

Planning Statement

Conversion of mixed use agricultural and domestic building to form Dwelling

Birchendale Farm, Hollington

October 2023

Conversion of building to form dwelling – Birchendale Farm, Hollington

Project	Birchendale Farm, Hollington
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Reference	1939
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.
- 1.2 The author of this appraisal, Jim Malkin, has worked as both a principal planning officer in development control, and more recently as a planning consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and experience of the appeals process. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

2 Site and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site comprises of an existing barn that is currently utilised for a mix of agricultural and domestic storage / hobby purposes. The building is located immediately adjacent to the existing dwelling at Birchendale Farm.
- 2.2 The building is constructed of a mixture of blockwork and profile sheet cladding and is reminiscent of a modern agricultural building, many of which have been converted under class Q permitted development rights. The building is provided with a solid concrete floor and is of solid and substantial construction.
- 2.3 The building is screened from Fole Lane by existing mature hedgerows. There is also a dedicated access to the north of the site which accesses the building. There is a public footpath that runs to the east of the building.
- 2.4 Application reference DET/2021/0023 which was submitted under Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order for the change of use from agricultural building to a dwelling was refused by the Council on the 03/08/2021. The application was turned down for two reasons as follows:

- The building was not 'solely' in agricultural use.
- The works proposed to facilitate the conversion exceeded those reasonably allowed under the limitations of Class Q.

2.5 The site and its surroundings are shown on the following aerial photograph.

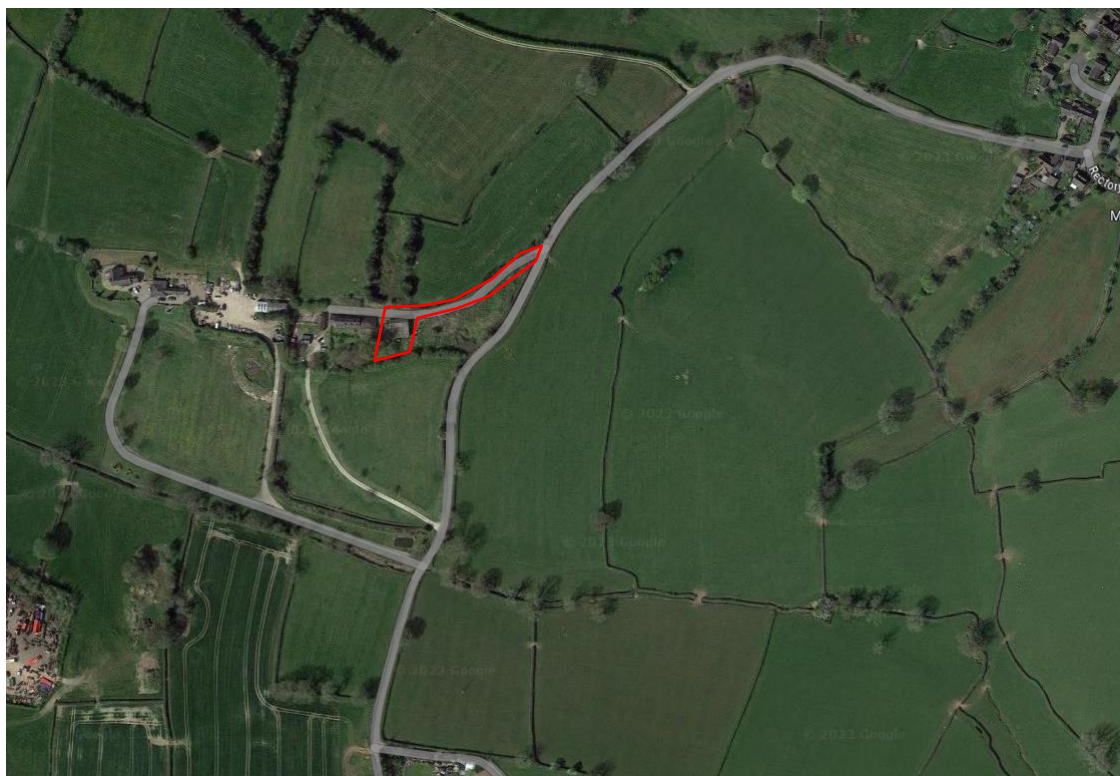


Figure 1 - Aerial photograph of site

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 This application is a full planning submission and seeks the conversion of the barn to form a single detached family home. The dwelling would be occupied by the applicant Mr Dean, who has lived in Hollington all of his life, with the exception of the past 2 years, where owing to his expanding family, he has moved into Uttoxeter. He now however wants to move back to the outskirts of the village to enable his family to grow up within the parish.

- 3.2 The building immediately adjoins Birchendale Farm which is Mr Deans family home, this is still occupied by his father who lives alone, and the proposal seeks to allow the family group to live together on the farm, thereby providing a support network for Mr Deans father as he gets older.
- 3.3 The scheme seeks to maintain the existing character of the barn and proposes very little in the way of external alterations, these are limited to the repair / replacement of external cladding onto the existing screen, alongside the installation of a small number of new openings to form doorways and windows to serve the new dwelling. Internally a total of 3 bedrooms alongside an open plan living area and bathroom will be provided.
- 3.4 Externally a small yard / garden area will be used as private amenity space, a total of 2 car parking spaces will be provided with access provided directly from Fole Lane along the existing track.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 Paragraph 11 advises that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan; and also in circumstances where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date unless 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.
- 4.2 Paragraph 60 of the NPPF states a sufficient supply of homes should be delivered to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of home.

This can be achieved by ensuring a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed to meet the needs of groups with specific housing requirements.

- 4.3 Paragraph 84 advises that planning decisions in local areas should *enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*
- 4.4 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that isolated new homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there is special justification, such as where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to their immediate setting.
- 4.5 Chapter 12 of the Framework houses a number of relevant paragraphs relating to the importance of appropriate design. Paragraph 126 encourages the creation of high quality buildings which raise the quality of the built environment and create better places in which to live and work. Paragraph 130 advises that decision makers should aim to ensure that developments respond to local character and history, reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

- 4.6 The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan was adopted in 2020 and provides the local planning policies on which development proposals should be assessed. The most relevant policies are as follows:

4.7 **Policy SS 10 Other Rural Areas Strategy**

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 the following actions:

1. Meet housing requirements and specific needs by:

- 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 H 1;*
- Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with Policy H 1;*
- 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 DC 2;*
- Allowing rural exceptions housing (in accordance with Policies H 1 and H 3);*
- 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.*

2. Sustain the rural economy by:

- Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified*
- Supporting the diversification of existing farm enterprises*
- Supporting the development of appropriate ICT and new means of communications to enable homeworking and small businesses reliant on e-technology;*

3. Enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by:

- *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;*
- *Ensuring renewable energy schemes are of an appropriate scale, type and location;*
- *Recognising and conserving the special quality of the landscape in the Peak District National Park (in accordance with Policy DC 3);*
- *Encouraging measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity, geological resources and heritage of the District.*

4. *Regenerate underused major developed areas in the countryside including:*

- *Bolton Copperworks, Froghall and Anzio Camp, Blackshaw Moor (in accordance with policies DSR 5 and DSR 6).*
- *Development of these areas shall be complementary to and not undermine the role of the towns and larger villages nor shall it undermine wider strategic objectives. It shall also avoid or minimise environmental impacts and congestion and safeguard and enhance natural and cultural assets.*
- *Facilitating the appropriate redevelopment of other major developed areas where the proposed development brings positive benefits to the area and any resultant environmental or highways concerns could be adequately addressed and minimised. Such proposals will be expected to provide supporting information that demonstrates clearly that the redevelopment will complement the overall development strategy for the District.*

5. *Enhance tourist opportunities by:*

- *Supporting sustainable tourism developments and measures in the Churnet Valley in accordance with Policy SS 11 and the Churnet Valley Masterplan SPD;*
- *Allowing for small-scale tourism developments in other areas (in accordance with policy E 4);*
- *Establishing strong linkages between recreational and tourist resources;*

- *Recognising and developing the close linkages to the Peak District National Park.*

6. *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. Any development proposal that might have the potential to affect a European or Ramsar Site must itself be subject to appropriate assessment.*

4.8 Policy H1 – New Housing Development

Policy H1 refers to the replacement of existing dwellings and provides the following guidance in section 5 refers to development in the open countryside:

- 5) *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 H 3.*
 - 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.*

Checkley Neighbourhood Plan

4.9 The Checkley Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was designated on the XXX and is at a stage where an independent examiner, Christopher Collison, has been appointed to move the plan forward to referendum. At this stage of the process, the

NDP carries some weight in the determination of the scheme. The NDP supports housing that responds to Local Needs.

Five Year Land Supply

- 4.10 The most recently published 5-year housing land supply statement for the LPA (as of 1st April 2022) confirms that the district has a deliverable supply of 3.71 years. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 policies for the restriction of new housing are out of date, and the tilted balance is engaged.

5 Planning Considerations

Principle of the Proposed Use

- 5.1 The site lies outside of any designated settlement boundary to the edge of the dispersed village of Hollington, in general planning terms however it is classed as development in the countryside. Therefore, in principle terms the most important policy is H1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan.
- 5.2 Policy H1 advises that *the conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion*. The proposed development makes use of an existing building which has been present within the landscape for a significant period of time and therefore contributes to the character of the area. The subject building whilst being utilitarian in design is typical of buildings within the locality, whilst being the type of building that the government has made clear is capable of conversion owing to the existence of the class Q regulations. The proposed development will ensure that the building retains in a positive use. It is therefore inherently sustainable.
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that sustainability encompasses wider implications, namely economic, social and environmental roles.

The development will provide economic benefits during the construction period with local tradespeople and suppliers being required to complete the works.

- 5.4 In addition, as set out earlier, and critical to this application, are the social benefits associated with the fact that the conversion would enable a young family with longstanding local connection to move back to the village, as well enabling a wider family unit to live close to each other thereby providing a support network for the applicant's father. The provision of local needs housing, as is clearly the case in this instance, is also central to the aims and ethos of the emerging Checkley Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 5.5 On this basis, the broad principle of the conversion of the building to a single residential dwelling is supported by Policies H1 and C1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and by the relevant policies of the NPPF.

Impact upon the Character and Appearance

- 5.6 The key to a successful conversion scheme is to avoid damaging the character of the original building. The scheme therefore retains the original form and character of this agricultural building, whilst making it an attractive and high-quality unit of accommodation.
- 5.7 The conversion will retain the form, scale and outward appearance of the former barn. The scheme proposes the replacement of cladding and the installation of a small number of new openings to provide for windows and doors. The building will appear as a modern interpretation of a barn conversion and will maintain the original character and appearance of the building, thereby protecting the wider appearance of the landscape.
- 5.8 The proposals will therefore enable the existing building and its appearance and form to be maintained in the streetscene and will, following the completion of the

conversion, enhance the character and appearance of their surroundings in accordance with Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Residential Amenity

- 5.9 The building is sited in the open countryside, albeit it is immediately adjacent to Birchendale Farm which is occupied by the applicant's father. The design of the scheme ensures that an acceptable relationship between the existing property and the proposed conversion is maintained, and no overlooking or loss of light will occur from the proposals. Therefore, the proposal ensures that no harm to amenities of the occupiers of existing properties occurs from the scheme.
- 5.10 With regards to the amenity of future occupiers all habitable rooms are served by at least one window which will allow for adequate natural light to permeate, whilst an appropriate level of private amenity space is provided to serve the development.
- 5.11 The proposal will therefore not give rise to any detrimental impacts on the amenities of neighbouring properties and will provide a high quality and acceptable living environment for future occupiers.

Highway Safety

- 5.12 The proposed dwelling will utilise the existing access from Fole Lane. This access is existing and is utilised currently by agricultural vehicles, this scheme will remove all movements through the access and on the lane from large, slow moving, agricultural machinery and will provide a net benefit to highway safety.

Flood Risk

- 5.13 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore not at risk from fluvial flooding.

Ecology

- 5.14 The scheme is accompanied by a Bat and Bird survey which concludes that there was no evidence of protected species using the building. The report provides a number of options for biodiversity enhancement and the applicant is happy to include these within the development.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The application seeks permission for the conversion of a modern mixed-use building to form a single residential dwelling. Critically, the dwelling is to be provided to allow the applicant and his young family to move back to the Parish, whilst enabling the family group to live together to support the applicant's father.
- 6.2 The proposal will have a positive overall effect upon the character and appearance of the surroundings and will provide significant visual enhancement owing to the appropriate re-use and repair of this substantial and permanent host building.
- 6.3 The development would not detrimentally affect the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby dwellings, nor will it impact adversely on the safe and efficient use of the existing highway network. The proposals will not harm protected species or their habitat.
- 6.4 The scheme therefore accords with the requirements of local and national planning policies, and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the proposal.