

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0041
Valid 31/01/2023

SMITHY FARM DIAL LANE
CONGLETON

**CHANGE OF USE OF
REDUNDANT FARM
OUTBUILDING TO ANCILLARY
RESIDENTIAL LIVING
ACCOMMODATION**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

Impact on the Green Belt, character and appearance of the area and the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Included on the County's record of historic farmsteads. One of a cluster of farms on Dial Lane, Biddulph. Smithy Farm is laid out around a loose, three-sided yard with detached farmhouse set long side on to the yard. Double fronted stone and tile cottage parallel to the road.

The farmstead is in the Green Belt essentially between the towns of Congleton to the north west and Biddulph to the south or, further out, Leek to the south east. It is served by Dial Lane a mid 18th century turnpike road which connected the towns of Ashbourne, Leek and Congleton. The farmstead forms a little cluster of properties with the two farms and three terraced cottages on the opposite side of the road. However, the land to the rear is open farmland countryside running to a woodland edge. At the rear the original elevation is a simple ground floor lean to conservatory at ground floor.

PROPOSAL

To convert an existing stone outbuilding to the front of the dwelling into additional living accommodation for the dwelling.

The conversion would provide annexed sitting room and a gallery/mezzanine bedspace. The conversion would rely on existing window and door openings in the west facing gable, it would not introduce any new openings, extend or alter the form of the existing building.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Area
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape Character

T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

78/05786/OLDDC alterations and extension to kitchen. Approved (not implemented)
SMD/2020/0100 Two storey rear extension. Refused.
SMD/2020/0517 Two and single storey side and rear extensions, replacement garage. Refused.
SMD/2021/0066 Extensions to dwelling. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 31/12/2023
Neighbour consultation period ends: 31/12/2023
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Biddulph Town Council: Recommend approval subject to remedial work being undertaken

SCC Historic Environment

No archaeological concerns

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection subject to the conversion remaining part of the existing dwelling and not becoming an independent dwellinghouse.

The proposal is for a change of use of a redundant farm outbuilding attached to the main farmhouse. The ground floor will consist of a siting/dining area with a bedroom above.

It is noted there are no kitchen or bathroom facilities proposed and it is assumed these facilities will be shared with the main dwelling.

Parking is not shown on the submitted plans however, it is noted the application form states there is parking for 6+ vehicles. Having visited the site, it is considered there is sufficient parking within the farmyard to accommodate parking for both the proposed accommodation and farmhouse.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The property is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions in the lists that

appear at paragraph 154 and 155 of the NPPF. Exceptions relevant to this case include, the extension or alteration of a building provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; and the reuse of buildings provided they are of permanent and substantial construction and the development preserves openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The existing building as confirmed by plans would be altered in an only very minor way, these alterations would not result in any size increase. The established stone outbuilding sits within the residential planning unit with physical connection to the dwelling, it is original to the historic farmstead and is of permanent and substantial construction, as confirmed by the structural survey report provided with the application. Re-use of the building would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with any of the purposes for including land in the Green Belt.

The conversion, if it would be development at all, would not be inappropriate and there would be no harm to the Green Belt.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the area

To accord with the strategy an extension to an existing dwelling must be appropriate in scale and design and not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. Supplementary to this, local plan design policy DC1 and DC2 require development to be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage value of an area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. With regard to 'extensions', the design guide requires them to harmonise with the parent building, respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing, as an example, setting back the new section from the building line and keeping the eaves and ridge lower than the parent building will help.

The character and appearance of the existing building and its arrangement / relationship with the dwelling would not be altered. The character and appearance of the area and the integrity of the historic farmstead would not be harmed. There would be no conflict with the Local Plan policies DC1, DC2 or DC3 in these regards.

Highway Safety

The Highway Authority have concern over the proposed accommodation becoming an independent dwelling and thus increasing parking demands against Local Plan standards. This is not what is proposed, the existing building can reasonably be included as accommodation to the existing dwellinghouse and can be conditioned accordingly.

Amenity

No extensions are proposed and no windows are proposed which would overlook or overshadow neighbouring dwellings.

Ecology

The application includes the submission of a preliminary bat survey report from a qualified ecologist. The surveyor did not find evidence of bats using the buildings as a place of shelter. There is access to the ridge board for Brown long eared bats but

the high level of natural illumination make the likelihood of bats using the building exceptionally small.

There is a crevice of the eastern elevation that can be retained for use by bats. It is to repointed with a gap 50mm long retained allowing bats access to the crevice. There is a roosting opportunity in the western elevation verge that can be retained if the building is converted to an extension to the dwelling by retaining a 50mm gap between the timber battens.

There are gaps at the eaves between the top of the stone walls and the timber wall plate that may have been used by birds for nesting and could be used by bats. These gaps are to be retained by using rise and brackets to support guttering, allowing access to the gaps. There is access under the ridge tiles for bats and these will be retained undisturbed if the roof is not removed, being in a good state of repair with a breathable roofing membrane beneath.

The conversion of the outbuilding will not affect a place of shelter for bats if the features above are retained and opportunities can be enhanced by installing a ridge tile roost within the linking structure. This can be condition accordingly.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

There would be no harm to the Green Belt or the character and appearance of the area. There is no conflict with the policies of the SMDC Local Plan or the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 5th January 2024

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council