BYATT OLIVER
LIMITED

The Barn at Horton Farm

Proposed change of use, from agricultural farm building to dwelling.

Planning Statement – V2

CONTENTS

1.0	**INTRODUCTION**
2.0	**HISTORIC APPLICATIONS AND PLANNING POLICY**
3.0	**PROPOSED DWELLING**
4.0	**LAND AND BUILDINGS**
5.0	**SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE PROPERTIES**
6.0	**SUMMARY**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- This document has been produced to support a Full Planning Application for the change of use for the conversion of one of the farm buildings to a dwelling.

- **The latest application follows a decision that was issued in 06.02.23 under planning reference number SMD/2022/0467. It is our opinion that the officer did not consider all relevant points relating to this case when making his assessment. This document addresses those points. We also consider that the officer did not act in accordance with the former Core Strategy SS1a which states that the council should work proactively with the applicants in order to secure development that improves the economic, social & environmental circumstances of the area.**

- The site referred to as Horton Barn, Eaves Lane, Kerry Hill, Stoke on Trent. ST2 8NA.

- The historic applications and reference numbers are referred to further in the report. Along with a description of the limitation and its context.

- This report aims to clarify why there is a need for additional accommodation at Horton Farm.

- The proposed new dwelling is to be annexed to the original Horton Barn, the applicant is willing to have a condition limited the use, such as the following:

    - The dwellinghouse hereby permitted and described above shall only be occupied and used by a member of the household or family that occupy the existing dwelling at Horton Barn; a guest of that household or family, during a temporary period where the occupant has their main residence elsewhere; or a person, and their family/household, who is employed, or last employed, on the unit at Horton Barn, in agriculture. The dwellinghouse described above shall not be used or occupied by persons who do not have that specified connection to the existing dwellinghouse or agricultural activity, or in any other way that is outside of those restrictions, and it shall not be let, sold or otherwise separately disposed of as a property independent of the existing dwelling or agricultural activity at Horton Barn.

- The proposal has been assessed against relevant national and local planning policies and it is considered to comply with their various requirements. Consequently, it is considered that the application should be supported by the local planning authority.

2.0 HISTORIC APPLICATIONS AND PLANNING POLICY

- This application follows the refusal of application SMD/2022/0467. In our opinion the assessment of that application did not give full consideration to the positive impacts that this application would have to the Economic, Social and Environmental circumstances of the area.

- There are only 2 reasons listed on the determination of SMD/2022/0467, these are:
    - In appropriate development in the green belt
    - Harmful to the Character and appearance of the rural area

- **Our case:**

- **Principle of Development / Green Belt**

- Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision taker this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

- The presumption in favour of sustainable development is reflected in Core Strategy (CS) policy SS1, where it outlines the Council expectation for all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of the Staffordshire Moorlands. Former CS policy SS1a states that the Council will work proactively with applicants in order to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental circumstances of the area.

- Core Strategy Policy SS9 is the Other Rural Areas Area or Smaller Villages Strategy Policy, which relates to the countryside outside of the development and infill boundaries of the towns and villages. Within these areas, development should meet local needs housing, support the rural diversification and sustainability of rural areas or promote sustainable tourism.

- The application is for a conversion of an agricultural building into a dwelling which is situated within the Open Countryside and Green Belt. The principle of a conversion dwelling in the Open Countryside accords with CS Policy. However, the site is also situated within the North Staffordshire Green Belt where restrictive development plan policies apply and accordingly chapter 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Policy are applicable. Policy states that appropriate development should not harm the rural character of the area or any sites designated for their nature conservation, or historical interest by virtue of the scale, nature and level of activity involved.

- The construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is to be regarded as being inappropriate development which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt. It should not be approved except in very special circumstances. These will not exist unless the potential harm the

development would cause to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and by any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.

- There are exceptions to this and these are set out in the Framework. One such exception is the conversion of a building to a dwelling, provided the converted building is not materially larger than the one it replaces. We must consider therefore that the conversion of an existing building has no greater impact. Therefore, provided the proposed conversion to a dwelling does not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or the purposes for including land within the Green Belt, the proposals will not constitute inappropriate development and will be acceptable in principle.

- By applying the above test that the new development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt, The building already exists and the application would seek to reduce the footprint of the building and improved the appearance.

- The harm which arises in this case results from the inappropriateness of the development and the harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the existing agricultural building. However, it is necessary to consider whether there are any very special circumstances relating to the proposal. The very special circumstances in this case relate to the fallback position represented by the fact that the building already exists and it already has an impact on the openness of the green belt. In addiation the change of use from dwelling to holiday accommodation at Horton Barn, should be considered positive and in line with the new Tourism Strategy. (Feb 2023)

- Taking the above in account, it is considered that the principle of this development is acceptable and in accordance with the relevant policies of the CS and the NPPF, subject to other material considerations as discussed below.

- **Character of the countryside / Design**

- Paragraph 127 of the NPPF advises that new development should function well, add to the overall quality of the area and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. Policies DC1 and DC3 of the adopted Core Strategy are consistent with this ethos and seek to ensure that new development is of a character, form and design which respects local distinctiveness.

- Apart from the neighbouring property Horton Barn, the site is situated in an isolated position in the open countryside though it is prominent when viewed from Eaves Lane. The existing agricultural building is typical of farm buildings in this location, the building in its current form offers little in terms of architectural merit and the proposal presents the opportunity to provide an enhancement to the appearance of the site and the surrounding area.

- The conversion and refurbishment of the existing building offers an opportunity for a contemporary design.

- There are a variety of dwelling types in the surrounding area and it is considered that there is scope in this particular instance for a design which is contemporary whilst also drawing on traditional design elements of nearby built form. The single storey form of the development will reflect the scale and height of the existing surrounding buildings.

- We draw the officer attention to Application SMD/2019/0440, which is an approved application for a replacement dwelling of a contemporary design. This application is approximately 130m away from the application site.



- The new dwelling at Fair View, Eaves Lane, has a very similar material pallet and contemporary design style to the application site. It therefore must be considered that the Local Authority are supportive of this type of design in this location.

- The officer for application SMD/2019/0440 stated "Overall, the design of the development, as revised, is of a high quality which complies with Policies DC1 and DC3 of the Core Strategy and Chapter 12 of the NPPF."

- **Support for Tourism**

- Approved in February 2023, The tourism Strategy identifies the council vision, key priorities for the growth and action plan for tourism delivery in the Staffordshire Moorlands.
-
- One of the four key priorities is "Accommodation – expand, improve and encourage investment".
- Along side the application to convert the existing steel framed barn, the application also includes the change of use from dwelling house to holiday accommodation of the existing brick-built barn know as Horton Barn. Enhancing the tourism offering in the locality, without having to create or build a new property.

- Under action area 4 – Accommodation, the strategy seeks to expand, improved and encourage the development of accommodation to attract visits to stay overnight and keep their spending in the local area rather than losing it to neighbouring regions

- The approach to achieve this is to unlock private sector investment. The applicants are willing to make this investment in their local economy.

- The actions of this strategy, include ensuring the planning within the council is supportive and enabling, with clear polies that encourage economic growth.

- We consider the granting of this consent would offer a great opportunity to enhance the offerings in the area.

3.0 PROPOSED DWELLING

- Planning permission is sought for the conversion of an existing agricultural building, in line with the Class Q limitation the building does not require any significant alterations or changes to the external envelope and as such will not impact the visual setting. It therefore must be considered that the building is suitable and appropriate in the open countryside.

- The proposed dwelling is intended for use by the applicants as the main family dwelling. The existing dwelling will become an sub servant building. Both properties will be tied together with an appropriate planning condition.

- The proposed dwelling utilises and makes best use of an existing building, the size, mass and scale of the building which has been erected since 1980's has not change and will not change as part of the scope of works.

- The building is of a typical agricultural style, being a portal framed building, with a low-pitched roof and box profile cladding to the sides.

- The building is located in within the main courtyard of the farm and is served by the existing vehicle access drive with the aim of limiting the impact on the openness of the countryside. In addition to this the building is of a sympathetic design, a single storey form with a traditional agricultural style and material palette that reflects the local vernacular.

4.0 LAND AND BUILDINGS

- Horton Barn is – approximately 23.5 Acres
- The building and farmstead is in very good order, and shows the perfect example of good farming/equestrian practices.

5.0 SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

- Following a review, it has been concluded suitable alternative properties in the locality which satisfy the requirements that this farm has for a permanent dwelling. The applicants has sought to identify alternative properties but there are none available meeting their requirements.

6.0 SUMMARY

- The proposal seeks to achieve planning permission for the conversion of an existing agricultural building into a dwelling at Horton Barn. The circumstances which have led an essential need for the dwelling are outlined above.

- Having reviewed all relevant factors, it is essential that there is a requirement for a permanent dwelling at the farm in order to help and appropriately manage the livestock and ensure that the animals have the care that they require.

- The application site is accessed from the existing main vehicle highways access point which