

Supporting Statement in relation to the conversion of barn to a dwelling

Meadowside View, Alton

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Conversion of barn to dwelling – Meadowside View, Alton

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Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Site and Planning History	3
3	The Proposed Development	4
4	Planning Policy Context	4
	National Planning Policy Framework.....	4
	Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020)	6
5	Planning Considerations	6
	Principle of Development	6
	Visual Impact	7
	Impact on Residential Amenity	7
	Impact upon Highway Safety.....	8
6	Conclusions	8

1 Introduction

- 1.1 JMI Planning is a Midlands based town planning consultancy. Its directors are chartered town planners with over 30 years' combined experience in both the public and private sector.
- 1.2 The author of this appraisal, Jon Imber, has worked as both a development control and forward planning officer in local government, and more recently as a senior planning consultant in the private sector. He has extensive knowledge of the planning system and experience of the appeals process. He is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

2 Site and Planning History

- 2.1 The application site comprises a stone and tile barn within the rural settlement of Alton.
- 2.2 The site is neighboured by residential properties and their gardens to the north, south, east and west.
- 2.3 The site is enclosed by a variety of boundary treatments including timber fencing to the north and west and a hedgerow to the south. Much of the eastern boundary is demarcated by the rear wall of the barn.
- 2.4 The site is accessed via a gated entrance off Meadow View.
- 2.5 The site has no recent planning history of relevance to these proposals.

3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The barn originally appears to have been in agricultural use. However, the associated farmland has been sold off or developed, and it is currently underutilised. An alternative use is therefore sought.
- 3.2 The site is surrounded by existing houses and their gardens, and a residential re-use therefore appears the most logical and practical alternative.
- 3.3 The proposed dwelling features three bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor and a bedroom, sitting and dining room, a kitchen, a utility and a wc on the ground floor.
- 3.4 The proposals do not involve any extensions to the building. New windows and doors are to be inserted within existing openings.
- 3.5 The dwelling is to be accessed off Meadowside View. There are two parking spaces across the site frontage.

4 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that “applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

4.2 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It explains that in the context of decision taking, this means approving proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay. Where the development plan is silent, or the policies most relevant to determining the application are out of date, then permission should be granted unless:-

- “i. the application of policies in this 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 this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”*

4.3 The footnote to Paragraph 11 confirms that policies relating to the provision of housing will be considered out of date where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

4.4 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF expresses a commitment to delivering housing growth. It states “To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed”.

4.5 Paragraph 131 of the Framework relates to design quality. It states *“The creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”*.

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020)

- 4.6 The site lies within the settlement boundary of Alton, which Policy SS8 identifies as a 'Larger Village'. Policy SS8 sets out that within settlement boundaries a range of development is acceptable in principle, including new residential development and the conversion of existing buildings to alternative uses.

5 Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The site lies within the settlement boundary of Alton, which is one of the District's 'Larger Villages'. Alton contains a range of services and facilities including shops, a primary school, a doctor's surgery and several public houses, which are all accessible from the site via non-car modes.
- 5.2 The proposals would deliver social and economic benefits. In the short term the proposal would make a modest but positive contribution towards meeting the District's housing needs. This benefit attracts significant weight in the context of a current shortfall. In the longer term occupants of the property could reasonably be expected to use local services and facilities, helping to secure their ongoing viability and retention. The NPPF prescribes significant weight to these economic benefits.
- 5.3 The proposal therefore constitutes sustainable development which accords with Policy SS8 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Visual Impact

- 5.4 The building is a traditional stone and tile barn. Whilst somewhat anomalous in its predominantly residential context, it nonetheless contributes positively towards the character and appearance of its surroundings.
- 5.5 The proposed conversion scheme is sensitive to the host building. No extensions are proposed, and new windows and doors are to be sensitively inserted within existing openings, respecting the simple agricultural character and origins of the building.
- 5.6 The resulting dwelling would be viewed in the context of neighbouring residential properties to the north, south, east and west and as such residential use would not be fundamentally out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- 5.7 The proposals therefore preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 5.8 No extensions to the building are proposed. The proposals will not therefore result in any loss of daylight or sunlight to the principal windows of neighbouring dwellings.
- 5.9 There are no windows on the north or south elevations. The proposed dwelling will not therefore overlook existing dwellings to the north and south.
- 5.10 There is a bedroom window and an entrance door on the east elevation. The entrance door does not serve a habitable room, and can be obscure glazed if

required. The first floor bedroom window faces the roof of the neighbouring dwelling and will not therefore result in an unacceptable loss of privacy.

- 5.11 The ground floor windows on the west elevation are at low level and overlooking of the neighbouring property is prevented by a timber fence across the boundary. The only first floor window on the west elevation serves a bathroom and can be obscure glazed.
- 5.12 The proposals would not therefore harm the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.
- 5.13 The proposed dwelling is NDSS compliant and benefits from a generous garden commensurate with its scale and function.

Impact upon Highway Safety

- 5.14 The proposals involve the creation of a four bedroomed dwelling. Two off street parking spaces are proposed, which is commensurate with the scale and function of the property. The spaces are accessed off Meadowside View, which is a lightly trafficked cul-de-sac subject to a 30mph speed limit. The proposals will not therefore prejudice the safe or efficient use of the highway network.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposals involve the creation of an additional dwelling within the Alton Settlement Boundary.

- 6.2 The proposals would not detrimentally affect the character or appearance of the building or its surroundings.
- 6.3 The development would not detrimentally affect the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of the existing dwellings or the safe and efficient use of the highway network.
- 6.4 The proposals therefore constitute sustainable development which accord with Policy SS8 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.