

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2021/0844
Valid 24/12/2021

GRATTON HALL FARM
GRATTON HALL LANE
GRATTON

**PROPOSED CONVERSION OF
EXISTING BUILDINGS TO
FORM PRIVATE ANCILLARY
LEISURE/RECREATION
ACCOMMODATION,
CONSTRUCTION OF AN
ADDITIONAL BAY TO AN
EXISTING GARAGE BUILDING,
AND RECLADDING AND
INCREASING HEIGHT OF
EXISTING LOG STORE**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle
- Green Belt
- Residential amenity
- Highways
- Impact on visual amenity
- Impact on designated heritage asset
- Ecology

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site relates to Gratton Hall Farm a detached property that is grade II listed.

The listing description is as follows:

HORTON C.P. GRATTON SJ 95 NW SJ 936 561 8/77 Gratton Hall - 1.2.67 - II

Farmhouse. Mid-C18 with C19 and C20 alterations. Red brick with rusticated stone quoins, dressings and plinth; red tile roof; brick end stacks. 2 parallel-range plan. 2-storey, 3-window front with centre break, possibly formerly pedimented, and arch-topped glazing bar sash in moulded stone surrounds; enlarged C20 casements to first floor and mid-C19 bay to ground floor right; C20 replica bay to-ground floor left, central pedimented entrance, shaped corbels, keystone on grounds and moulded surround to part-glazed 6-panel door. Interior: stair hall behind front door with

panelled, segmental-arch in front of dog-leg stair rising 6 flights to attic; open string with scrolls, turned balusters, handrail ramped at angle and scrolled over curtail step, 4-transom, full-height stair window behind stair.

PROPOSAL

Consent is sought for the conversion of existing outbuildings to form private ancillary leisure/recreation accommodation and the erection of an extension to the existing garage to provide an additional garage bay. The alterations are described as follows:

26 Shed

- Replacement timber windows with thin double glazing
- Replacement doors painted sage green.
- Replacement roof with second hand Staffordshire blue clay tiles
- Replacement timber shutters
- Existing walls to barn buildings to be inspected and defective mortar repaired with 1:2 lime mortar
- Replacing plastic guttering with new cast iron guttering painted black with new cast iron waste pipe painted black
- Replacement roof light with new conservation roof light
- Ventilation slit to be reinstated with thin double glazing
- New paint treated double doors with glazing behind

The Barn

- Refurbished and painting of existing sliding door with fixed glazing behind
- new zinc standing seam roofing
- Existing walls to barn buildings to be inspected and defective mortar repaired with 1:2 lime mortar
- Replacing plastic guttering with new cast iron style upvc gutting and rainwater pipes
- Roof lights replaced with conservation roof light
- New paint treated double doors with glazing behind
- New paint treated sliding door with glazing behind
- Replacement timber shutters

40 Shed

- Existing corrugated sheet to be removed from roof and replace with new black corrugated metal sheeting
- Replacement timber windows with thin double glazing
- Corrugate sheeting removed from elevations and replaced with vertical timber boarding.
- Existing block work elevations to be clad with red brick slips to match existing barn buildings. Staffordshire blue brick slips to be used up to dpc level.
- Existing door to be partly blocked up and new timber door with glazed door behind with side light.
- Existing door to be infilled with block work and new brick slips matching remaining building
- New paint treated door

- Replacing plastic guttering with new cast iron style upvc gutting and rainwater pipes

Garage Extension

- Walls to be constructed in block work and clad in green profiled metal sheeting to match existing
- New section door to match existing
- Green metal sheet roof to match existing
- Section of timber cladding on rear elevation to match existing

Floor of demolished building to be broken up and removed from site and reinstated with clean top soil and seeded

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS 10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC 2 The Historic Environment
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport
NE 1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
H 1 New Housing Development

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 11,12,13, 16

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0845- Listed Building Consent for proposed conversion of existing buildings to form private ancillary leisure/recreation accommodation, construction of an additional bay to an existing garage building, and recladding and increasing height of existing log store- LBC Approved

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 02.02.2022
Neighbour consultation period ends:N/A
Press Advert: 09.02.2022

Public Comments

None received within consultation period

Town / Parish Comments

Horton Parish Council Objects to the development due to amount of living space to be created and impact on listed building and environment.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Incapacity to submit comments.

Council for British Archaeology

Requested additional information be submitted.

Conservation Officer

No objection to principle of development but had concerns regarding retention of log store and proposed materials to outbuildings. Comments are discussed further within the report

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is located outside of any defined development boundary and falls within the designated Green Belt.

Policy SS 10 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.

- Meet housing requirements and specific needs by allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H 1.
- Maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy

Paragraph 147 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building

Paragraph 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. These are:

d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;

As the application proposes an extension to the existing garage and the conversion of existing buildings subsection C of paragraph 149 is engaged and subsection d of paragraph 150 is engaged.

The proposal relates to the conversion of agricultural buildings to residential use as ancillary buildings for Gratton Hall Farm. A structural inspection report has been submitted with the application and the report concludes that the barns are structurally suitable for residential use. Following the removal of the smaller 'log store' it is considered that all of the buildings are worthy of retention and that they are all curtilage structures to the principal listed farmhouse and are therefore part of the listed building. The proposal seeks to retain these buildings as being ancillary to Gratton Hall Farm and therefore visually appearing as forming one house. The conversion of these buildings would secure the future of the heritage asset as they would be utilised by the occupiers of the main farmhouse. As such the principle of converting the existing buildings is acceptable as the development preserves the openness of the green belt

The proposed extension to the garage proposes an additional bay to the existing garage at the site. The proposed extension is not considered to result in a disproportionate addition to the building. The proposal also involves the removal of an existing agricultural building and therefore the development results in a neutral impact on the openness of the green belt.

As such the principle of the development the development is acceptable subject to an assessment of the other material considerations.

Impact on visual amenity and significance of the heritage asset

Policy DC 1 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.

Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The hamlet of Gratton, forms part of the wider medieval parish of Horton, 4 miles west of Leek. Both Horton, Gratton, and other placenames contain the old English word Tun, (now modern day ton) meaning a settlement.

Pastoral farming, the land workers and estate owners dominated historic parish lands, and the pattern of rural farmsteads typically follows development of the estates and type of agricultural works. Much of this can be read in the types and

sizes of farm buildings, including the principle houses which were sometimes more ornate or consciously designed where wealth was higher and estate more prosperous.

Historic farmsteads are typically listed due to their social significance, as well as architectural merit and historic interest. Evidence suggests Gratton Hall forms part of a collection of historic farmsteads in the wider vicinity, where respective families moved from one to the other in some circumstances. Houses that contain 'hall' often indicate the site of an earlier manor house. (Not all are listed here due to the amount). Horton Hall; GII*, Blackwood House; GII, Blackwood Hill Farmhouse; GII, Fields Farmhouse; GII, Boot Hall; GII, Dairyhouse Farmhouse; GII*, Heath House; GII, Harracles Mill; GII, Harracles Hall; GII*, Dunwood House Farmhouse, GII, Trees Farmhouse; GII.

These in particular are within an approx. 2.5 mile radius of Gratton Hall, and have relative build dates, sizes, and architectural features. Where there are some rebuilt or reimagined structures, many have original cores. Many of these individual houses and sites form part of smaller hamlets scattered across the landscape, though from a wider standpoint they form fundamental relationships with the field systems and networks across the rural area.

This area sees quite a proliferation of heritage assets and the collection that remains equates to high evidential value in the rural setting. It is considered that the historic outbuildings and barns to be curtilage in this instance, as they are character buildings that make up the identity of a farmstead alongside the respective main house, though the modern post 1950s structures would not be included. The tarmac on entry and modern green shutter doors on the barns lessen the quality of the setting. It forms part of a multitude of heritage assets within the area, and consequently it remains part of a wider setting, and is seen to be a part of a good surviving example of a historic rural parish.

The site of Gratton Hall farm has progression of change over the years, one that is organic and well read. The existing material palette is relatively cohesive despite modern repair methods. Metal corrugated sheeting is expected to make an appearance at rural sites such as this, nevertheless the patina across these elements affords them to be fairly subtle and remain understated against the historic fabric of their counterparts.

The development includes the demolition of the existing open sided barn to be demolished and the applicants agent has identified each building as being a 'Log Store; 26 Shed, The Barn, 40 Shed and the garage'.

The conservation officer had concerns with the retention Log store and the proposed height increase. They considered that the existing structure is quite ugly, understandably it is a functional structure and offers little to the vicinity, except the existing height does afford it to be subservient and marginally neutral. The height increase and clad elevations look to exacerbate this and create a much more obvious structure causing some visual conflict in the setting. Concerns regarding its structural integrity were also raised during the determination of the application. The

applicant agent subsequently removed this element of the proposal from the scheme.

The conservation officer had also raised concerns regarding the use of inappropriate materials to 26 Shed, The Barn and 40 Shed. Including the retention of the dark green modern doors, additional roof lights and timber cladding.

The applicant's agent has subsequently submitted amended plans reducing the number of roof lights to 4 which is the same amount as existing. The dark green steel sliding doors are to be replaced with traditional timber hinged doors and the proposal is now changing the colour of all doors to a neutral Sage Green colour.

To the most modern building '40 Shed' it is proposed to use brickwork (to match the barn) and timber cladding to the external elevations. It is considered that although the use of timber cladding was highlighted as a concern by the conservation officer it is considered that following significant negotiations with the agent it is not considered that the use of timber cladding would warrant refusal of the application on this occasion. The other elements of the scheme will result in significant improvements to the overall appearance of the site. To ensure the most appropriate materials are used a condition will be attached to any subsequent approval requiring the submission of all materials before their use in the development.

The extension to the garage with matching materials is considered to be a modest addition and for this reason is considered acceptable.

As such in regard to all of the above the development is not considered to harm the significance of the listed building or the historic outbuildings

Amenity

The application site does not benefit from any immediate neighbours and therefore the development would not have any negative impact on any residential properties.

Highway Safety

The application site is served by an existing access off Gratton Hall Lane. This existing access would not be affected by the proposed development. As such the development is considered to have an acceptable impact on highway safety subject to a condition restricting the use of the converted buildings as being ancillary to the main farmhouse Gratton Hall Farm.

Ecology

Policy NE 1 states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence).

The application is supported by the submission of a protected species report dated December 2021. The report concluded that the development would result in the loss

of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat roosts considered to be of Local ecological value. The proposals would result in the loss of nest sites in B1 and B2 but swallows would still be able to nest in B4 and B5. Overall, the impacts are likely to be of low significance, and they would be very unlikely to affect the conservation status of the local bat population, particularly following implementation of the mitigation measures. A Natural England BMCL would, however, need to be obtained to ensure that the development does not infringe bat legislation.

The report advises that the following mitigation, compensation and enhancements are required.

- It is advised that works affecting swallow nesting sites are undertaken outside the nesting season which typically lasts from April to September for swallows. If this approach is not possible works should be sufficiently advanced to deter nesting from taking place with pre-works checks completed to ensure no active nests are present.
- two integral bat roosting units installed within gable end walls close to the apex of B1. Bespoke bat loft/hot box will be created on the first floor of the
- renovated B2.
- roof tiles and felt are removed carefully by hand under the supervision of an ecologist with the undersides of the tiles checked for bats. However, before work starts, two woodcrete bat boxes should be fixed to mature trees adjacent the site. The bat boxes would be sited approximately 3 - 4 m above ground level and remain on site permanently.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

It is for the above reasons and having regard to all material considerations and matters raised that the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : That consent be granted subject to conditions.

Case Officer: Rebecca Bowers
Recommendation Date: 11.04.2023

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council