

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0073
Valid 15/02/2023

WOODHEAD FARM
WOODHEAD ROAD
LIGHT OAKS

CONVERSION OF EXISTING
BARNs INTO 3NO.
RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Impact of Design on the Character and Appearance of the Area
- Amenity of Future Occupants
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- Impact on Highways
- Impact on the Ecological Value of the Site
- Environmental Impacts

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Woodhead Farm is an agricultural site located off Woodhead Road with the nearest settlements being Abbey Hulton and Milton located to the west and north, respectively. The site falls within the Green Belt area. The application site consists of a series of barn buildings, which forms the focus of the planning application. The barn building is currently vacant and have become dilapidated after a period of disuse. The building comprises of a building and two wings extending west-ward from northern and southern sections of the rear elevation and encloses round a courtyard. The principal building is part two-storey while the remaining sections of the building will be single-storey.

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for a proposed barn conversion to form no. 3 new residential dwellings.

Dwelling 1: 4B8P

Dwelling 2: 4B8P

Dwelling 3: 2B4P

The dwellings will be attached and the converted sections of the building will be the principal section that forms the frontage and southern rear projection/wing. The northern rear projection will retain its use. Dwellings no. 1 and 2 will be located along the front section of the building and dwelling no. 3 will be located southern rear section of the building. Dwelling 1 and 2 will be two-storey whereas dwelling 3 will be single-storey.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives

SS1 Development Principles

SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport
NE1

National Planning Policy Framework
SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

No relevant planning history.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 11/04/2023

Neighbour consultation period ends:

Press Advert: N/A

Neighbour consultation end date: 11/04/2023

Public Comments

Neighbouring letters were posted 28th Feb 2023. No responses were received.

Town / Parish Comments

Bagnall Parish Council were consulted and raised no objections to the planning application

Environmental Health

SMDC Environmental Health raised five potential areas of concerns:

1. Construction impacts (condition)
2. Land contamination (condition)
3. Lighting impacts (condition)
4. Drainage (Building Standards)
5. Asbestos (Advisory)

Environmental Health raised no objections to the proposed development subject to the inclusion of the following planning conditions:

1. Construction & Demolition Works: Time of operations

Unless prior permission has been obtained in writing from the Local Planning Authority, all noisy activities shall be restricted to the following times of operations.

- 08:00 - 18:00 hours (Monday to Friday);
- 08:00 - 13:00 hours (Saturday)
- No working is permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

In this instance a noisy activity is defined as any activity (for instance, but not restricted to, building construction/demolition operations, refurbishing and landscaping) which generates noise that is audible at the site boundary.

Reason: To avoid the risk of disturbance to neighbouring dwellings from noise during unsocial hours.

2. Construction & Demolition: Pollution Control

- I. During construction/demolition phases amplified music and/or radios shall not be audible beyond the site boundary;

- II. Any waste material associated with the demolition or construction shall not be burnt on site but shall be kept securely for removal to prevent escape into the environment. All waste transfer records should be retained for inspection by officers of the Local Planning Authority;
- III. No activity hereby permitted shall cause dust to be emitted beyond the site boundary so as to adversely affect adjacent residential properties and/or other sensitive uses and/or the local environment. In the event dust is caused to escape the site boundary the activity shall be stopped until sufficient dust suppression has been undertaken to prevent further escape. There shall always be the appropriate means and sufficient water resources on site for dust suppression. These should be made available for inspection when required by officers of the Local Planning Authority

Reason: *To protect the amenities of the area during construction*

3. Unexpected Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development should not commence further until an initial investigation and risk

assessment has been completed in accordance with a scheme to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site. If the initial site risk assessment indicates that potential risks exist to any identified receptors, development shall not commence until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property, and the natural and historical environment has been prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the local planning authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme and prior to bringing the development into first use, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

4. Soil Tests

Prior to bringing the development into first use, all soils that are intended to be used for the proposed garden/ soft landscaping areas should be tested for contamination and assessed for their suitability for the proposed use. Prior to sampling, a suitable methodology for testing the soil should be submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority and should include the sampling frequency, testing schedules, and criteria against which the analytical results will be assessed.

The results of the soil tests should be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If soil results indicate that a potential risk exists, development shall not commence until a detailed remediation strategy to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use has been prepared and subject to the approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason (common to 3-4): *- To ensure that the proposed development meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in that all potential risks to human health, controlled waters and wider environment are known and where necessary dealt with via remediation and or management of those risks.*

5. Lighting

The artificial lighting incorporated into this site in connection to this application shall not increase the pre-existing illuminance at the adjoining light sensitive locations when the light (s) is (are) in operation. Details of all artificial lighting to be installed under this permission

should be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to development commencing.

Reason: *To protect the local amenities of the local residents by reason of excess of illuminance*

6. Sound Insulation Scheme

Development shall not commence until a site specific scheme for protecting the proposed residential units from noise, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The submitted scheme shall have due regard for the British Standard BS8233:2014 Guidance on Sound Insulation for Buildings and be designed to achieve noise levels of less than 30 dB LAeq in bedrooms (Night time), less than 35 dB LAeq in bedrooms (Daytime), less than 40 dBLAeq in living areas and 50dB LAeq in outside living areas.

A report shall be produced containing all raw data and showing how calculations have been made. A copy of such report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its approval.

Reason: *To protect occupiers from noise and safeguard their residential amenities.*

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objections based on the amended details provided and subject to the following recommended planning condition:

1. Before the proposed development is brought into use, the passing bays shown on drawing 0379-011-P0 shall be provided and thereafter kept clear, retained and maintained for the purposes of providing passing bays for the life of the development.

REASON

1. To comply with NPPF Paragraph 111; to comply with SMDC Local Plan Policy DC1; in the interests of highway safety; in the interests of convenience of users of the access track.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

SWT assessed the scheme based on the following initially submitted documents:

- Existing and Proposed Plans
- Application Form
- Bat Activity Survey, September 2022 by Elite Ecology

The Trust objected to the proposed works citing a lack of information attached to the planning application and outlined that the following information would be required in order to accurately assess the ecological impacts of the proposed works:

- Further bat surveys to complete the buildings roost assessment, and check trees
- Detailed bat mitigation plan.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of wider site and BNG small sites metric.
- Drainage location information

The information was subsequently provided and SWT removed their holding objection and had no further comments for the planning application.

Heritage Comments

Based on a preliminary investigation of the site from the Conservation Officer, it was indicated that there may be evidence to suggest that Woodhead Farm is a historic farmstead and as such, may be a non-designated heritage asset. They recommended that a Heritage Statement should be provided in order to accurately assess this.

Subsequent comments were provided after the submission of the Heritage Statement. The consultation response commented that there is little to describe of the site's history and therefore any historical significance. Nevertheless, the comments further say that the site still hold some heritage interest, citing the scale, design, characters and its overall survival condition. Furthermore, the buildings shows traditional irregular fenestration something that is characteristic of historic agricultural buildings, heavy set lintels, some arched headers above windows, and humble decorative elements such as the circular central former clockface or similar at the main barn.

Historic agricultural buildings by their nature were not designed to be domestic or lived in, as such appropriate adaption that is faithful to their age and form is encouraged and as such, the Conservation Officer recommends the following condition:

I would support the sensitive reuse and adaption of these traditional buildings, noting that their gentle and unassuming characteristics be retained. This can be secured by conditions such as:

- Joinery. Including skylights, doors, and colour codes required.
- Finishing and facing materials.
- Repointing and mortar types.
- Landscaping scheme.

Reason/s: to conserve the heritage interest of the buildings and provide adequate and acceptable appearance to the structures.

AES Waste

No objections regarding waste collection.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The site is located within Green Belt area where Local Plan policy SS10 is relevant. The policy relates to development in other rural areas that comprise of the countryside and green belt and outside of the development boundaries of towns and larger villages and the open countryside of surrounding smaller villages.

Development will only be supported if it 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.

Of relevance, it will achieve this through meeting housing requirements by allowing the conversion or replacement of an existing rural building in accordance with policy H1. For development within the green belt, the Local Planning Authority will maintain strict control to resist inappropriate development and allow for development that meets the exceptions as outlined within the National Planning Policy Framework.

This is similarly outlined within policy H1. The policy further outlines that the conversion of rural buildings for residential use where the building is suitable and worthy in physical,

architectural and terms for conversion; or where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets.

The relevant exception is paragraph 155, part (d) of the NPPF for the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction. It is considered that the proposed development falls within this exception and is therefore not inappropriate. It is therefore not considered that the development would impact the openness of the green belt and would meet the exceptions to green belt development and is, by definition, not considered inappropriate.

Impact of Design on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy DC1 of the Local Plan requires that all development should be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Local Authority's Design Guide SPD. The SPD outlines a requirement for high quality designs that add value to the surrounding area and the use of materials that are appropriate to the local area.

The proposed conversion will retain the original facing stone and plain roof tiles and will further retain other original features such as the circular windows and stone arches to the front elevation. The proposal will include the installation of new openings and fenestrations along all elevations. Additional changes include alterations to the rear elevation of the main building section, which comprises of a lean-to extension and an enclosed canopy.

The enclosed canopy will be removed where new windows and doors will be installed. As originally proposed the extension was to be altered to remove the single sloped roof where it will be replaced with a flat roof that will serve as terraced balconies for dwellings no. 1 and 2. The terraces were to be accessed via the hallway on the first floor and will be further separated by glass screens to preserve privacy. Concerns were raised that this would introduce an overly domestic feature, which would also include a flat roofed form, both of which would not respect the character of this traditional agricultural building. Amended plans have been submitted omitting the balcony and adding a mansard style lean-to roof with a flat section at the rear. This is considered, on balance to be acceptable.

The other alterations are considered to be minor in scope and furthermore, reflect the agricultural character of the existing building, retaining much of its appearance and reinforces local distinctiveness. When further considered with the building being vacant and dilapidated, the conversion will bring the building into a use that will provide a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area over the existing arrangement.

When considered with the above, the proposed development is considered to be well designed and would not detract from the character of the area and will instead represent a positive addition. The associated alterations and no increase in the footprint of the building will also continue to maintain the openness of the green belt. It is therefore considered in accordance with Local Plan policies.

Heritage

Policy DC2 is of relevance when considering whether the proposed works are acceptable from a heritage perspective. The policy outlines that protections will be given to non-designated heritage assets as set out in the NPPF. Paragraph 209 of the NPPF states that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a

balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

As noted above, the historic significance of the buildings could not be determined and neither could its status as a non-designated heritage asset, which represents an important consideration in weighing any harm or loss. Nevertheless, the overall use and scale of changes to the building are sensitive and positively enhance the historic buildings that are currently unused and dilapidated. On balance, it is not considered that the proposed works would harm the character or significance of the buildings and would be in accordance with Policy DC2 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF.

Amenity of Future Occupants

The size, shape and layout of the building will remain unaltered in terms of footprint. The building will be subdivided into three new dwellings with associated outdoor amenity spaces.

Policy H1 outlines that all new dwellings should aim to provide flexible accommodation, which is capable of future adaptation by seeking to achieve adequate internal space for the intended number of occupants in accordance with the Nationally Described Space standards. Further, all new dwellings must be of a sufficient size to provide satisfactory levels of amenity for future occupiers of the dwellings whilst respecting the privacy and amenity of existing dwellings. The footprint for the dwellings are as follows:

Dwelling 1: 186sqm

Dwelling 2: 225sqm

Dwelling 3: 109sqm

For new two storey 4B8P dwellings, a minimum GIA of 124sqm is required to be compliant with the NDSS. For single-storey 2B4P dwellings, a minimum GIA of 70sqm is required. As shown by the above calculations, all three dwellings meet the threshold and it is considered that sufficient space would be provided to adequately meet the needs for future occupants. The dwellings further benefit from sufficient built-in storage space and meets the requirements for bedroom size, further complying with the NDSS.

Sufficient outdoor amenity space is provided that further guarantees a sufficient degree of privacy for all occupants subject to an appropriate boundary treatment. Privacy concerns arose with regards to the proposed balcony space for dwellings 1 and 2 despite the proposed privacy screen separating both balconies, which would have been an incongruous feature in design terms. However, as noted above this has been omitted.

It is further considered that adequate outlook and light is provided for all dwellings with all dwellings benefiting from dual aspect windows, which would guarantee acceptable degree of outlook and daylight throughout the year.

It is overall considered that the proposed change of use would guarantee a satisfactory degree of amenity for all future occupants and is therefore in accordance with Policy H1.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

No amenity concerns arise over the proposed conversion into three residential dwellings due to no neighbours in the immediate area and the surrounding land, including the farmhouse being in the same ownership.

Impact on Highways

As noted above, comments received by Highways Authority raised no objections to the proposed development, upon reconsultation, after a revised scheme was submitted. It is acknowledged that the site is located a significant distance away from the adopted highway and no highways concerns arise in terms of impact to safety.

With regards to parking, the application form claims that the site can provide 30 parking spaces, but no plans have shown this. The Highways Authority acknowledges this and notes that it is clear that sufficient parking is available on site and given the distance from the adopted highway, it is unlikely that there will be parking on the highway as a result of the development. Plans indicate that five passing spaces are available, which the authority notes should be provided and retained and maintained for the benefit of all users. Accordingly, they have recommended the inclusion of a planning condition for the provision of the passing bays and their retention and maintenance for the life of the development.

Waste storage and collection has further been demonstrated for the site, which Alliance Environmental Services raises no objection to regarding the waste collection.

Impact on the Ecological Value of the Site

Policy NE1 in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan adopted September 2020, expects that 'all development where possible seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity proportionate to the size and scale of the development. In circumstances where adverse impacts are demonstrated to be unavoidable, developers will be required to ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with suitable compensation measures towards loss of habitat used only as a last resort where there is no alternative.'

As noted above, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust initially objected to the proposed development citing a lack of information to fully determine the ecological impact of the proposal. The Trust noted that further bat surveys, a detailed bat migration plan, a preliminary ecological impact assessment and drainage location information would be required to fully determine the application. The additional information has been provided and upon review, the Trust has removed their previous objection to the proposal and have no further comments.

Environmental Impacts

Staffordshire Moorlands Environmental Health were consulted relating to environmental impacts. Their consultation response outlined five potential areas of concern for the development, which have been addressed by the above recommended planning conditions. As such, subject to the inclusion of the above planning conditions to any permission granted, no environmental concerns arise as a result of the proposed works.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed change of use into three dwellings is in accordance with both local and national planning policy. Subject to the inclusion of relevant planning conditions, it is considered no concerns arise from the proposed works and accordingly, it is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : **Approve with conditions**

Case Officer: Rebecca Bowers

Recommendation Date: 24th January 2024

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council