

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0011
Valid 09/01/2024

ENDON BANK FARM
CHURCH LANE
ENDON

**CONVERSION AND
EXTENSION OF EXISTING
BARN TO 4NO. HOLIDAY
LETS (C3 USE). DEMOLITION
OF EXISTING GARAGE
STRUCTURE AND RE-
CONSTRUCTION.**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the Green Belt; the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset; the character and appearance of the area; and the significance of the historic farmstead as a non-designated heritage asset.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Endon Bank Farm is in the Endon Conservation Area to the north of St Luke's Church (grade II listed building and churchyard). The Farm House and the adjacent linear farm buildings (the application stone barn) to the north west are in the Green Belt.

The application site is on the edge of a predominantly residential area which borders the green belt with properties to the South-West on High View Road built around the 1960's – 1970's. A number of other residential dwellings built around the 1950's – 1960's can be found opposite the site to the South.

The Church of St Luke's is located approximately 50 metres South West of the site with the cemetery located around 75 metres to the North of the farm house. Immediately adjacent the farm house is the old stone barn which consists a two-storey structure of solid stone construction with a pitched roof over with a tiled finish.

A later fair faced blockwork lean-to structure has been added to the rear along with a later red facing brick storage building to the North West end. Further agricultural buildings are located beyond to the North West and a number of bases from previous agricultural buildings that have dilapidated which can be seen on the topographical survey. The site appears on historic environment record as a 19th C historic farmstead.

The application site edged red covers an area of 1725sqm while the adjoining land edged blue also in the applicants ownership and forms the main agricultural land covers an area of 13,035sqm.

The site is located in Endon, Staffordshire and falls within the Endon Conservation Area. The Endon Conservation Area was designated in 1972, and the boundary amended in 1993. The boundaries have been tightly drawn to include specific areas of Special Landscape Interest where they help to preserve the rural setting of present and former farmhouses and hamlets, and to protect views out to the more distant landscape.

The Conservation Area lies north-west of the A53 connecting Leek with the Potteries, and is divided into two sections. The upper part contains the medieval settlement of Endon on Endon Bank, properties along Church Lane, and parts of Brook Lane and Park Lane. The lower part contains a later hamlet known as 'the Village'.

The name 'Endon' is Anglo Saxon, and probably means 'lambs' hill. As the name suggests, the medieval settlement occupied a hilltop, Endon Bank. Medieval settlements required arable land: for this small hilltop settlement it was on the south western slopes of the hill, an area now covered by twentieth century housing. There were three farms, each with its share in the former arable and with a farmhouse set in an irregular enclosure. Two of the enclosures can be distinguished on a map from 1900, and the boundaries of the Endon Bank Farm enclosure are still recognizable, though much of it was lost to the farm in the early 18th century when the church was built. Open land inside the early enclosures at Endon Bank Farm and Bank House Farm may be archaeologically sensitive, as it lies at the heart of the medieval settlement, but has already suffered considerable disturbance.

PROPOSAL

Conversion and extension of existing barns to 4no. holiday lets (C3 Use). Demolition of existing garage structure and re-construction.

The scheme within this application proposes the conversion of an existing barn structure into 4no. single storey holiday lets. Consisting 3no. two bed units and 1no. one bed unit. The building has a gross internal floor area of 340sqm, thus providing adequate floor area for the sub-division into residential units with individual room sizes compliant with the nationally prescribed spatial standards.

** Revised plans have been received throughout the application process that have simplified the scheme. All extensions, additions, roof dormers and balconies have been omitted from the scheme. Revisions include:

- Rooflight numbers have been reduced to two per roof slope of each section of the barn. They have also been reduced in size by 200mm in length and 200mm in width further to conservations concern over their scale. Total proposed down from 11nr to 8nr.
- Proposed extensions and zinc cladding removed.
- Glazed panel to the rear elevation in the central core space omitted. Glazed panel to the front elevation retained in lieu of poor quality brickwork linking the two barn structures.

- Proposed parking area has been re-sited nearer to the built form with the provision of spaces reduced but in-line with policy requirements. It should be noted the revised location is still sited on existing hardstanding.
- The extent of hard landscaping to the rear has been reduced and provides a net gain in soft landscaping over the existing concrete bases below the agricultural sheds. Hedgerows that previously sub-divided this rear amenity area have now been removed.

It is proposed to remove the existing brickwork infill/link to the south-west elevation and provide a glazed façade in its place- repeated through into the rear north-east elevation. This space will then provide a circulation route to the two upper floor units.

It is proposed to demolish the existing single-storey brickwork barn located at the most northerly end of the building range and re-construct this of the same size and scale but in a sympathetic brick.

A revised site plan has reduced the red edged area excluding a remote old silage clamp area that would have been used for parking to the north west of the site. A new area of parking would be provided to the edge of buildings on existing hard surface. Revised site plan omits patios and terraces and subdivision of amenity space. Amenity space at the rear would be grassed and remain open with two lines of low level stone walls providing gentle tiers across the rear of the whole building.

The drainage strategy for the scheme shall be via natural means. Surface water run-off shall be taken to a natural below ground soakaway/drainage field. Foul water shall be taken to a DEFRA approved package treatment plant, with outfall again taken to natural soakaway – please refer to the proposed site plan for further details.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
 SS1 Development Principles
 SS8 Larger Village Strategy
 SS10 Other Rural Area
 H1 Housing
 E4 Tourism and Cultural Development
 DC1 Design Considerations
 DC2 Historic Environment
 DC3 Landscape Character
 T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0227 single storey rear extension (adjacent dwelling). Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 9th Feb 2024

Neighbour consultation period ends: 9th Feb 2024

Press Advert: Press Notice Posted

Public Comments

One letter of objection has been received. The following concerns are raised:

- The ecological report shows significant use of the proposed barn by several bat species. This alone should be enough to prevent the proposed alterations to go ahead. Whilst provision is made for this, it is not enough and is likely to disrupt the roosting during the extensive building work etc.
- Light pollution into houses opposite. Since moving in, the owner has installed several large lights already which pollute into the front bedrooms of these homes. It is believed that the use of these homes would increase light levels due to increased lights, potentially later at night and that residents of the lets would not have the common courtesy to be aware of this as permanent residents might.
- Noise and disturbance. Four lets would potentially produce a lot of potential late night noise due to outdoor activity, especially during summer when celebratory activities may be taking place with holiday makers celebrating outside the lets. Previous experience has shown that the noise from this area carries significantly over into the residential area due to a lack of natural barrier between the proposed lets and residential properties. The area adjacent consists of a very quiet residential area with a significant number of elderly residents. The plans show outdoor/grassed areas at both the front and rear of the properties, with no shielding between these areas and the residential area.
- Anti-social behaviour potential - guests would more than likely be walking to and from local pubs in the area, there is potential for alcohol fuelled ASB whilst returning to the holiday lets, noise and carousing late at night in a quiet residential area.
- Traffic and parking - the area is already narrow and does not support the addition of extra use and potential parking problems. Whilst there are parking spaces planned, there is definitely potential for parked cars to increase in an area where there is already parking congestion.

Two comments of support have been received. They comment as follows:

- Immense consideration has gone into this proposal to enable appreciation of the countryside for all whilst enhancing the buildings and their surroundings. Conserving old buildings whilst modernising their uses takes great foresight and innovation, provisions have been made for parking behind a stone wall and also enjoyment areas to the rear of the buildings have been proposed therefore

neighbouring properties will be unaware of activities from the development. This proposal should therefore be encouraged.

- This former agricultural outbuilding has been sensitively designed to complement its heritage while bringing it up to modern day standards for a new use. The recently built stone boundary wall separates the amenity area from the farm track and neighbouring houses, providing safe access, car parking and space to play safely at the front of the building. At the rear, occupants of the holiday lets will be able to enjoy attractive outdoor space and beautiful views over the moorlands.

Endon PC

In principle the application raised no objection and will provide welcomed holiday facilities where there is limited accommodation of this nature at present. Reference was made that no replacement agricultural buildings in lieu of the part demolition and conversion proposals should be considered in the future and similarly while the use as holiday lets would bring much needed facilities of this nature to the parish a planning restriction should be applied for any potential future change of use to dwellings.

Conservation Officer

The officer raised objection with the original scheme in respect of numerous rooflights, additions and alterations to the rear, and a clash of forms and materials.

The officer has reviewed the revised plans and considers the scheme to be much improved.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

Holding objection. Improvement at the access can't be achieved, the land isn't in their control. Access onto High View Road is tight exiting to the right, would like to achieve a pull in along the access drive to help drivers wait whilst drivers existing left off High View Road are trying to navigate the access.

Environmental Health

No objection. Suggest conditions relative to discovery of unexpected contamination and imported soil, controls during construction, control of artificial lighting and the control of noise and management of the units.

Noise: The amenity of local residents can be protected through good site management e.g. control of music noise, curfews for loud noise, complaint mechanism etc. (Condition advised)

Waste Collection

No Issues

Severn Trent

Awaited

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Awaited

OFFICER COMMENTS

Impact on the Green Belt

The stone barn and all of the surrounding land, forming the application site, are within the Green Belt outside the edge of the Local Plan defined Endon 'larger village' settlement. In the Green Belt development is inappropriate and, by definition harmful, unless it is provided for by one of the exceptions on the closed list at paragraph 154 and 155 of the NPPF.

Two of the exceptions include:

- 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;
- The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The proposed extension and addition has been omitted from the scheme and as such the development would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, particularly as ramshackle agricultural structures along the barns rear elevation would be removed.

The stone barn is a building of permanent and substantial construction reuse of the building itself would not affect openness, the scheme as revised would preserve openness. Notably allocated amenity space for the units would be positioned adjacent to the edge of the building with close association on existing farm yard space.

Provision of amenity area at the rear of the building has been simplified and would remain as open grass land without plot subdivision, patio or decking, all omitted from the scheme.

Thus the development is provided for by one of the exceptions on the closed list at paragraph 154 of the NPPF. The development would not be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt.

Local Plan Rural Strategy Approach

Outside of the settlement boundary of the 'Larger Village' of Endon the site is within an 'other rural area'. Other rural area strategy SS10 makes provision, to meet housing needs, for the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policy H1.

Policy H1 provides for the conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical, architectural and character terms for conversion. The stone barn is a quality substantial example of a 19th Century Farm building within the conservation area. The building meets the tests of suitable and worthy.

In this case the applicant is clear that he does not wish to provide market dwellings but holiday lets. There would be benefits to rural local economy here with the regular turnover of guests visiting the area for holiday purposes and spending and visting local attractions and services.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area and heritage asset

The building is a detached long form, two storey stone barn. Adjacent to Endon Bank Farm, the buildings together form the historic farmstead dating from the 19th Century within the Conservation Area and setting of the Grade II listed St Luke's Church.

The stone barn has simple linear form, but at the rear functional block and ramshackle canopy sheds have been added and attached currently concealing the building's historic elevation. The original elevations contain and arrangement of original door and window openings, some of which have been blocked or closed up.

There has been considerable amendment here with the scheme. The proposed conversion and alteration has been simplified so that it will be respectful and complementary to the form and character of the original barn – dormer additions, balconies, porch additions and contemporary use of materials and architectural detailing has been omitted. There will be enhancement and improvement to the building in terms of its restoration and longevity with the removal of the ugly sheds at the rear and the reveal of the concealed rear elevation. Windows and doors would use pre-existing opening spaces original to the building.

By virtue of revised design, scale, form, materials and appearance the scheme would sustain and relate well to the Endon Conservation Area, and to the setting of listed building noted above. The scheme would be a respectful enhancement to the survived structures and provide positive contribution to the historic character and interest. The scheme would be appropriate and relate to and appear informed by its context as per guidance outlined in Policy DC1 and DC2.

The proposals would sustain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area to accord with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regard to the NPPF there would not be harm to the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

The proposed development is of suitable design and would not adversely impact the character and appearance of the area or the value of the heritage assets. There would be no conflict with the policies DC1, DC2 or DC3 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Amenity of Neighbours

The application states that the units are to be holiday lets, the applicant is insistent on that (as opposed to full dwellinghouses providing main or sole residencies).

Some of the local residents express concern about the potential for noise and disturbance late at night due to outdoor activity, especially during summer when celebratory activities may be taking place with holiday makers celebrating outside the lets or returning from pubs.

The development would provide three 2 bed and one 1 bed individual units. The type and size of accommodation available in each unit is likely to suit a family or household type occupancy rather than those seeking a party house type experience. Use of the units by families is unlikely to result in inherently or overtly noisy activity that would not be compatible with the adjacent, nearby, residential properties.

Beyond the outdoor play of children, normal for a residential area, outdoor activity, particularly at night will be dependent on fine and warm weather which during a British summer can be less than frequent. Warm evenings, like in any residential area, will be enjoyed as the pleasant opportunity presents. There is no proposal to provide decking or hot tubs outside and a condition could be used to prevent and control the installation of such facility.

Environmental Health officers suggest that noise can be controlled through good management. The amenity of local residents can be protected through good site management e.g control of music noise, curfews for loud noise, complaint mechanism etc. (Condition advised)

Overall the development should not impose an unreasonable impact on the amenity and living conditions of nearby residents. There would be no conflict with Local Plan policies DC1 or SD4 in those regards.

In the statement the surrounding land is referred to as disused agricultural land and on plan the building is marked to the north as a chicken shed. On site observation does not suggest or reveal any noisy activity that might disturb the occupants of the new units. In any event the occupants would be on holiday for a short period with their main residence elsewhere, any adverse effect on living condition would be temporary for those occupants and presumably would ultimately affect the commercial viability of the units.

Highway Safety

The access arrangement for the 4 units would be less than ideal. There is a holding objection from the Highway Authority. Within the scheme a standard compliant parking provision would be made adjacent to the north western end of the building. However, to access this area cars must travel a long narrow drive between two boundary walls where there are no passing places. The extent of the red edge and the highway end of the driveway does not run to the carriageway edge or the highway boundary, instead it adjoins the private access arrangement that has been previously approved under SMD/2021/0227.

The Highway Authority acknowledge that improvement at the access can't be achieved, the land isn't in the applicant's control. Access onto High View Road is tight exiting to the right, and the highway officer would like a pull in to be provided along the access drive to help drivers wait whilst drivers existing left off High View Road are trying to navigate the access.

Unfortunately, it does not appear possible to provide a passing pull in, the drive is hard edged between boundary and a recently built substantial stone wall that encloses the building. The applicant argues that vehicle movements would be low speed and limited in number and that two vehicles should not readily meet on the access drive - a vehicle approaching from the south-east along Church Lane has good visibility along the whole driveway on approach. Should a vehicle be exiting, the applicant submits, a driver traveling in the opposite direction could wait clear of the highway on the private access space, before negotiating the access mouth and driveway.

Where the Highway officer raises concerns about a vehicle not being able to exit in the direction of High View Road i.e. take a right turn, the applicant points out that this would not be the natural or most frequent direction of travel. A right turn takes a route into the convoluted arrangement of the estate road network, whereas the shortest and direct route onto the A53 from the site is to the left.

The NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

High View Road is a residential road with a 30mph limit, approaching the site from either direction the road gradient is steep and arrives on or toward a tightening bend. This must have the effect of naturally slowing traffic increasing the ability of drivers to anticipate any obstruction or emergence associated with the site and development. Given the relatively few number of units (and that they would be family holiday lets where they are most likely to have one car each, rather than a family dwelling where there maybe two or three cars to a household) the occasions when two opposing cars obstruct each other on the long narrow driveway are unlikely to be frequent. The applicant is convinced that should the driveway be temporarily obstructed by an oncoming vehicle they would be able to wait clear of the carriageway.

With all of these matters considered in the round, it can be reasonably concluded that the development would not impose an 'unacceptable impact on highway safety' or a severe impact on the road network and in those regards the development should not be refused on highway grounds.

Ecology

The application is submitted with an ecology report, specifically including a bat survey. The building has high potential as a bat roost and the report finds bat activity and presence of protected bat species within the building. The report concludes that a bat license would be required to carry out the development. Such license is only likely to be granted on the condition that the development makes integrated mitigation and alternative provision. The report recommends the integration of bat lofts into the development, and accordingly the architects drawings include the provision of bat loft spaces. There is good indication that in these circumstances a bat license could be granted to enable the development without conflict with policy NE1 of the Local Plan.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed development would restore and secure the longevity of a 19th C stone barn on a historic farmstead within the conservation area. The conversion scheme, as revised, has been simplified and treatment of the building would be faithful to the buildings original form, detailing and character to accord with the SMDC design guide and policies DC1 and DC2 of the Local Plan. The development would be respectful and complementary to the setting of the listed buildings in proximity. The scheme would be a respectful enhancement to the survived structures and provide positive contribution to the historic character and interest. I cannot see that the scheme is inappropriate.

The reuse and alteration of the building would preserve Green Belt openness and moreover, remove large functional and ramshackle structure from the rear of the shed,

thereby restoring openness. The development would not be inappropriate and harmful to the Green Belt.

The development and the resulting land use would be compatible with adjacent residential land uses. It should not be overtly noisy and would not have an unreasonable impact on neighbour's amenity or living conditions. No conflict with Local Plan policies DC1 or SD4 in these regards.

The proposals would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area to accord with Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regard to the NPPF 2024 there would not be harm to the significance of the non and designated heritage assets.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 15/08/2024

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council