

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0190
Valid 23/04/2024

SPRINKS FARM DINGLE
LANE
RUSHTON SPENCER

SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION
(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Design
- Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The proposed site comprises a detached stone and tile barn which has been converted to a dwellinghouse and its associated curtilage, situated in the Horton ward. The site is not located within the Development Boundary, instead it is on greenbelt land. The dwelling has not previously been extended. Two direct neighbours adjoin the site; Endon Hays Farm, Dingle Lane being located to the North-East and Marl Sprink Farm, Dingle Lane to the South-West. The site is blanketed by open greenbelt countryside land in all other directions. The site and its two neighbours share an access road off Dingle Lane, which runs adjacent to the site to the North.

PROPOSAL

The proposed development comprises a single storey side extension. The proposed extension would allow for the addition of two new bedrooms and a bathroom. The side extension would have a depth of 6.35 metres and would have a width beyond the Eastern side elevation of 8.46 metres. It would have a ridge height of approximately 4.34 metres and an eaves height of 2.16 metres. The proposed extension would be constructed from materials to match those used in the construction of the host dwellinghouse, including sandstone, blue slate and stained timber.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles

1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

SS9 Smaller Villages Area Strategy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14
Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places, 13 –
Protecting Green Belt land

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

Part 5 – Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

SMDC Design Principles for conversions

Staffordshire Moorlands Space About Dwellings SPD

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1988/1155 – Site for farmworkers dwelling. Refused.
SMD/2008/0275 – Implement barn. Approved.
SMD/2009/0258 – Roof over existing stock yard and siting of corn bin. TLPANR
SMD/2010/0845 – Conversion of existing barn to dwelling. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 08/07/2024
Neighbour consultation period ends: 31/05/2024
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

No public comments have been received.

Town / Parish Comments

No comments have been received from Rushton Parish Council.

Cllr Jo Cox has commented to show her support for the application:

“The suggestion of moving the extension to have a more linear appearance creates a problem of it being too close to their next-door neighbour. They feel that any amendment would now be obtrusive and encroaching onto the neighbour’s boundary.”

The Lovatt's have two children who currently share a bedroom. Their original plans allow for each child to have their own bedroom and private space especially as they get older.

The application was submitted with this in mind, and they feel it is important that the rooms are a similar size and therefore, do not think that this application is excessive and over the top for the needs of the family and their neighbours."

Staffordshire County Council Highways

The proposal is for a single storey extension to the rear elevation of the property. The proposed extension will provide 2 bedrooms.

The footprint of the property will increase to 4 bedrooms.

Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards state: Detached/Semi-detached property of 4 or more bedrooms will require 3 spaces (2.4 x 4.8m each space) for residents and visitors within the curtilage of the dwelling.

The submitted plans do not show parking however, having scaled the yard area identified on the submitted Site and Block Plan as proposed it is considered that there is sufficient space within the curtilage of the site to provide parking for 3 vehicles.

I consider the proposal not to have a detrimental impact on the adopted highway and have no objection (application number SMD/2024/0190).

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision makers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan the Council expects all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect and where possible enhance the environment. A more limited focus on future growth is to be directed to smaller

villages, including the rural area of Rushton Spencer. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The application site is located in the Open Countryside and Green Belt whereby Policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that 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.

Part (3) of policy SS10 seeks to protect the quality and character of the area and requires all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

The site is located within the Green Belt. Part (6) of Policy SS10 states that the Council will “maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.”

The proposal is for a single storey side extension to the converted barn building. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF (2021) outlines that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets an exception. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF (2021) states that ‘inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances’. One such exception is (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.

Neither the Local Plan nor the NPPF (2021) provide a definition of what is regarded as being ‘disproportionate’ for the purposes of Green Belt policy. However, previous policy guidance considered a development resulting in a 30% increase in the size of the original building as being acceptable. Whilst it is acknowledged that 30% increase is not planning policy, it does represent a useful “rule of thumb”.

The proposed extension would equate to an increase in volume of approximately 42%. Although the extension to the property would exceed the 30% guideline, the Council do not consider that the extension would result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building, as it would not largely exceed the guideline.

It is now necessary to identify whether there is any other harm arising from the proposed development.

Design

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place. The Council’s Design SPD outlines the Council’s expectations in respect of design and states that extensions should harmonise with the parent building. An extension

should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing.

The application property was previously a barn, granted permission to be converted to a dwelling in 2010 ref SMD/2010/0845. The building has never previously been extended.

Historic England's guidelines for 'Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings' states that 'extensions should be avoided if they compromise the character and setting of the farm building and instead consider extensions and new buildings that work with and enhance the historic plan form of the farmstead. The guidance goes on to state that 'extensions should be subordinate in scale and relate to the massing and character of the existing farmstead group and overtly domestic extensions such as porches and conservatories are alien in character and can rarely work successfully within the context of historic farm buildings'. The general objective should be that traditional farm buildings should remain largely unaltered and continue to look like former farm buildings following their conversion to another use. The conversion of the former barn appears to have been very successful in that regard.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Principles for conversions is relevant to the applicant as the conversion took place within recent years. The conversion was compliant with development policy and this design guide. The principles document states that conversions should be within the shell of the existing building. Extensions will be discouraged; where essential, extensions should be small and unobtrusive.

Initially, the proposed extension was a rear extension. The positioning of the proposed extension to the rear of the barn would have meant that the barn would lose its linear form, which is an integral part of its character. A rear extension would have contributed to a more 'domestic' appearance of the building, creating a feature against the guidance of the Design Principles for conversions document. As such it was considered that the extension would represent a significant alteration to the original simple form and massing of the building which would be harmful to the rural character of the building.

Since this issue was raised, revised plans have been submitted, changing the position of the proposed extension to the North-East facing side elevation. The internal space in the house has been reorganised to create provision for an access plus two more bedrooms and an additional bathroom. The new positioning of the extension to the side of the dwelling ensures that the linear form of the barn will be maintained. Thus, the extension is considered more appropriate development, whilst providing the additional space which the applicants require.

Although the ridge height of the proposed side extension would align with the lower section of ridge line of the dwelling, it would be set down from the maximum ridge height of the host building. Therefore, the extension is considered to have a subordinate relationship with the host dwelling in this sense.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Principles for conversions document states that *"new materials should match the original; windows should be of timber with either a stained finish or painted in a muted colour; joinery details should be carefully*

repaired or matched". Materials used in the construction of the proposed extension would match those used in the construction of the existing building. Sandstone, blue slate tiles and stained timber would be used in the construction of the proposed extension. Thus, the proposed materials would match the existing materials and harmonise with the existing building, not detracting from the character of the original building.

The works, by virtue of their size, scale and siting maintain the character of the existing dwelling and area. The works would therefore accord with the provisions of local plan policy DC1 and section 12 of the NPPF in this regard.

Amenity

Paragraph 127 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

The application site is bound by Endon Hays Farm, Dingle Lane to the North-East and Marl Sprink Farm, Dingle Lane to the South-West. Thus, assessment of amenity impact will be required on the direct neighbouring dwellinghouses of the site.

The proposed single storey extension would not impact the amenity of the neighbours at Marl Sprink Farm. As this neighbouring dwellinghouse is positioned approximately 120 metres South of the site, the single storey extension will be an extremely long distance from this neighbour, thus mitigating any amenity impact.

The proposed extension would barely be visible to the neighbouring dwelling at Endon Hays Farm. The approximately 52 metre distance between the proposed extension and the side elevation of this neighbouring dwelling would eradicate any loss of light or overshadowing from occurring. Furthermore, the substantial amount of soft landscaping comprising the boundary treatment between the site and neighbouring dwelling would screen the extension from this neighbour.

Although there would be one window on the side elevation of the proposed extension which would face the neighbouring dwellinghouse at Endon Hays Farm, the soft landscaping comprising the boundary treatment between the site and this neighbour would block any privacy impact from occurring. Furthermore, the window would serve a bathroom, therefore it would most likely be obscure glazed. Although there would be a door on the side elevation of the extension facing towards Marl Sprink Farm, the 120 metre distance between the door and the closest elevation of this neighbour is substantial enough to meet the spatial standards set out in the Staffordshire Moorlands Space About Dwellings SPD. Thus, the privacy amenity of the neighbours at Marl Sprink Farm would be protected.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 102 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development does not lead to an increase in on street parking.

The proposed extension would increase the number of bedrooms of the dwelling from two to four. Although this means that an additional off-highway parking space will be required for the number of people inhabiting the dwellinghouse, the driveway to the front of the dwelling would accommodate the additional demand for off road parking. Furthermore, no objections have been received from Staffordshire County Council Highways. The development proposals therefore comply with Policy T1.

Thus, the proposed extension would have no impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy T1.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above, the application is recommended for approval. Although the application would have no adverse effect upon the openness of the greenbelt, neighbour amenity and no overall impact on the highway, it was initially considered that the proposed extension would have caused visual harm to the existing converted barn building. The initially proposed extension to the rear of the building would have disrupted the linear form of the building, detracting from the character of the traditional converted barn. The proposed extension would have added a 'domestic' style feature to the building, going against the guidance provided in The Staffordshire Moorlands Design Principles for conversions document. Since this issue was raised, revised plans were submitted, changing the position of the extension from the rear elevation to the side elevation of the building. Thus, the linear form of the converted barn building would be maintained and the extension is now considered appropriate in terms of its design. Therefore, the proposed extension is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions raised.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Hannah Varley

Recommendation Date: 08/07/2024

X 

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

