Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

Mr. B. Haywood
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
Stockwell Street
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6HQ

20th March 2023

Dear Ben

RETENTION OF FARM SHOP – CAVERSWALL CREAMERY, ROUGHCOTE LANE, CAVERSWALL

On behalf of my client, Mr. D. Moseley, I would be grateful if you would find enclosed a retrospective planning application proposing the retention of the existing farm shop at the above site.

The appellant had believed that the farm shop did not require planning permission as it was principally selling products that were produced on the farm. The Local Authority's Enforcement Officer had nevertheless concluded that a material change of use had occurred because some of the produce was not being produced on the farm, and the land was also being used for occasional visits by a mobile pizza van. This application consequently seeks to regularise that situation.

The farm shop was created via the conversion of an old stable block that has existed on the site for a considerable period of time. The applicant sells milk, eggs and milkshakes, which are all produced on the farm, along with ice cream from a supplier elsewhere. The shop is open daily between 08:00hrs and 22:00hrs and opened in May 2022. The farm shop typically receives 20 customers a day during the week, and up to 60 over the course of a weekend. On Mondays, between the hours of 16:00hrs – 20:00hrs a mobile pizza van visits the site. A picnic table area adjacent to the existing area of hardstanding provides an area for food and drinks to be consumed.

The application site is located within the Green Belt and forms part of the rural area. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan confirms that strict control will be exercised over development in the Green Belt, allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government Policy. Paragraph 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the change of use of land and the reuse of existing buildings are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided the development does not give rise to harm to the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the purposes of including land within it, and in the case of the reuse of a building, entails a building that is of a permanent and substantial construction.

Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
T. 07779 783521
E. rob78duncan@gmail.com
W. www.robduncanplanning.co.uk
A. 28 Ferndale Road, Lichfield
Staffordshire, WS13 7DJ

Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy

The existing building is constructed from timber beams with metal and wood cladding to its elevations and appears on historic aerial photographs as far back as 2003. It is also visible on Google Streetview images from 2009 onwards. The applicant advises that it has been in situ for circa 30 years. It can consequently be held to be of a permanent and substantial construction. The reuse of the building as a farm shop has not given rise to any adverse impact to the openness of the Green Belt, nor any conflict with the five purposes of including land within it, and as such amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt.

Similarly the change of use of the surrounding land to provide parking, picnic area and space for the mobile pizza van has not given rise to any harm to the openness of the Green Belt, having regard to the fact that the parking areas are already laid to hardstanding and have historically been used for the storage of agricultural implements / equipment, as the historic aerial photographs of the site attest. The change of use of the land consequently also amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt.

Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. It also confirms support for the development and diversification of agricultural businesses. This guidance is enshrined within policy SS10 of the Local Plan which confirms that support will be given to the diversification of existing farm enterprises, along with policy E1 which states that schemes involving the reuse of rural buildings for commercial enterprise will be considered favourably where the proposed use does not harm the building's character and / or the character of its surroundings.

The submitted proposal represents a diversification of the applicant's existing dairy business. The applicant has operated a dairy from the site for the last 23 years and has 210 head of cattle. Over the years the dairy business has become increasingly unviable which has forced the applicant to diversify his activities. The farm shop that the applicant has established has enabled the existing dairy business to continue to operate and is critical to the future longevity of this established agricultural business. The shop supports one full time member of staff and makes a positive contribution to the rural economy, providing goods that are produced on the site for local customers to purchase and enjoy.

Within the site there is ample parking to meets the needs of the farm shop, with space available within the site for vehicles to turn around so that they may exit in a forward gear. No adverse harm to highway safety has consequently arisen as a result of the development. The building also lies sufficient distant from the neighbouring occupier, and is separated from it by a tall hedgerow, such that no material harm to neighbouring amenity arises. s

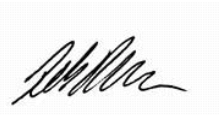
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
T. 07779 783521
E. rob78duncan@gmail.com
W. www.robduncanplanning.co.uk
A. 28 Ferndale Road, Lichfield
Staffordshire, WS13 7DJ

Rob Duncan
Planning
Consultancy

Having regard to the above considerations it is concluded that the proposed development is in accordance with the provisions of policies SS1, SS10, E1 and DC1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the retention of the farm shop.

Should you have any queries or concerns in respect of the submitted proposal then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Rob Duncan
Planning Consultant

Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd.
T. 07779 783521
E. rob78duncan@gmail.com
W. www.robduncanplanning.co.uk
A. 28 Ferndale Road, Lichfield
Staffordshire, WS13 7DJ