

Conservation Response.

Date: 07/06/2023.

File/Application ref: SMD/2023/0196.

Case Officer: Ben Hurst.

Proposal: Proposed change of use of existing agricultural barn and conversion for residential use.

Address: Longhurst Farm, Dimmingsdale, Oakamoor, Staffordshire, ST10 3AS.

Dear Ben,

No issue with a change of use to utilise the barn to suit modern function. Though I have a number of concerns with some proposed design features.

The barn is an unassuming rural vernacular agricultural building identifiable as a historic Moorlands (ex) working building. With an interesting roof shape and pitch, heavy set stone walls, simple window reveals and juxtaposed elevations. It's existing appeal, despite the general deterioration and lack of function sees quite a quaint and curious structure.

See drwg ref: 'AL12 Elevations as proposed'.

Firstly; oak effect UPVC door and window units. Faux wooden windows are of a truly awful colour and effect attempting to replicate something traditionally found on sites and buildings such as this. I think perhaps an alternative ought to be explored to accurately represent original features and prevent the elevations becoming visually jarring. This proposed material against the historic stone walling I fear may be quite visually unpleasant.

Second; on the same drawing at south (rear) elevation, a glazed door central to the ground floor elevation. This is quite odd and I would expect a barn style timber boarded door, again to retain the unassuming traditional vernacular. This clashes with the remainder of the door types on this elevation.

Third; on the same drawing at the south (rear) elevation sees an apparent glazed Juliet balcony paired with two sets of largely glazed double doors. These are quite alien features on a simple barn and the balcony is quite strange here.

Further, at north (front) elevation there looks to be a very large opening with an arched brick header, central doorway and large glazed panelled surrounds. (The one to the lefthandside, annotated '*carefully remove redundant cabling and existing blockwork infill....etc*'), this design appears to be something not too dissimilar to the front of a shop in a high street. There is too much glazing and framework, the opening panes very large and again, looks quite strange.

In addition to this, the north (front) elevation here sees another doorway and glazed surrounds to the righthandside, appearing to be set back behind their respective arched brick header. This door is too contemporary, looking to have a very modern handle, glazed pane and generic letterbox.

Also it should be noted across the elevations annotations there is a mix-match of the proposed use of plastic faux timber UPVC and the apparent proposed use of vertical boarded hardwood doors. Clarity required. It is not recommended to mix and match these materials as both quite clearly contrast each other.

Other points I will note at this stage are:

- Proposed pointing mix of NHL 3.5 'to match existing'. Has mortar analysis been undertaken to inform this? If not – mortar analysis should be undertaken to accurately match historic existing.
- No issues with amount of skylights and their placement. Though I will not permit any more if at a later stage, any are added.
- I have no issue with the removal of the small lean-to's.

As it stands, the eradication of most of the simple farmstead aesthetic on the building, and the replacement of which with overly modern items has made for a structure not too dissimilar to a giant bungalow. Something of which is quite odd, and any rural vernacular intricacies do not seem to be enhanced. It is advised that an honest approach be taken in the works to this structure. I am not confident confusing the structure's history, identity and inaccurately blurring new and old is again, enhancing the structure in a sensitive manner.

Regards,

Miss E Holland.
Conservation Officer.