

PLANNING STATEMENT

**SHAW HOUSE FARM
ALTON**

JANUARY 2026

Site Address:

Shaw House Farm, Cheadle Road, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DH

Applicant:

Jo Bartram

Proposal:

Erection of outbuilding with bat loft

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 26th January 2026

Job Reference: RDP/2026/010

Report Prepared By:

Rob Duncan BSc(Hons) MA MRTPI
Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd

Contact Details:

Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd
St. Mary's Old School, Minster Pool Walk, Lichfield, WS13 6QT
Email: rob78duncan@gmail.com
Tel. 07779 783521

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Jo Bartram to seek full planning permission for the erection of a detached outbuilding with bat loft on land to the southeast of Barn 1 at Shaw House Farm, Cheadle Road, Alton.
- 1.2 The application follows on from the grant of prior approval for the conversion of the building to form 2no. dwellings as part of a wider scheme for conversion of four buildings on the site to form 5no. dwellings (LPA Reference: DET/2024/0002). Owing to the presence of a maternity roost of brown long eared bats within the building, it is necessary for a bat loft to be installed.
- 1.3 The approved scheme does not provide sufficient roof void space to allow for such a bat loft to be installed, so instead the applicant proposes to erect a domestic outbuilding to provide this necessary mitigation. The outbuilding will replace an existing poor quality agricultural building that is currently attached to the southeast elevation of the building.
- 1.4 The proposed building will have a rectangular plan form, and be orientated with its long axis running NW to SE. It will be open sided on one side, and will provide a domestic storage area at ground floor with a bat loft contained within the roofspace above. The building will occupy a footprint of 42.2 square metres and stand to a ridge height of 5.6 metres.
- 1.5 The building is to be clad in vertical larch timber to its elevations, with a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof atop, into which four bat access tiles are to be incorporated, as well as three raised ridge tiles. Bat access points are also to be provided in the gable ends, with one Schwegler bat box provided to the northwest elevation, and three eco-bat boxes to the southwest elevation.

2 Site Location

- 2.1 The application site is located within the rural area and comprises a two storey former agricultural building constructed from natural stone with a Staffordshire blue tiled roof above. It is a visually pleasing, vernacular building that contributes positively to the rural surroundings within which it is located. Attached to its southeast elevation is a portal framed, concrete block and metal clad agricultural building that is approved for removal as part of the extant consent on the site.
- 2.2 The building forms part of a range of former agricultural buildings on the site, the others being located to the north and northeast of the site. The existing farmhouse is located to the east, beyond an existing area of hardstanding.
- 2.3 The buildings on the site share the existing vehicular access serving the farmyard which connects with the Cheadle Road to the south of the site. An existing area of hardstanding lies to the immediate east / northeast of Barn 1, with vehicular access to the other buildings further to the east beyond that.
- 2.4 The building is not statutorily listed, nor does the site lie within a Conservation Area. The site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1 (low-probability of flooding).

3 Planning Policy

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any relevant material considerations. The Development Plan for this area comprises the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) of which the following policies are of relevance to the determination of the application:

3.2 Policy SS1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development Principles' and states that the Council will expect the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands in terms of delivering, in partnership with other agencies and services:

- a mix of types and tenures of quality, affordable homes, including starter homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of the existing and future communities.
- quality local services, including provision for education, healthcare, leisure, community, cultural and tourist facilities in response to anticipated population change and visitor numbers.
- easy access to jobs, shops and transport services by all sections of the community.
- increased economic prosperity and opportunities for employment and greater local capacity with an educated, skilled and flexible workforce.

- a healthy, safe, attractive, active, well-designed and well-maintained environment.
- development which maintains the locally distinctive character of the Staffordshire Moorlands, its individual towns and villages and their settings.
- development that is undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas, including the Peak District National Park, both now and for future generations.
- support development which secures high quality, sustainable environments, efficient and effective use of resources and contributes effectively to tackling climate change and reduced carbon emissions.

3.3 Policy SS10 of the Local Plan relates to the 'Other Rural Areas Strategy' and states that these areas will provide only for development which 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. The policy confirms that the Council will meet housing requirements and specific needs by allowing extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area. The policy also seeks to enhance and conserve the quality of the countryside by encouraging measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity of the District.

3.4 Policy DC1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Design Considerations' and states that all development shall be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness by positively contributing to and complementing the special character and heritage of the area in line with the Council's Design Guide SPD. In particular, new development should:

1. be of a high quality and add value to the local area, incorporating creativity, detailing and materials appropriate to the character of the area.
2. be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.
3. create, where appropriate, attractive, active, functional, accessible and safe public and private environments which incorporate public spaces, green infrastructure including making provision for networks of multi-functional new and existing green space (both public and private), landscaping, public art, 'designing out crime' initiatives and the principles of Active Design.
4. incorporate sustainable construction techniques and design concepts for buildings and their layouts to reduce the impact of the development.
5. protect the amenity of the area, including creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, overbearing development, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.
6. promote the maintenance, enhancement, restoration and re-creation of biodiversity and geological heritage, where appropriate.

7. provide for safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.
8. require new developments to be well integrated for car, pedestrian and cycle use as well as other sustainable transport links.
9. ensure that existing drainage, waste water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is available, and where necessary enhanced, to enable the development to proceed.
10. ensure, where appropriate, equality of access and use for all sections of the community.
11. be served by high speed broadband (>30mbps) unless it can be demonstrated through consultation with Next Generation Access Network providers that this would not be possible, practical or economically viable. In all circumstances during construction of the site sufficient and suitable ducting should be provided within the site and to the property to facilitate ease of installation at a future date.

3.5 Policy NE1 of the Local Plan relates to “Biodiversity and Geological Resources’ and states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development (and having regard to relevant ecological evidence) by (amongst other measures):

- Conserving, and enhancing regional and locally designated sites. The Council will not permit any development proposal which would directly or indirectly result in significant harm to geological and biodiversity conservation interests, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a) there is no appropriate alternative site available; and
 - b) all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to any such proposal have been satisfied; and
 - c) appropriate conservation and mitigation measures are provided; or if it is demonstrated that this is not possible
 - d) the need for, and benefit of, the development is demonstrated to clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site and compensatory measures are implemented.
- Expecting 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. Where any mitigation and compensation measures are required, they should be appropriately scheduled and managed according to the nature, size and scale of the development so as to minimise impacts that may disturb protected or important habitats and species.

3.6 Policy T1 of the Local Plan relates to 'Development and Sustainable Transport' and states that the Council will promote and support development which reduces reliance on the private car for travel journeys, reduces the need to travel generally and accommodates residual development traffic in line with the Integrated Transport Strategy. This will be achieved by:

1. Ensuring that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.
2. Ensuring that major development is located in areas that are accessible by sustainable travel modes or can be made accessible as part of the proposal.
3. Considering appropriate parking provision on a case by case basis with recourse to the parking guidance set out in Appendix 2.
4. Where appropriate all new development shall facilitate walking and cycling within neighbourhoods and town centres, and link with or extend identified walking or cycling routes. In addition applicants should also consider how their schemes can enhance the existing path network in line with the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan and also give consideration to the protection of non-definitive public footpath routes in addition to definitive routes.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies, *inter-alia*, in respect of securing high quality design. The provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

SMDC Design Guide SPD

- 4.2 The adopted Design Guide SPD provides advice aimed at securing the delivery of high-quality built development within the District, including residential conversions. The content of the Design Guide SPD constitutes a material consideration in the assessment of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application proposes the erection of a domestic outbuilding with bat loft above, on a site that is located within the rural area. Policy SS10 of the Local Plan allows for extensions or additional domestic outbuildings to existing dwellings provided they are appropriate in scale and design and do not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling and the character of the rural area.
- 5.2 The existing building does not currently comprise a dwelling, but benefits from consent for conversion to form 2no. dwellings and works to commence the conversion of the building are due to start in the Spring. The spirit of policy SS10 of the Local Plan is therefore held to be relevant to the assessment of this application. Even if one were to take the contrary view on this point, policy SS10 is also noted to allow for measures which protect and enhance the biodiversity of the District.
- 5.3 The originally approved application for the conversion of the existing building to residential use as 2no. dwellinghouses was accompanied by a bat survey which identified the presence of a maternity roost for brown long-eared bats within the building, along with a maternity roost for common pipistrelle bats. It was concluded that a bat loft would need to be provided to mitigate for the impact of the development on the former.
- 5.4 The approved plans for Barn 1 show it to comprise of two floors of living accommodation. Having regard to required minimum ceiling heights, as dictated by the Building Regulations, the resultant loft space will be of insufficient size to accommodate the minimum required dimensions for the bat loft. It is therefore not possible to accommodate the required mitigation

within the building itself. A stand-alone building is therefore proposed to address this matter.

- 5.5 The applicant's ecologist has confirmed that the proposed bat loft needs to have a minimum height of 2 metres, a width of 5 metres, and a length of 7.3 metres. The proposed outbuilding has been designed to accommodate these requirements.
- 5.6 The building will provide a domestic storage area at ground floor, with the bat loft located above. Within the roofslope itself will be four bat access tiles, along with three raised ridge tiles. These mitigation measures will be further supplemented by bat access points in each of the gable ends. The required mitigation for common pipistrelle bats is to be accommodated by way of four bat boxes that are to be located on the northwest and southwest elevations.
- 5.7 The enclosed letter from Elite Ecology serves to confirm that the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures as shown on the submitted plans will compensate for the loss of the existing bat roosts and will enable a licence to be granted by Natural England. The proposal will therefore protect and enhance the biodiversity of the District.
- 5.8 The proposed building has a single storey form and is to be located in the same general position as the existing metal clad agricultural building that currently occupies this part of the site. It will occupy a lesser footprint than that building and owing to its muted palette of materials will not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling or the character of the rural area.
- 5.9 It is consequently concluded that the proposed outbuilding is consistent with the requirements of policies SS10 and NE1 of the Local Plan and that the development is therefore acceptable in principle.

Design & Layout

- 5.10 The site is currently occupied by a poor quality agricultural building that extends off the southeast elevation of the main two storey stone building. It is finished in a mixture of blockwork with different coloured metal cladding above. This building contributes little to the character and appearance of the area; indeed it can be held to detract from it.
- 5.11 The proposed outbuilding will be sited in the same general position as the existing building thereby reflecting the layout of existing built development on the site. It is single storey in scale with a ridge height that sits comfortably below that of the main building, thereby ensuring that it has a subservient relationship to it.
- 5.12 The proposed palette of materials, comprising of larch timber cladding to the elevations and a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof above, will have a muted appearance and provide a clear contrast to the stone building behind. The use of Staffordshire Blue tiles ties in with the other buildings on the wider site. The building will respect the form of these existing buildings, having a rectangular plan form, with a strongly defined ridge line emphasised by gables.
- 5.13 In views from the public domain the building will read as a subservient structure, in contrasting materials such that it will not compete with the stone buildings that surround it. On approach to the site from the east along the Cheadle Road the building will be seen against the backdrop of the two storey stone barn in behind. Similarly on approach from the east along the Cheadle Road the building will be viewed against the backdrop of the three storey farmhouse. It will not appear dominant or incongruous within its surroundings as a consequence.
- 5.14 Having regard to the considerations set out above it is concluded that the design and layout of the proposed development is consistent with the
-

requirements of policies SS1, SS10 and DC1 of the Local Plan and guidance set out within the adopted Design Guide SPD.

Car Parking

- 5.15 The approved scheme makes provision for the parking of 5no. cars to serve the two dwellings that are to be formed within this building. The submitted proposal maintains the provision of 2no. spaces to the north of the building to serve Unit 2, with three spaces retained to serve Unit 1, but in an alternative layout to that which was previously approved. The proposed development will therefore not result in a loss of parking on the site compared to the approved scheme.
- 5.16 Ample space will also remain within the site so as to allow for vehicles to turn within the site and thus exit onto the Cheadle Road in a forward gear. No harm to highway safety will therefore arise as a consequence. The proposal is therefore consistent with the requirements of policy T1 of the Local Plan.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The proposed bat loft will provide adequate mitigation to safeguard protected species. The required mitigation is unable to be accommodated within the existing building.
- The building is appropriate in scale and design and will not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwelling or the character of the rural area.
- The proposal will not have an adverse impact on highway safety within the locality.

6.2 The proposed development is consequently held to meet the requirements of policies SS1, SS10, DC1, NE1 and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD.