

The Croft
Dilhorne Road
Dilhorne
Staffordshire Moorlands
Conversion of Curtilage building
Planning Statement
07/09/2013

The Croft, Dilhorne Road, Dilhorne

Planning Statement

Proposed conversion and limited rebuilding of existing curtilage building together with construction of freestanding garage to create single dwelling

Planning Application August 2013



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant Mr & Mrs Ball to accompany a planning application for the conversion of an existing curtilage building at the Croft with limited rebuilding and the construction of a freestanding garage for the development of a single dwelling.

1.2 This statement supports the application and considers the planning issues associated with the proposal.

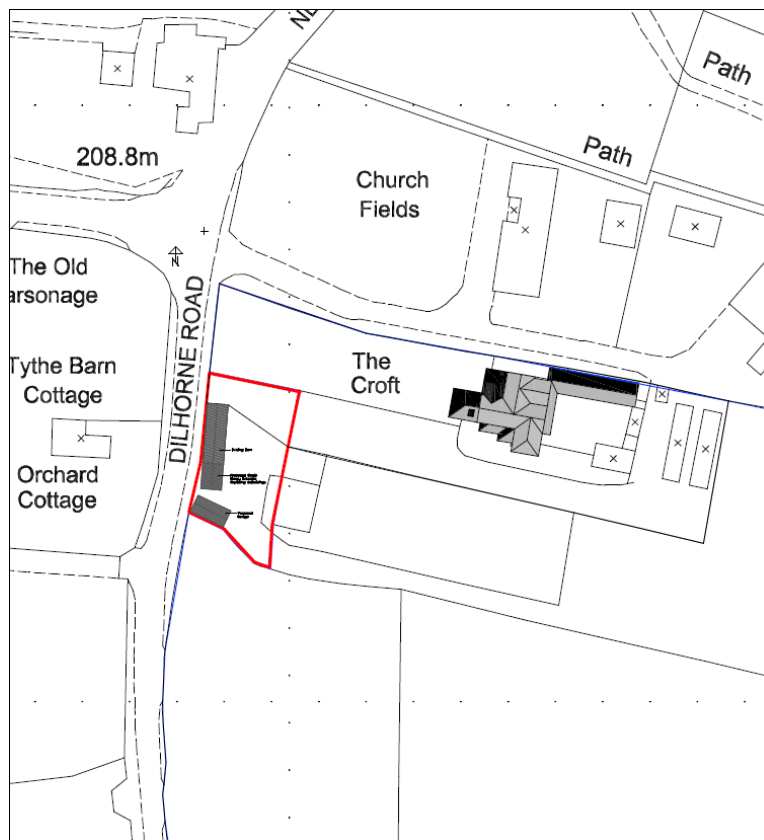
1.3 The structure of the statement is as follows:

- A description of the application site and its surroundings;
- A review of the planning history for the site and surroundings;
- A description of the proposal;
- A review of the national and local planning policies of relevance to the scheme; and
- An appraisal of the scheme against the relevant policy context

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2.0 The Application Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located within Dilhorne Road, Dilhorne, Staffordshire Moorlands and is within the Green belt and a Special Landscape Area as defined in the Staffordshire Moorlands Proposals Map 1998.
- 2.2 The application site (as denoted by the red line on the site plan) currently consists of a unused outbuilding, which is currently within the wider curtilage of The Croft.



Site Plan Extract (Not to Scale)

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- 2.3 The site consists of a brick built barn, which is double height and has been extended over a period of time with single storey additions, which have created storage space and garaging. The building is visible from Dilhorne Road although there are no openings within this elevation, all openings are situated on the gable ends and eastern elevation, which are fitted with timber casements and shutters. The site is within the curtilage of an existing residential dwelling 'The Croft', which also contains further outbuildings, which are currently in use.
- 2.4 The surrounding land is rural in nature but with the presence of further dwellings and local services including a Public House and Church in walking distance. The settlements of Caverswall and Forsbrook are also in close proximity of the site to the west and south respectively.
- 2.5 Access to the site for both vehicles and pedestrians is directly adjacent to the northern corner of the building, which is set back from the main carriageway and is secured by timber gates. The site is located approximately 2 miles to the north of the A50 which provides a key transport corridor with links to the North West and the Midlands.
- 2.6 The building has been marketed for freehold or leasehold by Butters John Bee and seen as possibly suiting workshop or storage use. The building went to market in May 2012 and whilst 5 e-mail enquiries were received in 2012 no viewings or offers have been made.

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3.0 Planning History

3.1 A planning applications search has revealed that there have been no recent planning applications for this building, which is consistent with the fact that the marketing of the premises has yielded no interest in over 12 months. However, planning permissions have been granted for extensions to 'The Croft', as the main dwelling on the site.

3.2 The search has revealed that a series of planning permissions have been granted in the surrounding vicinity which include the conversion of former agricultural buildings for residential purposes. Those of note are listed below:

- 11/01089/FUL – Old Engine Farm Birchenfields Lane, Dilhorne, Staffordshire ST10 2PX, The conversion of a former agricultural building to a single residential dwelling – Approved with conditions
- 11/00470/OUT – Royal Oak Inn High Street, Dilhorne, Staffordshire ST10 2PE, 3 new dwellings and associated car parking facilities (Outline)
- 10/00569/FUL - Day House Farm Sarver Lane, Dilhorne, Staffordshire Moorlands ST10 2PD, Change of use of former cowshed to ancillary residential accommodation

3.3 These applications are all of relevance to this planning submission given the location of these sites within the Green belt.

4.0 The Proposed Scheme

- 4.1 This is a full planning application for the conversion of a redundant curtilage building, together with minor rebuilding works and the provision of a garage in association with the creation of a new dwelling with associated curtilage.
- 4.2 The proposed conversion would involve modest but necessary demolition and rebuilding works, which would not result in any material increase in the existing floorspace available. The work would have the result of removing unsympathetic additions to the original building with a modest extension, which would enable an efficient layout capable of accommodating a two bedroom property.
- 4.3 The main aspirations for the conversion are to bring about the effective, sustainable re-use of a rural building, which has been marketed for suitable re-use without interest. It would result in the continued stewardship of the building without detriment to the visual amenity or openness of the surroundings.
- 4.4 Internally, the dwelling would provide modest accommodation, consisting of a lounge and open plan kitchen/dining space at ground floor with bathroom and two bedrooms at first floor level.
- 4.5 Externally, the rebuilding work would result in a seamless extension of the main building with roof pitch to match that of the original structure. The residential curtilage is defined in plan form but it is not the intention of the

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applicant to physically define this curtilage on-site given the need to maintain shared access throughout the site and to avoid the unwanted effect of erecting boundary features, which would detract from the openness of the Green Belt and impact upon the character of the landscape. To ensure that the proposed use of the building has a minimal impact upon the landscape the applicant would expect the Local Planning Authority to remove all permitted development rights relating to extensions, improvements or alterations within the curtilage including the provision of any boundary treatments.

- 4.6 Access to the site for vehicles and pedestrians is to be maintained in its current location and provision is to be made externally for a freestanding garage to accommodate one vehicle. All arrangements for refuse collection are to be consistent with those which exist for 'The Croft'.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 Planning policy guidance of relevance to the proposed scheme is set out within the following documents:
- National Planning Policy Framework
 - The Saved Policies of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 1998
 - Supplementary Planning Guidance and Documents
- 5.2 The proposals should be assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.3 Section 7 of the NPPF sets out the position regarding the design of the built environment. Planning policies and decisions are required to ensure that developments respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- 5.4 Section 9 of the NPPF 'Protecting Green Belt Land' sets out the position concerning Green belt land for the decision making authority. It is made clear that there are five main purposes for including land within the Green belt, amongst which is the aim to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. When considering planning applications within the Green belt it is clear that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development and such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances.

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- 5.5 Section 11 of the NPPF highlights the need for the planning system to give consideration to the protection of biodiversity. The planning system should promote sustainable forms of development whilst minimising impacts upon biodiversity and providing net gains where possible.
- 5.6 The Local Development Framework (LDF) and the various suites of documents are still emerging in light of a revision to the Local Development Scheme which will now see a review of the emerging Core Spatial Strategy for the District. The proposal will therefore need to be considered against the statutory development plan, consisting of saved policies from the local plan as adopted in 1998.
- 5.7 The adopted proposals map identifies the site as being located within the Green belt, making adopted policies N2 and N7 of direct relevance.
- 5.8 Policy N2 sets out the approach for a presumption against inappropriate development in the Green belt with a list of caveats A-G in which certain circumstances, for example, the conversion of rural buildings of permanent construction, development may be acceptable.
- 5.9 N7 sets out the need to ensure that developments pay regard to the character and setting of the Green belt when considering siting, materials and design.
- 5.10 Policies N8 and N9 are also of relevance to the scheme and highlight the need for developments within 'The Special Landscape Area' to respect this setting in terms of siting, scale, design and materials.

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- 5.11 Policy B13 sets out the design principles with which developments are to be assessed and underlines broad design principles such as scale, mass, character, siting and materials as key considerations.
- 5.12 Policy B21 is of direct relevance to the proposal as it sets out the relevant criteria against which conversions of rural buildings are assessed. The criteria highlight the importance of the structures stability, materials specification, impact upon the surroundings including environmental, social and economic considerations.
- 5.13 It is deemed that SPG: Design Principles in the Staffordshire Moorlands is a material consideration.

6.0 Planning Appraisal

6.1 Having regard to the planning policy context as described, it is thought that the main issues to be considered are as follows:

- Principle of residential use
- Potential impact upon the surrounding landscape

6.2 Principle of residential use

6.3 The principle of the proposed conversion of this curtilage building should be assessed against the guidance contained within the NPPF and the relevant local plan policies.

6.4 *Paragraph 90 of the NPPF states that “Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt... [this includes] the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.”*

6.5 The adopted local policies contained within the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 1998 ensure that any planning applications for inappropriate development would be refused unless special circumstances exist.

6.6 However, this submission seeks to re-use an existing rural building for residential purposes, which is listed as qualifying as special circumstances in local plan policy N2 (C) subject to the criteria listed within policy B21 which relates specifically to the conversion of rural buildings.

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- 6.7 The applicant has commissioned a structural report which was carried out in December 2011. The findings of the survey conclude that the building has suffered very little settlement and structural movement and as such the external structure is viable for conversion to a dwelling subject to isolated elements of work.
- 6.8 Given the findings of the structural survey it is considered that the conversion works are deemed to be acceptable subject to the scheme design and the assessment of the proposal against the criteria contained within policy B21.
- 6.9 Policy B21 requires rural buildings to be suitable for conversion, a requirement which the applicant has evidenced within this submission.
- 6.10 The local vernacular sees a mix of building materials with the use of modern construction methods within 'The Croft' which has been subject to modern extensions. However, there is a consistent use of brickwork, clay tiles and natural stone within the immediate area. The proposal seeks to retain and repair existing building fabric in accordance with the Design SPG with the proposed dining area to be constructed in suitable facing materials that would complement the existing structure.
- 6.11 Given that the site is already accessible by vehicle it is considered that the re-use of this building for residential purposes would not be out of character or obtrusive within the landscape, given the presence of existing dwellings and outbuildings associated with business use. Whilst the application site does not lie within established development boundaries, the applicant currently resides at 'The Croft' and the intention is that the proposed dwelling would be occupied by family members.

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- 6.12 It is considered that the structural evidence submitted with the proposal, coupled with the expressed aim to create a characterful dwelling, confirms that the proposal should not be viewed as inappropriate development within the Green belt. Furthermore the resultant scale of the development should not be viewed as harmful to the character of the site or its surroundings and cannot reasonably be argued to prejudice the vitality of existing settlements.
- 6.13 The NPPF seeks to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. In this case the proposal includes the conversion and limited rebuilding of a vacant structure. The applicant commissioned an ecological scoping survey, which concluded that there were no protected species evident on site, nor was there any requirement for further survey work prior to determination of the planning application.
- 6.14 **Potential impact upon the surrounding landscape**
- 6.15 Notwithstanding the failure to attract business use for the site, further to a prolonged period of marketing, it is considered that in this case a residential conversion would be more appropriate environmentally. It is considered that the use of the site for economic purposes would likely result in a more intensive use of the site and detract from the character of the Green belt.
- 6.16 The dwellings' integration into the landscape will ensure minimal harm to the rural character and openness of the Green belt, due to the use of unobtrusive materials and limited alteration to the scale and mass of the structure.
- 6.17 Policies N8 and N9 seek to ensure that proposals within the Special Landscape Area promote high standards of design in order to protect the open qualities of the surroundings.

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6.18 The proposed scheme has been designed to respect the landscape character and maintain its distinctiveness, taking cues from the SPG with regards conversions. The limited, yet sensitive alterations to the external fabric of the building have been designed with the intention that the natural landscape and associated habitats are maintained.

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7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The proposed conversion scheme is of a high design quality and is sensitive to the character of the immediate surroundings and its wider setting. The proposal should not be viewed as inappropriate development within the Green belt and accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Plan where relevant.