

Dear Rebecca Bowers,

SMD/2023/0630

**Conversion of former agricultural building to form 1no. dwellinghouse and associated works
Catswall Farm, Huntley Road, Denford, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 7JX 0.105 hectares**

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been asked to review the above application as part of a service level agreement with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council to provide ecology advice regarding planning and development management functions.

The application is a Full – Minor application for the conversion of a single traditional Grade II listed agricultural building (Barn A) into a single dwelling.

Previously, the proposed conversion of two barns (Barn A and Barn B) into three holiday lets, and alterations to an existing barn to form garage and shed unit ancillary to the farmhouse received planning and Listed Building Consent in 2017. Under this previous consent, Barn B was converted however Barn A remains unaffected.

We have viewed the following documents:

- Application Form - dated 6th December 2023;
- Design and Access Statement V2 - dated April 2023;
- Plans and Elevations as Existing: Barn A - Drawing AL(0)01 A - dated July 2012;
- External Works Site Plan as Proposed: Barn A Dwelling - Drawing PL(0)12 - dated November 2023;
- Barn A Plans as Proposed - Drawing PL(0)15 B - dated December 2021;
- Barn A Elevations as Proposed - Drawing PL(0)16 B - dated November 2023;
- Barn A Window/Door Plan Sections Elevations: Typical Section Through Barn – Drawing PL(0)17 A - dated February 2024; and
- Visual Structural Inspection of Barn A, Catswall Farm, Denford, ST13 7JX - Report dated 17th July 2023.

SUMMARY – a **Holding objection** to the proposals is recommended due to a lack of ecological information, specifically information in relation to protected species on the site and also information in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Required prior to determination:

1. A survey is required to determine the potential for / presence of protected species on site;
2. Clarification is required as to the extent of any habitats on site or impacted by the proposals;
and
3. An assessment is required in respect of BNG.

DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES

No designated wildlife sites are present within the site or within 1km of the site boundary. No likely effects on designated sites are identified.

HABITATS

The site comprises the building proposed for conversion to a dwelling, however, it is not clear if any adjacent habitat is included in the proposal. Further information is required to clarify this.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

There is no information provided on BNG and combined with the lack of clarity on impacts on any habitats along with the potential presence of protected species, the requirement for BNG cannot be judged.

As a minimum, a statement on BNG referring to the Statutory Metric approach should be provided, including a statement as to why the proposal may be exempt from BNG if this is considered appropriate. If the proposal is not exempt from BNG then a BNG assessment using the Statutory Metric should be provided.

SPECIES

The Application Form identifies that protected species are present on the site, however, no further information is provided. Given the character of the site the 'presence of protected species' is likely to refer to roosting bats and/or nesting birds. The information viewed includes photographs of the structure and there is potential for both roosting bats and nesting birds to be present.

Further information is required in relation to the presence of / potential for both roosting bats and nesting birds at the site.

Surveys should follow current published methodologies and be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced personnel.

Suitable avoidance / mitigation / compensations measures should be provided as part of any further information on protected species.

Regards,

Dated 26th April 2024