

PLANNING STATEMENT

**THE COW SHED
KINGSLEY HOLT**

MAY 2024

Site Address:

The Cow Shed, Churnet Valley Road, Kingsley Holt, ST10 2BQ

Applicant:

Mrs. J. Matthewman

Proposal:

Change of use from 1no. holiday cottage to 1no. dwellinghouse

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 13th May 2024

Job Reference: RDP/2024/030

Report Prepared By:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy has been instructed by Mrs. J. Matthewman to seek planning permission for the change of use of an existing holiday cottage known as The Cow Shed at Bank Top Farm, Churnet Valley Road, Kingsley Holt to form 1no. dwellinghouse.
- 1.2 Planning permission to convert the existing building, along with an adjacent building to the southeast, to a holiday cottage was originally granted under application SMD/2002/1200. Works to convert the buildings were subsequently undertaken in 2003, and the property has since operated as a holiday let. The building to the southeast is no longer owned by the applicant.
- 1.3 The holiday let business no longer provides a viable income and has led the applicant to consider her options for the site, which has resulted in this application being brought forward to change the use of the premises to a dwellinghouse.
- 1.4 The resultant dwellinghouse will have a gross internal floor area of 303m², and will provide an open plan lounge / dining area, kitchen, bedroom utility, w.c. and hall at ground floor, with stairs leading up to four bedrooms (one ensuite) and two bathrooms, and a gallery landing at first floor level. No changes are proposed to the interior or exterior of the building as part of this application.
- 1.5 The site benefits from an established area of private amenity space on the northwest side of the building that extends to and which extends to 344m² and which is enclosed by dry stone walls and post and rail fencing. A large area of hardstanding is located to the southeast of the building where parking for numerous vehicles can be accommodated along with associated turning space. No changes are proposed to the existing external layout of the site.

2 Site Description

- 2.1 The application site is located within the rural area, and comprises an aesthetically pleasing, two storey, vernacular former agricultural building that is currently used as a holiday cottage. The building is finished in red/brown facing brickwork, with a Staffordshire blue tiled roof atop. Stone headers sit atop the existing windows. A large area of amenity space is located to the northwest of the building, enclosed by a mixture of dry stone walls and post and rail fencing.
- 2.2 The building lies to the northeast of Bank Top Farm which is occupied as a dwellinghouse. A vacant former agricultural building is located directly to its northeast of the building. The site is enclosed by a large area of hardstanding to its immediate southeast, beyond which lies another two storey former agricultural building which was approved as a holiday cottage under the same planning application (SMD/2002/1200). Open fields extend to the north, with a large copse of trees to the northeast.
- 2.3 Vehicular access to the site is taken via a long, agricultural style twin trod track that connects with the Churnet Valley Road to the west of the site, some 300 metres away.
- 2.4 The building on the site is not statutorily listed, nor does it lie within a Conservation Area.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community
- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce
- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment

- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations
- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

3.3 Policy SS3 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Future Provision and Distribution of Development' and states that provision will be made for at least 6080 additional dwellings (net of demolitions) to be completed in Staffordshire Moorlands during the period 2014 to 2033 - an annual average of 320 homes per year. Sufficient deliverable land will be identified to provide at least 5 years of development at all times. The policy goes on to confirm that 25% of the total housing requirement will be delivered within the rural areas.

3.4 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and confirms that 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. The policy goes on to state that 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. This will be achieved via a number of actions, including:

- Allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policy H1.
- 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

3.5 Policy H1 of the Local Plan relates to 'New Housing Development' and states that, amongst other requirements:

- New housing development should provide for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenure including a proportion of affordable housing as set out in Policy H3, and where appropriate housing for special groups, to meet the needs and aspirations of the current and future population having regard to the Area Strategies.
- All development will be assessed according to the extent to which it provides for high quality, sustainable housing and to which it meets identified housing needs, having regard to the location of the development, the characteristics of the site and the economics of provision.
- All housing development should be at the most appropriate density compatible with the site and its location, and with the character of the surrounding area. Higher densities will generally be appropriate in

locations which are more accessible by public transport and which have good access to services.

- All new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standard and delivered to meet accessibility standards set out in the Optional Requirement M4(2) of Part M of the Building Regulations. This will be determined on a site-by-site basis subject to considerations such as viability and design.
- All new dwellings must be of sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of occupiers of existing dwellings.
- Housing development on sites not allocated for such purposes in Policy H2 will be supported within the development boundaries of the towns and larger villages subject to compliance with the Spatial Strategy and wider Local Plan policies.

3.6 Policy H1 goes on to state that 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 H3
- 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.

3.7 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should (amongst other requirements):

- be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area
- be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance

- protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution
- provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use

3.8 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by (amongst other requirements):

1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.
2. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.
3. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of significantly boosting the supply of housing, securing high quality design, and ensuring highway safety. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

Staffordshire Moorlands Space about Dwellings SPG

- 4.2 This document provides a series of numerical standards that new development should seek to achieve in the interests of safeguarding residential amenity. The content of the SPG has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMD/2022/0656 – Alderlee Farm, Meerbrook

- 4.3 The above application granted planning permission for the change of use of 3no. holiday lets to 3no. dwellinghouses on a site within the rural area of the Staffordshire Moorlands, in a location far less sustainable than the current application site. The conclusions of the Local Authority in their assessment of that application have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

- 5.1 The application site is located within the rural area, wherein policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan make provision for the reuse of rural buildings for residential purposes, provided that the building is worthy in structural, architectural and character terms for conversion.
- 5.2 The site comprises an aesthetically pleasing, former agricultural building of vernacular design and appearance, constructed from red/brown facing brickwork with a Staffordshire blue tiled roof atop. The building is currently used as a holiday cottage, having been approved for such purposes under application SMD/2002/1200. Given that the building is already occupied as a holiday let, and no works of alteration or demolition / rebuild are proposed, the building can be held to be worthy in physical terms for conversion (policy H1 refers).
- 5.3 The building is also unquestionably worthy of conversion in architectural and character terms, comprising as it does an aesthetically pleasing, vernacular form of development that contributes positively to the character of the Staffordshire Moorlands. The change of use of this building to form a dwellinghouse is consequently held to be acceptable in principle, in accordance with the provisions of policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan.
- 5.4 It is recognised that the proposal will involve the loss of an existing unit of holiday accommodation. However, the existing use is simply no longer viable. The audited accounts for the business for the last two years show a nominal net profit of below £1,500 each year. Those figures are *without any form of salary / wages being taken*.
- 5.5 Occupancy for the last two years has also been poor, running at 52% (2023) and 42% (2024) respectively. The cottage has no bookings for the summer
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school holiday period, a time when one would usually expect demand to be at its greatest, and when coupled with spiralling heating and energy costs, it is no longer considered to represent a financially viable business.

- 5.6 The applicant has therefore served notice on the holiday company that manages bookings for the accommodation, such that this will be its last year as a holiday cottage. By contrast, the proposed permanent residential use of the building will ensure that this vernacular building will be safeguarded and maintained into the future.
- 5.7 The Local Authority currently has a significant shortfall of housing. Whilst the National Planning Policy Framework no longer requires local authorities to demonstrate a five year deliverable supply of housing where its Local Plan is less than 5 years old (as is currently the case with the Staffordshire Moorlands), it nevertheless remains a fact that the Local Authority's housing delivery performance continues to fall well short of the targets it set for itself within policy SS3 of the Local Plan.
- 5.8 Policy SS3 confirms that over the plan period 2014 – 2033 provision will be made for at least 6080 additional dwellings at an annualised rate of 320 dwellings per year. The Local Authority has a long history of housing under-supply and the table in Figure 1 overleaf, taken from the Local Authority's latest Monitoring Report, demonstrates that **at no point** since 2014 has the Local Authority delivered sufficient housing to meet the stated annualised housing requirement of 320 dwellings per annum (Policy SS3 refers).
- 5.9 The Local Authority's Statement of Five Year Housing Land Supply (as of 1st April 2023) confirms that the annualised housing requirement now stands at **597 dwellings per annum** in order to meet the housing shortfall required to fulfil the provisions of policy SS3. In all but one of the monitored year

(2014/15) the Local Authority has failed to achieve even *half* of that new annualised requirement.

Figure 1 – Table of Housing Completions (Source: SMDC Monitoring Report)

Year	Leek	Biddulph	Cheadle	Rural	District Total
2014/15	149	60	31	38	278
2015/16	29	28	10	32	99
2016/17	44	40	4	40	128
2017/18	40	33	13	56	142
2018/19	14	6	87	58	165
2019/20	85	18	22	78	203
2020/21	79	15	41	66	201
2021/22	29	11	57	80	177
2022/23	23	4	128	87	242
Total	492	215	393	535	1,635
Local Plan Target (%)	30%	20%	25%	25%	100%
Percentage % (to date)	30.1%	13.2%	24%	32.7%	100%

5.10 We consequently submit that there continues to be a significant demand for the delivery of new housing within the District, and the submitted proposal will make a positive contribution towards meeting that need, making beneficial reuse of a vernacular building to provide 1no. dwellinghouse. Such benefits weigh heavily in favour of approval.

Sustainability of Location

5.11 The application site constitutes a sustainable location for new housing, as it makes beneficial reuse of a vernacular building, in full accordance with the objectives of policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan. The site lies 300m from the main built up area of Kingsley Holt where there are some local services and public transport connections.

- 5.12 In consideration of this matter we also draw attention to the Local Authority's approval of consent for the change of use of 3no. holiday lets at Alderlee Farm, Meerbrook to 3no. dwellinghouses under application SMD/2022/0656. That site was found to constitute an *unsustainable location* for new development. Planning permission was nevertheless granted on the basis that the development would be no less sustainable than the existing holiday let uses on the site. Those same conclusions apply equally to this application which also has an established holiday cottage operating from the site, and its reuse as a dwellinghouse will be no less sustainable than that established fall-back position.
- 5.13 The proposal derives no conflict with the provisions of paragraph 84 of the NPPF as it will not result in the creation of isolated homes in the countryside; the new dwelling having a close physical association with neighbouring buildings to the southwest and southeast, and being close to the main built up area of Kingsley Holt. We consequently submit that this site constitutes a sustainable and appropriate location for new housing that meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and policies SS10, H1 and T1 of the Local Plan.

Design & Layout

- 5.14 The submitted proposal does not require, nor propose, any internal or external alterations to the existing building, nor any changes to its external layout. The site benefits from a large area of private amenity space to the rear of the building (344m²) which far exceeds the recommended minimum standard of 65m² as set out in the adopted Space About Dwellings standards. The gross internal floor area of the building (303m²) also far exceeds the minimum standard required by the Nationally Described Space Standards (124m²), thereby ensuring that future occupiers of the dwelling will benefit from a high level of residential amenity.

- 5.15 The proposed development will consequently derive no harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and will provide an acceptable level of residential amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling, in accordance with the objectives of policies SS1, H1 and DC1 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

- 5.16 The application site benefits from an existing means of access off the Churnet Valley Road which links with an existing track that serves the application site as well as a number of nearby buildings that are also in residential / holiday cottage use. The access affords good visibility in both directions on egress from the site onto the Churnet Valley Road, and has good forward visibility along its length.
- 5.17 The access already functions as the vehicular access to the holiday accommodation, so the impact of the proposed development on highway safety will be no greater than that which already occurs. There is also ample parking space available to the front of the building to ensure that the adopted car parking standards are met, with space for numerous vehicles. The proposed development will therefore not lead to any severe residual impacts to highway safety and meets the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The reuse of the existing building as a dwellinghouse is fully consistent with the Local Authority's adopted housing strategy for the District.
- The site occupies a sustainable location within walking and cycling distance of day-to-day services and facilities on offer within the village, and will be no less sustainable than the existing holiday cottage use of the building.
- The proposed development will not derive any material adverse impacts to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- The proposed development will provide a good standard of residential amenity for future occupiers of the dwelling.
- The proposal will not result in any severe residual impacts to highway safety.

6.2 The proposed development is therefore held to be in accordance with the requirements of policies SS1, SS3, SS10, H1, DC1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Staffordshire Moorlands Space about Dwellings SPG.