

Supporting Planning Statement

Proposed Barn Conversion at Beaver Hall, Staffordshire

1. Introduction

This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the sensitive conversion of an existing barn at Beaver Hall, Staffordshire, to residential use. The purpose of this statement is to explain the planning merits of the proposal, describe the site and development, and demonstrate how the scheme can be delivered in a manner that respects the rural character of the site and the wider Staffordshire landscape.

The statement is intended to accompany the application drawings, application forms, ownership certificates and a Preliminary Roost Assessment.

This statement is structured to follow the main stages of the planning assessment: first describing the site and proposal, then setting out the relevant policy context, before assessing the key planning considerations relating to design, amenity, ecology, highways and the overall planning balance.

2. Site Context

The application site is located at Beaver Hall in Staffordshire. Beaver Hall is an established rural/equestrian site, historically associated with farm buildings and later equestrian and visitor-related uses. The site context is therefore rural in character, with existing built form associated with the former agricultural holding and related countryside activities.

The barn proposed for conversion would avoid the need for a new dwelling in the countryside and would help secure the long-term maintenance of an existing building while retaining the established built character of the site.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal seeks planning permission for the conversion of an existing barn to form residential accommodation, together with any associated operational development required to make the building suitable for domestic occupation. The detailed arrangement of rooms, openings, amenity space and servicing will be shown on the accompanying architectural drawings.

The conversion retains the existing building envelope with no extensions to the footprint being proposed. It reuses the existing openings, with the only alteration being the conversion of one window opening to a door. The only new interventions to the building fabric are new rooflights on the single-storey section of the barn and enlarged rooflights within the double-storey section.

4. Planning Policy Context

The application will be determined in accordance with the development plan for the relevant local planning authority, together with national planning policy and other material considerations. Where Beaver Hall falls within Staffordshire Moorlands, the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014–2033 provides the principal local policy framework. Relevant policies include

Policy SS 1: Development Principles, Policy SS 10: Other Rural Areas Strategy, Policy H 1: New Housing Development, Policy DC 1: Design Considerations, Policy DC 3: Landscape and Settlement Setting and Policy NE 1: Biodiversity and Geological Resources.

National planning policy supports sustainable development, efficient use of land and buildings, high-quality design, protection of the natural and historic environment, and the vitality of rural communities. The conversion of suitable existing buildings can contribute positively to these objectives where the proposal is structurally feasible, sensitively designed and compatible with its countryside setting.

Local rural building guidance commonly expects barn conversions to respect the original agricultural character of the building, make best use of existing openings, avoid excessive extension or rebuilding, retain simple roof forms, and ensure that gardens, parking, boundary treatments and lighting do not suburbanise the rural setting.

This policy context provides the basis for assessing the main planning considerations raised by the proposal.

5. Key Planning Considerations

5.1 Principle of Development

The proposal represents the reuse of the barn rather than the introduction of a new isolated dwelling in the countryside. The principle of residential conversion can therefore be supported as a sustainable and efficient use of an existing asset, provided the submitted information confirms that the building is structurally capable of conversion and that the works retain its rural character.

5.2 Design, Character and Appearance

The conversion maintains the essential agricultural character of the barn, including its form, proportions and roofscape. No new window or door openings are proposed, with the only alteration being the conversion of one existing window opening to a doorway. The use of rooflights, rather than additional wall openings, allows the building to be adapted for residential use while keeping external intervention to a minimum. Any necessary repairs to external materials, including roof tiles, shall be carried out on a like-for-like basis.

5.3 Residential Amenity and Living Conditions

The proposed use would provide residential accommodation within the existing building envelope and should be capable of being served by appropriate private amenity space, parking and servicing arrangements within the site. Owing to the rural context and the reuse of an existing building, the proposal is not expected to give rise to unacceptable impacts on neighbouring amenity, subject to details of lighting, boundary treatment and external domestic paraphernalia being appropriately controlled.

5.4 Ecology and Biodiversity

A Preliminary Roost Assessment has been carried out and submitted as part of the application. At the time of preparing this statement, the two recommended emergence surveys have been scheduled, and their findings will be submitted to support the application. Any required mitigation, compensation or enhancement measures will be incorporated into the proposal and secured through planning condition where necessary.

5.5 Highways, Access and Parking

The proposed conversion would make use of the established access arrangements serving Beaver Hall. As the proposal relates to the reuse of an existing rural building, it is not expected to generate a material level of traffic when compared with the historic agricultural, equestrian or associated site activity. Any vehicle movements would be limited in scale and compatible with the character and capacity of the surrounding rural road network.

Adequate off-street parking is available within the application site and no additional hardstanding is required to accommodate parking for the barn.

6. Summary and Planning Balance

In summary, the proposal represents a sensitive and appropriate reuse of an existing rural building at Beaver Hall. By converting the barn within its existing footprint and retaining its established form, openings and agricultural character, the scheme would avoid the need for a wholly new dwelling in the countryside while securing the long-term maintenance and beneficial use of the building.

The proposal is capable of complying with the relevant development plan policies and national planning policy where the submitted drawings and supporting information confirm the building's structural suitability, the limited nature of alterations, appropriate ecology mitigation, suitable drainage, and safe access, parking and turning arrangements.

Overall, the proposal would preserve the rural character of the site, make efficient use of an existing building and would not be expected to result in unacceptable harm to highway safety, residential amenity, ecology or the wider landscape. On this basis, the planning balance weighs in favour of granting permission, subject to the final technical details and any necessary planning conditions.