellings. Associated turning space

is also to be provided such that vehicles will be able to exit the site in a forward gear.

- 5.20. The site is also noted to occupy a sustainable location that is within walking and cycling distance of local day-to-day services, and which also benefits from public transport connections nearby where Rakeway Road meets Millhouse Drive. Future occupiers of the new dwelling (and the existing farmhouse) will therefore have a choice in their means of transportation, without having to rely upon motor vehicles.
- 5.21. As a consequence of the above, the proposed development will not give rise to any severe residual impacts to highway safety and as such the proposal meets the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan and paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Biodiversity

- 5.22. The application is accompanied by a Bat and Bird Survey undertaken by Evolution Ecology which has assessed the existing buildings on the site for the presence / potential for bats and birds.
- 5.23. The survey concludes that both brown long eared bats and common pipistrelle bats are roosting in the south elevation of the portal framed building located to the east of the existing vehicular access, but no evidence of bats was found in either the farmhouse or the traditional agricultural buildings. By resultant effect the proposed development can be safely concluded to not have any impact on bats or their roosts.
- 5.24. Several swallow nests and a wren nest were identified around the site, and the survey recommends that seven replacement swallow nests and two wren nests be installed on the more modern portal framed agricultural building to mitigate for the loss of the existing nests and secure a net gain to biodiversity. Alternatively these could be accommodated on the barns themselves by way of externally positioned swallow boxes / wren boxes on the northern gable end of the building. Such measures can be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition, and in doing so the proposal will accord with the requirements of policy NE1 of the Local Plan.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:
- The buildings proposed for conversion, extension and alteration are worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion.
 - The proposed extensions and alterations to the farmhouse are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.
 - The design and layout of the development serves to safeguard the character and appearance of the existing buildings and the wider surrounding area.
 - The proposed development will not give rise to any issues in respect of residential amenity.
 - The proposed vehicular access will secure a betterment to highway safety and realise the benefits of converting the existing buildings to a dwellinghouse.
 - The proposed development will not have any adverse impact on protected species within the local area and will secure a net gain to biodiversity.
- 6.2. The submitted proposal consequently meets the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, H1, T1, NE1, DC1 and DC3 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and policies set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.