

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0308
Valid 02/07/2024

APESFORD FARM
APESFORD LANE
BRADNOP

ERECTION OF 2NO.
DWELLINGHOUSES IN LIEU
OF THE 2NO.
DWELLINGHOUSES
APPROVED BY APPLICATION
DET/2024/0005

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- The principle of development in this rural location
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area
- The impact on residential amenity
- The impact on the ecological value of the site
- The impact on highway safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies within the open countryside about a mile to the south of Bradnop village and comprises part of a farm on the south side of Apesford Lane. It comprises two modern portal-framed blockwork and timber clad farm storage buildings which stand side by side and which are reached via a farm track off Apesford Lane which runs past several other farm buildings before reaching the site which is off a yard area at the end of the farm track and is on the southern edge of the farm. Each building has an open side which faces the gap between the buildings. The two larger buildings on site have an approval for conversion into dwellings under Class Q of Part 3 of the GPDO but no works have been undertaken and the buildings still appear in a rather derelict untidy state.

The other farm buildings at the farm property, outside of the site, include a traditional stone barn a short distance to the east of the buildings and which has an approval for a conversion into a dwelling but this has not yet been undertaken. There is a smaller traditional barn to the north of this which also has a dwelling conversion approval. The farmhouse which appears rather derelict and vacant lies further to the east on the other side of the yard and farm track. There are other old and modern farm buildings to the north-east and east of the site. There is a separate farm property immediately to the north of the site ("Middle Farm") which has a separate access off Apesford Lane and which also comprises farm buildings and a farmhouse and another separate farm property to the west of this. Open fields lie to the west and south of the site.

A Public Right of Way (PRoW) runs along the farm access track then crosses the yard and then continues south through the fields. There is another PRoW crossing the field to the west of the site and which joins the other PRoW heading south.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application to replace the two modern portal framed barns with two new-building stone-clad detached dwellings with the same footprint of the two existing buildings but repositioned adjacent to the west and east boundaries of the red-edge site (which remains the same as the previous “Class Q” application). The gap would be widened between buildings which would remain parallel with one another. The difference between the two existing and two proposed buildings, other than the change in materials, is a steeper roof with a raised ridge but lower eaves. The internal layouts would be similar to those approved, spread across one floor, with large living/kitchen areas facing south and three bedrooms off a corridor in the north parts of the buildings. The wider gap would allow for garden and parking areas between the two buildings instead of the approved parking areas and garden areas on the other side of the buildings, adjacent to the side boundaries of the site. The application includes a Planning Statement and a Bat Report.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- SS11 Churnet Valley Strategy
- H1 New Housing
 - DC1 Design Considerations
 - NE1 Biodiversity
 - T1 Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework (Dec 2023)

Sections 5 (Housing), 12 (Design), 15 (Natural Environment).

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET 2024 0005: Conversion of two portal framed farm buildings under Part 3 Class Q of the GPDO. Approved on 28th March 2024.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 6.8.24

Neighbour consultation period ends: 6.8.24

Press Advert: 9.7.24 (Development Affecting a Public Right of Way (PROW)).

Public Comments

None.

Town / Parish Comments (Bradnop)

The PC questions if these are to be used as dwellings or holiday accommodation units.

Local highways authority

No objection subject to a condition requiring the provision and maintenance of the proposed parking areas.

Environmental Health

No objection subject to standard conditions used for the conversion of farm buildings including a recommended noise insulation condition given that the site is adjacent to a working farm.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

No objection subject to a condition requiring ecology enhancement measures e.g. bat and bird boxes.

Peak & Northern Footpath Society.

We note that the PROWs Bradnop and Cawdry 16 & 17 are close to the proposed site.

Use of the PROWs, and the safety of users must not be affected by the development, nor during the work taking place. We would be particularly concerned that the likely access for any construction traffic would be via the ROWs.

Ramblers

Bradnop and Cawdry 16 and 17 must not be affected if these plans are accepted.

SMDC Waste Collection Service

The waste collection point for these 2 proposed dwellings would be at the curtilage of the property - adjacent to the public highway. The waste Collection Team would not travel off the public highway to service these properties.

OFFICER COMMENTS

An approval was given in March 2024 to convert the two existing buildings into two 3-bed dwellings. This is a revised scheme to demolish the buildings and replace them with two new-build dwellings based on the same size and footprint as the two

existing buildings but spaced slightly further apart and with changes to the roof form, resulting in an increased height (from 4.3m to 5.3m but eaves reduced by 0.5m) and also material changes from blockwork and timber to stone in keeping with the other more traditional buildings at the farm. The approval was given under Class Q of Part 3 of the GPDO which only allows for the conversion of buildings without any form of structural rebuilding. This can be carried out without planning permission if the proposal complies with several tests and criteria as outlined in the Class Q legislation.

The applicant states the reason for this revised scheme and therefore new application is to improve the character and appearance of the site, which this new scheme is considered to do in relation to the implementation of the conversion of the buildings under the Class Q approval.

This new scheme differs as it for two new-build dwellings. A full planning application is required for this (i.e. planning permission) and therefore the proposal must be determined against the policies of the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the NPPF.

The site is in the countryside and the strategy for the countryside, SS10 and also the new housing policy, H1, resists new-building market-value dwellings, as rural areas are generally unsustainable locations for new dwellings and the policies also seek to protect the open and rural character and appearance of the countryside from new buildings.

The site is in an unsustainable location with poor access to nearby shops, services, public transport and workplaces and new residents of the site would be strongly reliant on the car to reach the nearest shops, services and workplaces.

The site also has an appearance which is not untypical of that of farm and is on the southern edge of the farm with open countryside adjacent to the site to the south and west and with attractive traditional stone farm buildings to the north and east.

The proposal does not comply with policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan. The principle of the development is deemed to be unacceptable.

The applicants mention the "fall-back position" of the Class Q approval which allows the introduction of residential uses on this rural site and considers the new scheme to be a better alternative to the approved scheme in terms of the character and appearance of the site.

I do not consider the new scheme to be such a significant improvement to the rural character and appearance of the area to the extent that it would outweigh the breach of policies SS10 and H1 and override the principle of new-build houses in unsustainable locations.

Although the current site and buildings is untidy it is not untypical of a rural farm and the scale, height and form of the buildings is not out of keeping with the area and does not harm the character and appearance of the area. The conversion approval will enhance the buildings and tidy them up with new timber cladding and roofing

materials which is still compliant with the tests under Class Q. The Council considered the design and appearance of the conversion proposal to be acceptable (one of the tests of Class Q) and that the scale and form of the buildings was not inappropriate or unsuitable for residential conversions.

The revised proposal would not result in reduced volume of development than what is current at the site or what would result under the Class Q conversion scheme and re-siting of development would result in no better visual impact on the landscape. The new buildings under this new application would be no less visible from the nearest roads or from the public rights of way crossing the site than the existing development and as the new buildings would be 1.0m higher than the existing buildings and one of them would be pushed closer to the footpath to the south-west, there is a case to state there would be slightly greater visual impact. The only gains would be the new materials and roof form would be more in keeping with the more attractive traditional stone buildings at the farm and the more traditional qualities of the wider countryside in general.

With regard to other impacts, the internal floorspace would meet the threshold in the government's Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) applicable to 3-bed single-storey dwellings. The private outdoor garden areas for each unit would also comply with the size thresholds set out in the Council's Space About Dwellings SPG. Amended plans were received to move bedroom window positions on one of the buildings to avoid direct overlooking into the bedroom windows of the other new-build dwelling and also the habitable room windows of the stone barn to the east, which was approved to be converted into another dwelling under Part 3 Class Q of the GPDO although no conversion works have been undertaken. Overall, the proposal would not result in harms to the residential amenities of existing or future residents of the site or surrounding area.

The submitted Bat Report reveals that three existing buildings to be demolished as part of this scheme have negligible potential for bats and therefore the scheme would not result in any harms to the ecological value of the site. There is no requirement to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) under this application as existing hard-surfaced yard areas for the new development and no grass areas or vegetation would be removed (and therefore no areas of potential habitat lost) and therefore would fall under the exemptions for providing BNG.

Finally, although the proposal would result in an increase in vehicle movements by providing two new dwellings in an unsustainable location, the access onto the lane is deemed to be safe and there is ample areas for vehicles to park and turn. The local highways authority as raised no objection to the application.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed development of two new-build market value dwellings in this unsustainable location in the countryside does not comply with policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan and is unacceptable in principle. It would also not provide significant improvements to the character and amenities of the area in relation to the recently approved conversion of the existing buildings into dwellings under Part 3 of Class Q of the GPDO and therefore does not outweigh the conflict with the Local

Plan policies. The proposal also therefore does not comply with NPPF which also resists new dwellings in unsustainable locations. Therefore the application should be refused.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : REFUSE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston
Recommendation Date: 27.8.24

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council