

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0529
Valid 28/11/2024

APESFORD FARM
APESFORD LANE
BRADNOP

**ERECTION OF SELF-BUILD
DWELLING TO REPLACE
EXISTING DWELLING.**

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

The principle of the proposal
The impact on the character and appearance of the area
The impact on residential amenity
The impact on highway safety
The impact on the ecological value of the site

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site lies within the open countryside about a mile to the south of Bradnop and comprises a traditional stone farmhouse at Apesford Farm, on the south side of Apesford Lane, a country lane off A523 which lies a short distance to the north-east. The site is served by a farm track off Apesford Lane and the site is at the southern end of the track. The farmhouse has a traditional stone shippon (barn) attached to its northern side but this is outside of the application site. Also within the site, a short distance to the south side of the farmhouse, is two attached vacant buildings, one a stone single-storey milking parlour type structure with pitched roof and next to this to the east is a dilapidated open barn. There are several other buildings at Apesford Farm, including a traditional detached barn to the south-west of the site being converted into two dwellings. To the east and south of the site is open land with land to south sloping downwards. To the west of the farm, is Middle Farm, a separate property with a number of buildings and further west another separate farm, also called Apesford Farm. There are other farm buildings to the north of the site. The three farms are surrounded by open land which is in the Churnet Valley countryside but not within the Green Belt.

PROPOSAL

This is a full planning application for the demolition of the farmhouse (but retaining the attached shippon) and the provision of a 4-bed replacement detached dwelling of a similar siting and orientation as the existing and which would overlap part of the footprint of the farmhouse, but which would be completely detached from the shippon. The scheme is shown on amended drawings which were received on 8th December 2025 (but not displayed online until 23rd January 2026). The replacement dwelling would be in the form of a traditional Victorian stone farmhouse with similar features to the existing stone farmhouse, including pitched and tiled roof with side gables and rear outrigger partly with catslide roof and chimneys. It would have an eaves height of 5.0 metres and ridge height of 8.0 metres. It would be

larger than the existing farmhouse and with more floorspace (it would have a total floorspace of 203 sq.m whereas the current farmhouse has 143 sq.m excluding the attached rear store). A new driveway would be placed between the shippon and the proposed new dwelling, leading to a parking area to the rear. A rear garden would also be provided and the new residential curtilage would be enclosed by new dry-stone boundary walls.

The new curtilage would overlap the footprints of two vacant storage buildings to the south, which would be demolished.

The original plans were for a replacement dwelling placed further to the south of the two storage buildings to be demolished. These were further amended and a “long-barn” form of dwelling was put forward. This has been further replaced by the December 2025 plans for more of a “farmhouse” form and complete re-siting.

Accompanying the application is a Bat Report (of the existing buildings to be demolished), a BNG Report, BNG calculations (which were revised on 10.2.25 and 3.3.25) and a Planning Statement.

In September 2025, an email was received from the agent stating that it was the intention of the applicant to build the dwelling and to live in it. The proposed development is therefore classed as a “Self Build” Scheme.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted Sept 2020)

- SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
- H1 New Housing
 - DC1 Design Considerations
 - NE1 Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2025)

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

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2022/0019: Change of use of agricultural building to one dwellinghouses (Class C3) under Part 3 Class Q of the GPDO. Approved. Not implemented. (Attached shippon).

SMD/2019/0687: Full planning application for the conversion of two barns into two dwellings. Permission granted. (To west of application site). One of these, “Barn B”, is in the process of being converted.

SMD/2023/0624: Extensions to existing farmhouse. Approved. Not implemented.

SMD/2024/0339: Conversion of shippon attached to farmhouse. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 10.1.25

Neighbour consultation period ends: 10.1.25

Press Advert: 11.12.24 (Affecting a Public Right of Way).

Public Comments

One letter of objection has been received on the grounds of the demolition of a historic building and the number of approved dwelling conversions at the farm which would lead to light pollution affecting local people and wildlife and that lighting so far has been out of keeping with the area.

Parish Council Comments

Bradnop PC questions why the replacement of the dwelling is needed given the current dwelling is historic and has an approval for an extension. The PC also raises concerns over bats in the roof of the current dwelling and that previous works at the site resulted in the closure of public footpaths. The PC considers that with all the other schemes on the property, there is increasing overdevelopment.

Local Highways Authority

No objection.

Environmental Health Section

No objection subject to standard conditions applied to new-build dwellings on farms.

SCC Public Rights of Way (PROW).

Request that the route of an adjacent public footpath is shown on the plans.

Ramblers Association

Footpath Bradnop 16 goes through the site and must be kept open at all times.

Peak & Northern Footpaths Society

We note that the PROW Bradnop 16 runs through the site. Use of the PROW and the safety of users must not be affected by the development including during the construction phase.

Waste Collection Services

No issues regarding waste collections.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Original Consultation Response (Dec 2024):

A Holding Objection was issued on the grounds of clarification of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) details required including revisions to the BNG metric calculations.

SWT also commented that the Bat Report revealed the existing farmhouse and shippon were used as a summer roost for bats were satisfied that the mitigation measures are acceptable and recommends conditions to provide new bat and bird boxes and appropriate lighting.

Revised consultation response in response to amended BNG details (Feb 2025):

A Holding Objection was continued on the basis that the revised BNG calculations did not take into account existing private garden land including that within the curtilage of the existing farmhouse.

Consultation response (March 2025)

SWT continued its Holding Objection on the basis of errors and clarifications required in the BNG details and metric.

Comments (August 2025)

SWT still require further BNG related information particularly with regard to the recording of trees in private gardens.

Impacts relating to bats can be controlled via conditions requiring mitigation measures and the submission of external lighting details for approval.

OFFICER COMMENTS

The Local Plan allows replacement dwellings, including in the countryside, in accordance with Policy SS10, the strategy for the countryside and also Policy H1 which states that replacements will be permitted where they would not have a significantly greater impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling or result in the loss of a building which is intrinsic to the character of the area. It is accepted the current farmhouse does have some traditional rural character it could be described as being “intrinsic” to the character of the area. However, it is in poor condition and appears untidy and dilapidated. For this reason, its current appearance would detract from its character and appearance and its contribution to the traditional rural character and appearance of the area. Despite its poor condition and state of dereliction, it is not considered the farmhouse has been abandoned and therefore has not lost its ‘C3 Residential’ Use Class. This is because a planning application to extend it was recently approved and although the extensions have not been implemented (probably due to the deterioration of the building), it does give some evidence of an intent to retain the residential use of the site. The principle of replacing the vacant farmhouse with a completely new dwelling is therefore not unacceptable, providing that the form and design of the replacement

dwelling would significantly contribute to the traditional rural qualities of the area in relation to the existing.

It is considered the eventual amended form and design of the replacement would achieve this. The design and materials are appropriate to the surrounding area and it would contain sufficient features and detailing. The traditional layout and orientation of buildings in this traditional farmstead has been retained.

The new house would have an eaves and ridge height of approx. 1.0 metre higher than the existing farmhouse. However, the proposed heights of 5.0m and 8.0m are not untypical of larger traditional farmhouses in the area. The proposed floorspace (203 sq.m) would be 60 sq.m larger than existing (143 sq.m). However, if the approved rear extensions to the farmhouse had been built, this would have resulted in a farmhouse of 181 sq.m, just 22 sq.m less than the new replacement dwelling.

The floorspace calculations/measurements of the existing, existing as extended and proposed have been provided by the agent and the Council, carrying out its own measurements, has verified these as being correct.

The farmhouse could have been further enlarged via extensions carried out under permitted development (without needing planning permission) under Part 1 Class A of the GPDO, particular to the side of the dwelling. If such extensions had been undertaken, along with the approved extension, this would have provided a farmhouse of equal floorspace to the new house proposed.

A condition can be added removing the permitted development rights (under Part 1 of the GPDO) to extend the new house to keep it in appropriate size for its location and prevent insensitive further additions without planning permission, which may harm the traditional rural character and appearance of the area.

Overall, despite the height increase, it is not considered the proposed replacement dwelling would be materially larger, in terms of volume, than the existing and therefore the proposed development would not have significantly greater impact on the existing character of the rural area than the original dwelling, in compliance with policies SS10 and H1 of the Local Plan and that the design would be compliant with Policy DC1.

As the proposed dwelling would have the same orientation and similar siting to the existing farmhouse and also similar window positionings, the proposal would not result in any harmful overlooking, loss of privacy or loss of light provision to any existing or future residents of the area surrounding the site. The nearby barns, including the shippin, have approvals for conversions into further dwellings but these would not be affected by this new proposal.

The new house would meet the floorspace thresholds in the governments Nationally Described Space Standards for 4-bedroom 2-storey houses and the garden would also comply with the size and length standards for private outdoor garden space in the Council's Space About Dwellings SPG. The proposal would provide adequate living conditions for the occupants and overall, the residential amenities of the area would not be harmed, in compliance with Policy DC1.

With regard to ecological impacts, the farmhouse and shippon, the former to be demolished, have high bat roost potential and surveys found the building to contain a number of summer bat roosts. However, bat mitigation is proposed and is approved by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. This would include four new bat boxes which can be achieved by way of a planning condition. Bird boxes and new native planting are also proposed to maintain the ecological value of the site.

With regard to Biodiversity Net Gain, this would normally be required for new buildings occupying at least 25 sq.m of potential habitat (the new dwelling would be on grassland areas). BNG measures and Metric baseline calculations required in order to assess if BNG can be achieved, were submitted but it later transpired that the new proposed dwelling is to be built by the applicant who would also live in it on first occupation. The development is hence a "Self-Build" scheme and such schemes are exempt from BNG.

Overall, with the safeguard of conditions, biodiversity would not be affected and the proposal would comply with Policy NE1.

The nearest neighbouring property, not within the applicants' control; is Middle Farm. However, this is over 60m from the dwelling, which will have no greater impact on amenity than the existing farmhouse.

With regard to highways impacts, the proposal in replacing a dwelling would not lead to any increase in vehicle movements or traffic and three new parking spaces would be provided which is in accordance with Council parking standards for 4-bed dwellings.

The new development would not affect the adjacent Public Rights of Way running through the farm and past the application site, to the west of it. The "path" marked to the east of the farmhouse and immediately to the south of it, running past the two storage buildings to be demolished, would be blocked off by the new dwelling and its curtilage. However, this appears to be a private track and is not a Public Right of Way.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

The proposed replacement dwelling, as amended, is acceptable in principle in this rural location and would not harm the visual or residential amenities of the area or harm the ecological value of the site. It has an appropriate scale and design of sufficiently high quality for this traditional and rural location. It would therefore comply with the Council's Local Plan and the government planning guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Chris Johnston

Recommendation Date: 29.1.26

X *B.J. Haywood*

Signed by: Ben Haywood

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council