

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

DET/2025/0034
Valid 11/09/2025

ROCK CLIFFE MAIN ROAD
HOLLINGTON

APPLICATION TO DETERMINE
IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS
REQUIRED FOR A PROPOSED
CHANGE OF USE OF THE
AGRICULTURAL BUILDING
ON THE SITE INTO A SINGLE
RESIDENTIAL DWELLING
UNDER CLASS Q OF
PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

(NOTIFICATION - CHANGE OF
USE PRIOR APPROVAL)

MAIN ISSUES

Applicant seeks a determination as to whether the prior approval is required for details relating to the change of use of a building to a dwellinghouse, and if so, the prior approval of those details, relevant to Class Q, Part 3, Schedule 2 of the GPDO. As a starting point there must be consideration for whether the development would comply with the limitations and conditions at Class Q and whether the development would be permitted at all.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises a stone-built agricultural building at Rockcliffe Farm, previously used as a milking parlour, with a more recent concrete block building attached to the rear (north side). It is located to the north of Main Road and is accessed via an existing entrance drive to the farm and farmhouse, with a metal gate that is set back approximately 6 metres from the edge of the carriageway.

PROPOSAL

The proposed development is described in the submitted statement as “to convert the agricultural building on the site into a single residential dwelling”.

- The footprint of the building proposed for conversion remains unchanged at 170m²
- The single dwellinghouse created will all be single storey
- The total internal floorspace of the dwellinghouse created by the conversion will be 139m² in compliance with the new legislation for Class Q that has to be used for all applications from 21st May 2025 (maximum 150sqm per dwelling).

The proposed development consists of the following building operations:

- Insertion of new windows and doors in the building structure using mainly existing openings;

- Overhaul of roof structure to insulate and make weathertight to meet Building Regulations.

Details of the proposed site layout are included with this submission and show a parking area and outdoor amenity space for the occupiers (garden) both within the proposed curtilage area. The existing blockwork wall will be retained to provide a more private enclosed garden area, reminiscent of a walled garden.

The conversion of the building into a dwelling will require internal works of insulation and plaster boarding to meet building regulations for energy efficiency (as would any barn conversion).

The following internal works will be undertaken:

Dry-lining and insulating the walls and roof, vapour barrier installed and plasterboard internal finish. No new structural elements are required.

The provisions at Class Q, Part 3, Sched 2 of the GPDO 2015 were revised and updated on the 21st May 2024. The application confirms that the applicant relies on the new Class Q provisions.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan (adopted 9th September 2020)

SS1 Development Principles
 SS2 Settlement Hierarchy
 SS10 Other Rural Areas Area Strategy
 DC1 Design Considerations
 DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
 H1 New Housing Development
 NE1 Biodiversity and Geological Resources
 NE2 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
 T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

03/01252/NOT_AG Agricultural building (north/rear of dwelling). No Decision.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 21st November
 Neighbour consultation period ends: 21st November
 Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Severn Trent

No objection. Recommend conditions requiring approval of drainage details.

Environmental Health

Recommend refusal due to insufficient information being provided to address the suitability of this location for third party residential housing (odour and noise) due to proximity from farming activity.

Conservation Officer

The development site would involve a stone barn which is a potential non-designated heritage asset, as it is visible on historic mapping but has not been identified on the Historic Environment Record. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining applications and a balanced judgment will be required in regards to the scale of harm or loss of the significance of that asset (par.216 of the NPPF).

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No response within consultation period

Parish Council

Checkley PC: No response within consultation period

OFFICER COMMENTSIs the proposed development permitted?

The provisions at Class Q, Part 3, Sched 2 of the GPDO 2015 were revised and updated on the 21st May 2024. A form has been completed with the application confirming that the applicant relies on those updated Class Q provisions.

Specifically of note, under new and current provisions, the development permitted is not restricted to a change of use from an agricultural building, but, instead, it permits the change of use from “a building that is part of an established agricultural unit” or “a former agricultural building that was (but is no longer) part of an established agricultural unit” to a dwellinghouse. The current provision also permits “building operations necessary to convert the building to a dwelling” and it remains a condition of the provision that “before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required”.

Development is not permitted by Class Q if—

In the case of a site that is part of an established agricultural unit, the site was not part of the established agricultural unit—

on 24th July 2023, or

in the case of a site that was (but is no longer) part of an established agricultural unit—the site was part of an established agricultural unit on 24th July 2023,

It is explained in submissions that the old farmer and former occupant of the existing farmhouse, died in 2023. The unit that provides the application site was farmed up to the farmers passing in 2023, and while the holding size has been reduced through land sales, the unit has been used to keep a small flock of rare breed sheep. The site, therefore, is part of an established agricultural unit and was part of that unit on 24th

July 2023. The site has not been used for any non-agricultural purpose since that date.

This proposal meets all the criteria/tests under Class Q (1) for applying for a conversion under Class Q of the GPDO. The building is located on a small farmstead, one of two buildings. The building has milking stalls and a block and portal frame extension at the rear has feed cages and has been used to keep livestock.

The building appears to overall be in reasonable substantial condition. It can be converted into residential use with operations to convert the building that would be permitted as conversion scheme allowed to be implemented under Class Q. The conversion would provide a dwellinghouse across a single floor level with an internal floor space of 139sqm (less than 150sqm).

Consideration of the Issues

Before beginning the development, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to—

- (a) transport and highways impacts of the development – discussed below
- (b) noise impacts of the development – discussed below
- (c) contamination risks on the site – discussed below
- (d) flooding risks on the site – no issues arise
- (e) whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a dwellinghouse – discussed below
- (f) the design or external appearance of the building – discussed below
- (g) the provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms of the dwellinghouses – no issues arise

(a) transport and highways impacts of the development

The existing access will remain with no changes proposed. Plans show a 3-bedroom residential dwelling which will technically require, if it were to meet with Staffordshire Moorlands Parking Standards, 2 parking spaces (2.4m x 4.8m each) for residents and visitors within the curtilage of the dwelling. Drwg. No. 2025-371-08 P01 details 2 pull in car parking spaces at the end of the old established stone track. The proposed parking therefore meets with the Parking Standards.



(b)noise impacts of the development

The site is 22m from the existing farm dwelling. The proposed dwelling would have its own dedicated curtilage and amenity space a good distance from the existing house and its garden. The proposed dwelling could be provided without causing unacceptable noise impacts on the adjacent farm dwelling.

(c)contamination risks on the site

Historically the site has been used as an agricultural building. Historic maps point to it being at the access to an old quarry to the north. There may, therefore, be some associated ground contamination. Environmental Health have not provided consultation response, but on similar enquiry they have in the past suggested conditions relative to the discovery of unexpected contamination. Prior approval is required and could be granted subject to such conditions.

(e)whether the location or siting of the building makes it otherwise impractical or undesirable for the building to change from agricultural use to a dwellinghouse

The site is within a small area of enclosure to the north and north west of the old farmhouse. The enclosed area, surrounded by livestock fencing and native hedgerow, provides modest farmstead surrounded by wider grazing land. Historically, the site was positioned at the entrance to an old quarry. The site is served by the linear farm track and an area of stoned hardstanding that has become grassed over.

The site is positioned discretely within the enclosure. It has physical association with the adjacent farmhouse, but has enough space and distance to function with its own area of parking, access and modest curtilage that would be formed naturally within and adjacent to the form of the building that lends itself to the provision of such facility. The building is long established with the main stone part possessing some traditional value relative to its landscape contribution and historic origins at the quarry entry. The more functional building extension at the rear provides substantial block wall structure and sheet roof supported on timber frame, conversion of this structure would enable the provision of adequate nationally described space standard compliant accommodation.

The site has open aspect to the front and there is space at the side to provide outdoor amenity. The accommodation would provide three bedrooms and a good area of space as an open plan dining and living area. It would provide acceptable living conditions for a future resident.

Environmental Health officers raise concern around the impacts that adjacent farming activity (noise and odour) might have on the living conditions of future residents. The applicant responds explaining that Rock Cliffe is a very small farm by modern standards, the farmer has passed away the applicants are gradually disposing of the Estate. It is said that the unit only extended to 20 acres at the time, and now most of the land has been sold off to neighbours. This in turn, limits the head of livestock that could be sustained or farmed on adjacent land. Overall it is not considered that adjacent farming activities would have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of future residents.

Rockcliffe Farm is set in an area of high-quality habitat for foraging, commuting and roosting bats. An ecologists 'Bat Survey' report has been submitted with the application. The oldest stone built part of the building (B1) was found to have high suitability to support roosting bats and was confirmed to support two species of bats. The block and timber frame shed extension to the rear (B2) was assessed to have low suitability to support roosting bats, and no bats were recorded roosting within B2. Surveys completed in summer 2025 identified low numbers of non-breeding whiskered/Brandt's and common pipistrelle bats within B1. Neither B1 or B2 were considered to have notable hibernation potential owing to the lack of suitable hibernation features and the lack of stable climatic conditions required for hibernation owing to the exposed nature of the building. The report confirms that a bat license from Natural England would be required before carrying out the development and the report recommends outline mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures. It is considered that with license and suitable mitigation it would, in these regards, be practical for the building to change from agricultural to a dwellinghouse. Prior approval on this matter is required and granted subject to conditions.

(f) the design or external appearance of the building

The existing main part of the building is a stone built double fronted cow shed with a tiled full pitch roof. It is traditional in form, appearance and character and makes contribution to the landscape. The conversion work would make sensitive treatment of this building element, making use of existing openings and limiting alterations to the external appearance.

At the rear the shed extension is rather ramshackle, but in the main part it consists of substantial block walling that provides convertible structure. The conversion of this structure would retain a subordinate profile behind the main presentation of the more traditional stone part. From the roadside to the south, the site and the main form of the buildings are concealed behind and enclosed by effectively placed native hedgerow, that limits the impact and intrusion of the building on the landscape. The shed section would retain the appearance of a more functional livestock shed with a concrete block base and timber cladding above with a profile sheet roof.

The development would not be harmful to the landscape and the character and appearance of the area. There would be no conflict with Policy DC1 and DC3 of the adopted Local Plan and the design provisions of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED AND GRANTED

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date:

X *B.S. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council