

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0072
Valid 09/02/2024

ASH TREE LODGE ASH
TREE ROAD
HOFTENS CROSS
CAULDON LOW

CONVERSION OF
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO
RESIDENTIAL ANNEX

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Rural location and worthiness of building for conversion
- Impact on Character and appearance of area
- Ecology

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Ash Tree Lodge is a stone built cottage with attached shippon dating from the 19th Century. It has a remote isolated other rural location surrounded by moorland farmland. The rear of the dwelling backs onto its curtilage boundary just 4m away. At the rear of the curtilage there is a belt of trees that have been planted in and fill out the shape of the former heading of the dismantled Cauldon Low tramway (Victorian 1849 route). Presumably, Ash Tree Lodge has its origins as a tramway corks cottages.

An adjacent concrete block shed and a timber pole haybarn were introduced in the mid-20th Century. The concrete block shed has a gross internal floor area of 52m² and is located to the southeast of the existing dwellinghouse on the site. The building is single storey and has an asbestos full pitch sheet roof atop. It is said that the shed was formerly used for milking.

The shed faces the dwelling 13m away, and has a presence and relationship similar to that of a detached garage.

PROPOSAL

Conversion of the single storey farm shed to provide a residential annex to the existing dwelling. The application proposes the replacement of the existing asbestos roof with a new tiled roof, along with the change of use of the building to form a residential annex. The accommodation of the annex will comprise of an open plan kitchen / living area, two bedrooms and a bathroom. The gross internal floor area of the annex will be 46m².

The annex is to be occupied by the applicant, with his father living in the main dwellinghouse. The annex will share the same domestic curtilage and parking areas of the existing dwelling, will remain in the same ownership, and will also share all of its service connections and postal address with the main dwelling.

Vehicular access to the site will be taken off Ash Tree Lane to the northeast of the site, with no alterations being proposed.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Area
H1 Housing
DC1 Design Considerations
DC2 Historic Environment
DC3 Landscape Character
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 22/03/2024
Neighbour consultation period ends: 22/03/2024
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Cotton Parish Council: No objection

Staffordshire County Council Highways

It is considered the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the adopted highway and therefore no objection to the proposal. The proposed annex is to be occupied by the applicant, with his elderly father living in the main dwellinghouse. Parking for 3 vehicles (2 spaces for Ash Tree Lodge, the host property and 1 space for the proposed residential annex) is shown on submitted Drawing ref: 1844-04, and parking for a further vehicle is available to the side elevation of the proposed residential annex as shown Drawing ref: 1844-06. This meets with Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards which state: Detached/Semi-detached property of up to 3 bedrooms requires 2 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m each space) for residents and visitors. Access to the property will be via an existing access off Ash Tree Road. No alterations are proposed to the access.

Waste Collection

No issues

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

In an 'other rural area' policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan provide support for the conversion of existing buildings to residential use, provided that the building is worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion.

Where the policies are primarily concerned with the provision of dwellings in the rural areas, the proposal in this case would not introduce a new house it would provide additional living accommodation for an existing dwelling to be used as part of the same household and residential planning unit.

However, with some observation of the principles advocated by the policy, the simple farm shed is of permanent and substantial construction with an obviously subordinate relationship to the adjacent dwelling with the character of a garage or outbuilding. The proposed alterations would improve the materials to the roof introducing tiles that would relate better to the dwelling and give the building a less functional or agrarian character and appearance. In these respects the building is worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion.

Impact on Character and Appearance of Area

The building is of functional, utilitarian character and appearance characteristic of a remote moorland farm location, not unusual within the landscape setting. There would be some moderate improvement to the appearance of the building with the introduction of tiles to match and improve relationship with the dwelling, making it a little less utilitarian in character. Nonetheless, the impact of the development on the landscape character and that of the area would be neutral with the building retaining a subordinate arrangement and relationship with the dwelling, not inappropriate for an annexe or ancillary building. The development would not be intrusive in the landscape and would not harm the character and appearance of the area. There would be no conflict with policies DC1 or DC3 of the Local Plan in these regards.

Impact on Ecology

The application is accompanied by a Bat and Bird Activity report prepared by Charnia Ecology. The bat activity survey serves to confirm that the existing building has negligible to low potential for roosting bats given its corrugated asbestos sheet roof. In addition, no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the bat activity surveys. No bat licence is therefore required to undertake the conversion works to this building.

The provision of a bat box can be included into the resultant building in the interests of securing a net gain to biodiversity, and in doing so the development will meet the requirements of policy NE1 of the Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Highway Safety

No alterations are proposed to the existing site access off the Ashbourne Road and the proposal will not materially intensify its use compared to the existing. The property benefits from an existing yard area that has capacity to accommodate at least three vehicles and consequently the requirements of the adopted Car Parking Standards will continue to be met. Consequently the proposal will not give rise to any greater

harm to highway safety than that which may already freely occur. The proposed development is therefore held to meet the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposal would make an appropriate repurposing of a functional building within the planning unit and proximity of an existing dwelling. There would be no harm to the character and appearance of the area. There would be no conflict with the Local Plan policies listed above.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 04/04/2024

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council