

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0156
Valid 26/04/2024

MAINWARING FARM
CONGLETON ROAD
MOW COP

**PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF
EXISTING DOMESTIC STORE
BUILDINGS AND ERECTION
OF NEW ATTACHED GARAGE,
HOME WORKSHOP, UTILITY
AND REAR ENTRANCE WITH
STORE COME GYM WITH
ENSUITE ANNEXED ABOVE,
REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING
PORCH WITH NEW BAY
WINDOW. EXTENSION OF
HARDSTANDING TO EXISTING
DRIVE
TO EXISTING VEHICULAR
ENTRANCE GATE**

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the Green Belt
- Impact on character and appearance of the area
- Impact on ecology/protected species

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The existing dwelling is of simple linear form with a wide front elevation that faces and runs parallel with Congleton Road and slim end gables facing north east and south west. To the north east of the dwelling there is an open flat area of land that provides parking and garden. The dwelling is in the Green Belt, beyond and some 70m to the north east of the settlement of Mow Cop. The farms and cottages in the open extent of Green Belt to the are scattered and occasional in otherwise undeveloped land between Mow Cop and Congleton to the north.

The dwelling is situated on high ground toward the highest point of the Congleton Road ridge, just below the Mow Cop summit to the south west. Behind the dwelling there is the backdrop of the steeply rising embankment of the field that has in places exposed rock and heath.

PROPOSAL

The application proposes the enlargement of the existing dwellinghouse with a two storey addition that would extend 10m from the dwelling's rear wall into the embankment of the field behind (excavation required) and then from the end of the rear extension an addition to the side that would extend 13m from the side wall of the

dwelling and rear addition. This would create a kind of S shaped footprint. The footprint and volume of the dwelling would be more than doubled with considerable extension and continuation to the rear (the north west) and the side (north east).

At ground floor the addition would provide a complicated galleried staircase arrangement within a large open hallway, a new utility room, a large motorbike workshop and a car garage. At first floor there would be the galleried landing above the hallway and new staircase, a large open home office and gym, and a large bathroom.

The front elevation would be of random course facing stone to match the front of the existing dwelling. Centrally there would be a faux double height cart opening within a wide arch at first floor there would be glazing above a garage roller door. Adjacent there would be three slot windows at ground floor and a dormer style window with a peaked gable that raises above eaves level. In the end or side gable of the addition, facing north east, there would be another double height faux cart opening with glazing above a timber garage door. The side elevation facing south west would be rendered to match the slim end gable of the existing dwelling it would include a double height feature window with exposed lean to roofs running off the rear. The rear elevation presenting to the excavated bank of the field behind would be rendered.

To compensate for the introduction of the development it is proposed to remove three detached single storey old farm outbuildings to the south west of the dwelling (two stone and brick out houses with full pitch tiled roofs and one timber clad agrarian shed).

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS10 Other Rural Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape Character
NE1 Ecology
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

87/00521/OLD Site for replacement dwelling to incorporate granny flat. Approved.
87/00792/OLD Details of dwelling including granny flat and new access. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 21/06/2024
Neighbour consultation period ends: 21/06/2024
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Biddulph Town Council: Object/recommend refusal. Insufficient information, incomplete surveys and overdevelopment.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Conditionally acceptable. Application is for an extension and alterations to access arrangements. The extension is substantial but there is adequate parking available within the site to accommodate any additional use.

The central vehicular access is to be permanently closed with the existing northern access improved and brought into use. The southern access is pedestrian only.

The central access has severely restricted visibility. The access to the north is existing but appears to have become grassed over. Visibility at this access is better than at the central access. The access is proposed to be widened and the gates set back. Some form of feature or surfacing is shown on drawing 21061 3, but it is not clearly defined, hence condition above.

Use of this access with its better visibility is preferable to use of the central access which is proposed to be permanently closed. This aspect of the proposal will improve highway safety for users of the access and for drivers passing the site.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the Green Belt

The site is within the Green Belt where development is inappropriate and, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions that appear on the closed lists at paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF. Any harm to the Green Belt should be attributed substantial weight. Planning permission should not be granted for inappropriate development unless the harm to the Green Belt and any other harms resulting from the development are clearly outweighed by other considerations, that amount to very special circumstances.

The lists of exceptions include at paragraph 154 - c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; and g) the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

The existing ground floor footprint of the original dwellinghouse built in 1987 is 122 sq metres. The proposed addition would have a ground floor footprint of 152 sq metres. That would more than double the original dwellings footprint. The vast majority of the original dwelling's footprint is of two storey height and the proposed addition would also largely be two storey across its footprint. This means that the volume and floor area of the original dwelling would also be at least doubled. It is clear that this would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

The applicant points to farm outbuildings that are adjacent to the dwelling situated to the south west. They include two small brick and stone single storey outhouses with full pitch tiled roofs. The buildings pre date the construction of the replacement dwelling in 1987. Their case is that these outbuildings would be demolished as compensation for the additions made to the other side of the dwelling. In these respects the applicant also includes a timber shed/barn in their considerations, this shed is light in structure and agrarian in character, appearance and function, it has arrangement and projection commensurate with the adjacent field and does not appear or perform as part of the dwellinghouse and cannot therefore, be considered as part of the original dwellinghouse. The two brick and stone outbuildings have single storey footprint which, together, amounts to around 60 sq metres. Even if these two outbuildings are, by reason of their proximity, considered to be part of the 'original dwelling', the proposed addition would still add a further 80% to footprint. The outbuildings are only single storey while the majority of the proposed addition would be two storey and this would mean that size increase to volume and floor area would be even greater than 80%. The proposed extension would still, using that analysis, clearly result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original.

If the proposed addition to the dwelling is considered to be a replacement for the 3 outbuildings, it is clear that it is materially larger and the development would not be provided for by that particular exception. The total footprint of the three outbuildings, with the inclusion of the timber shed, is 90 sq metres of largely single storey structure. The proposed addition would have a footprint of 152 sq m and be of a largely two storey height.

If considered more generally, as the partial redevelopment of previously developed land, the applicant would want the timber shed/barn to be considered as part of the previous development. The Council does not readily accept that proposition - the timber shed is light in structure and agrarian in character and it has association with the adjacent field. However, in any event, the 're development' proposed consisting of the enlargement of the dwelling and the replacement of outbuildings would clearly have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development on site, an observation that is immediately apparent. The proposed two storey development would extend 10m from the rear wall of the dwelling into the embankment of the field to the north west and then 13m from the side wall of the dwelling to the north east. In both directions substantial two storey development would extend and encroach considerably into open undeveloped Green Belt. The encroachment would be visually conspicuous from the north east and the south east in particular, making for a massive form and run of development that would cut into and conceal the rising embankment of the field behind.

The removal of the three outbuildings would not compensate for that harmful impact. These buildings are to the south west of the dwelling's side elevation, they extend into a smaller swathe of open field and toward the edge of the Mow Cop settlement and a row of dwellings just 70m away, unlike the proposed additions that would impose considerable built form toward wide open Green Belt that extends extensively toward The three outbuildings provide a small grouping of detached farm buildings to the edge of the field that, although they have proximity to the dwelling, with their apparent age and mix and condition of facing materials appear distinct from the main dwelling. The largest of the three outbuildings, the timer clad shed, is agrarian in character and light

in structure it does not have the visual impact and substance that would be imposed with the additions on the other side of the dwelling.

The proposed development would not be provided for by any of the exceptions that appear in the NPPF, it would be inappropriate in the Green Belt and impose significant harm to openness in both spatial and visual aspects. Substantial weight is attributed to this harm to the Green Belt and there are no considerations that clearly outweigh this harm and the other harms that result from the development.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance

Policy DC1 of the Local Plan requires all development to 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, the policy requires the development to be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating materials appropriate to the character of the area.

The SPD guidance says that *"The key to a sensitive approach is to take note of what is there already before preparing the design and to work with the building's character. An extension should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing. Setting back the new section from the building line and keeping the eaves and ridge lower than the parent building will help"... "New buildings should use facing materials that either match or complement those of the surroundings".*

The site is in the countryside, under the terms of local plan policy DC3 local landscape will be protected and, where possible, enhanced by resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside and supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character.

The existing dwelling presents a wide two storey front elevation of random course stone parallel to Congleton Road, it has a slimmer side elevation and occupies a slim, long linear footprint and is of simple uncomplicated form. The dwelling is set to the front of a steep field embankment that runs behind and to the side merging with the applicant's garden and in places, further to the north east, revealing rocky outcrop and heath.

The applicant's dwelling appears uniquely with some remoteness from the closest of the neighbouring properties, without the architectural continuity of a built grouping or street scene to provide context or reference. The dwelling sits, on its own merits, neatly within the setting of high quality surrounding landscape. The dwelling contributes to and provides visual interest and foreground within a high quality local landscape.

The sensitivities and qualities here, therefore, can be identified as being that of the simple linear form of the dwelling and its open setting against a steeply rising field embankment behind. This is the contribution it makes to the quality of the local landscape, the distinctiveness of the locality, and the character and appearance of the area. Significant alteration or enlargement of the existing dwelling would disrupt and be harmful to the proportions, character and appearance of the dwelling and its relationship between the dwelling and the landscape and the character and appearance of the area.

Specifically here:

- The extensive extensions to the rear and side, would be damaging to the dwellings simple linear form and would create a strange S shaped footprint. The additions would not be subordinate to or respect the original form, scale and character of the original dwelling. The two storey additions to the rear and side of the dwelling would make for a massive run of built form that would cut into and conceal the rising field embankment behind that provides the dwelling's landscape setting. Both side elevations, currently of slim end gable profile, would become massively wide and dominant with a mix of building forms and architectural styles. The development would make an overly dominant and prominent form of development on high ground that would be apparent from the front and both sides. In these regards the development would make a prominent and significant intrusion into the countryside.
- With the use of half gables, lean to mono pitches at first and ground floor level, flat roof sections, and full pitched gables, the resulting roof arrangement and building form that falls below, would be an awkward confused mix of roofing styles and built form that relate poorly to each other and that of the original dwelling in particular. This would be apparent from all elevations. This would be insensitive to the dwelling's character and origins, and apparent from all exposed elevations that are prominent and apparent from public view to the northeast, south west and southeast.
- The proposals would introduce an unusual mix of window and door openings and arrangements on all elevations that would appear architecturally confused and lack continuity and cohesion as an approach or in the way in which they relate to the original building. The assertion of the front elevation as the dwelling's principle elevation would be made weak with the removal of the central entrance that currently provides balance and symmetry to the elevation. The faux cart openings in the front and end elevations would appear poorly proportioned and oddly positioned within an end gable.

The development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and local landscape. The proposal would not comply with policies SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the Adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020 and the Design Guide 2018 for the area.

Impact on Amenity

The development would extend away from the nearest adjacent neighbours to the south west. It would not introduce any windows that would face or overlook any residential neighbour. No issue would be raised in these respects.

Impact on Ecology

An ecologists report and preliminary roost assessment has carried out a site survey and established that the structures B1 and B2 have moderate potential to support roosting bats and B3 has low potential to support roosting bats. Due to this two further bat activity surveys are required/recommended on those structures B1 and B2 and one further survey is required on the structure B3 during the bat activity survey season of May to September (inclusive).

Further compensation, enhancement and mitigation recommendations in relation to bats could be devised following such activity surveys.

However, the application has not been submitted with an activity survey it does not appear that this has been carried out, essential to assessing the full impact that demolition of the outbuildings would impose on bat species and habitat. There is assumed harm in these regards and conflict with policy NE1 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

The application proposes alterations to access arrangements. There would be adequate parking provision within the site for the development. The existing central access has restricted visibility and would be closed in favour of alteration and re-establishment of existing gated access to the north shared with a neighbour's farm track. This would offer an arrangement with improved visibility.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The development would be inappropriate and, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt it would result in the disproportionate size increase of the original building and result in redevelopment or replacement of existing buildings that would not preserve openness and cause encroachment into the countryside. There would be harm to the character and appearance of the original dwelling and that of the area by reason of the size and design of the proposed addition. The development would cause significant intrusion into the countryside and landscape harm as a result of this and the overall design of the development. There are no other considerations or matters amounting to very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and those other harms resulting from the development. There would be conflict with policies SS10, DC1 and DC3 of the SMDC Local Plan 2020 and the terms of the NPPF in these regards.

The application has not been provided with an activity survey as recommended by the qualified ecologist that carried out a preliminary bat survey on behalf of the applicant. In the absence of such evidence there is assumed harm to the bat species and habitat and conflict with policy NE1 of the SMDC Local Plan 2020 and the terms of the NPPF in those regards.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 21st June 2024

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

