

PLANNING STATEMENT

PARK FARM, GRANGEWOOD

JUNE 2019

Site Address:

Park Farm, Grangewood, Derbyshire, DE12 8DY

Applicant:

Mr. & Mrs. Hemus

Proposal:

Conversion, extension and alteration of building to create 1no.
dwellinghouse

Planning Statement:

Date Issued: 24th June 2019

Job Reference: RDP/2019/014

Report Prepared By:

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. & Mrs. Hemus to seek full planning permission for the conversion, extension and alteration of a former agricultural building at Park Farm, Grangewood, to form a single dwellinghouse.
- 1.2 The existing building on site is of relatively recent construction, having been substantially re-built in 2010 following declarations by the Local Authority's Building Control Department that the building was structurally unsafe and at risk of collapse. In agreement with the Local Authority, works were subsequently undertaken to demolish and re-build the majority of the building. This application seeks consent to convert, alter and extend the resultant building that was erected in order to create an independent dwellinghouse.
- 1.3 The application proposes the conversion and alteration of the building, encompassing the insertion of a full height glazed opening in the western elevation of the building, along with two additional windows on either side, in order to optimise views over the surrounding landscape. It is also proposed to part brick up two larger openings in the southern elevation of the building, replaced by two new windows. The proposal otherwise works with and makes beneficial reuse of existing openings, with others blocked up where indicated on the plans. The resultant accommodation will comprise of a hallway, three bedrooms, study and cloakroom at ground floor, with an open plan kitchen, dining and living room, utility, w/c and master bedroom at first floor.
- 1.4 At the easternmost end of the building it is proposed to erect a double garage that will connect the existing building to the existing range of single

storey outbuildings at the eastern end of the site. A new wall is to be erected in the southeast corner of the site, which along with the existing buildings and proposed garage will form an enclosed yard area. Vehicular access to the site is to be taken via the existing track that serves both Park Farm, and neighbouring properties (The Piggery, The Croft, Woodridge Barn, Potterswood Barn and Park View Barn). This access has passing places along its length, and has good visibility on egress onto High Street.

- 1.5 The application has been subject to pre-application discussions where it was confirmed that the principle of converting the building to a dwelling is acceptable, with the key consideration being ensuring the design details are sympathetic and reflect a strong rural setting. The centrally positioned, full height window and the insertion of new windows in the western elevation was concluded to be acceptable. Previous pre-application advice had suggested that the proposed garage extension should be stepped back slightly from the front courtyard elevation and ensure that the eaves sit behind the host wall in the interests of ensuring that new brickwork does not have to be keyed in. The amended proposal maintains a forward projection in the interest of ensuring that the resultant space can function as garaging. The planning officer noted that setting back the extension would improve its subordination, but did note that it resolved the brickwork issue. The only concern raised was in respect of the interface distance between the first floor kitchen window of the building and the principal windows of the piggery, recommending that this latter window be bricked up if recommended distance guidelines cannot be achieved. The applicant has proposed to partially brick up this opening, retaining the upper half such that it cannot afford overlooking of the neighbouring property, but will maintain wider views of the countryside. The proposed flues were considered acceptable.

2 Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located within the rural area, and comprises a substantially re-built former agricultural building that is located immediately to the north of Park Farm. The building is two storey in nature, with traditional two-thirds elevation / one-third roof proportions. It is constructed from facing brickwork and has a Staffordshire Blue tiled roof. Between the building and Park Farm is an existing yard area that is used for parking. A range of single storey outbuildings extend in a north/south direction to the east of the building, beyond which lies an extensive walled garden associated with Park Farm. Residential development in the form of The Croft, Woodridge Barn, Potterswood Barn and Park View Barn lie to the east of the site, with The Piggery located to the north, beyond an existing access track. The Piggery is noted to lie at a lower level to the application site. To the west of the building lies open grass enclosed to the north by the access track serving the neighbouring properties to the east, and to the south by the access track that will be used to provide vehicular access to the development.

3 Planning Policy

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. The Development Plan for this area comprises the South Derbyshire Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and Part 2 (2017) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

Local Plan Part 1

- 3.2 **Policy S2** of the Local Plan Part 1 relates to the 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development' and states that when considering development

proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will work proactively with applicants to seek solutions, which mean that proposals secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications received by the Council that accord with the policies in the Local Plan Part 1 & 2 (and where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be dealt with positively and without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:

- (i) Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the national planning policy framework taken as a whole; or
- (ii) Specific policies in that framework indicate that development should be restricted.

3.3 **Policy H1** of the Local Plan Part 1 relates to the 'Settlement Hierarchy' and states that the Settlement Hierarchy is based on the range of services and facilities that are offered by each settlement. The level of development for each settlement will be of a scale appropriate to the size and role of that settlement. As planning applications are received the merits of each individual site will be assessed through the Development Management process. The distribution of new development outside of allocations over the period of this Plan will be in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy below:

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- 1) Urban Areas - the urban areas of Swadlincote including Woodville, adjacent to Derby and adjacent to Burton upon Trent
 - 2) Key Service Villages - Aston on Trent, Hatton, Melbourne Repton, Willington, Etwall, Hilton, Overseal, Shardlow Linton
 - 3) Local Service Villages
 - 4) Rural Villages
 - 5) Rural Areas
- 3.4 Policy H1 goes on to state that within the rural areas, beyond the defined settlement boundaries, only development of limited infill and conversions of existing buildings will be acceptable.
- 3.5 **Policy BNE1** of the Local Plan Part 1 relates to 'Design Excellence' and states that all new development will be expected to be well designed, embrace the principles of sustainable development, encourage healthy lifestyles and enhance people's quality of life by adhering to the Design Principles below.
- a) Community safety: New development should be designed to ensure that people feel comfortable and safe by minimising opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour, providing good natural surveillance and appropriate demarcations between public and private areas;
 - b) Street design, movement and legibility: Streets should be designed to relate to their context, with a balance being struck between place-making needs and vehicle movement needs. Streets should be attractive, pedestrian and cycle friendly and meet the needs of all users. New development should be easy to find your way around, have a clear hierarchy of streets and take advantage of available opportunities for connections to local services, including public transport;
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- c) Diversity and community cohesion: New development should be designed to be diverse, vibrant, possess a sense of place and encourage social interaction.
- d) Ease of use: New development should be accessible to all user groups, well managed and should be able to adapt to changing social, environmental, technological and economic conditions, including the needs of an ageing society;
- e) Local character and pride: New development should create places with a locally inspired character that respond to their context and have regard to valued landscape, townscape and heritage characteristics;
- f) National Forest: Within The National Forest, new development should be encouraged to follow National Forest Design Charter and Guide for Developers & Planners and fully reflect the forest context;
- g) Visual attractiveness: New development should be visually attractive, appropriate, respect important landscape, townscape and historic views and vistas, contribute to achieving continuity and enclosure within the street scene and possess a high standard of architectural and landscaping quality;
- h) Neighbouring uses and amenity: New development should not have an undue adverse affect on the privacy and amenity of existing nearby occupiers. Similarly, the occupiers of new development should not be unduly affected by neighbouring land uses;
- i) Cross boundary collaboration: New areas of growth that span administrative, land ownership, developer parcel or phase boundaries

should be considered and designed as a whole through a collaborative working approach;

- j) **Healthy Lifestyles:** New development should address social sustainability issues, by supporting healthy lifestyles, including through the promotion of active travel, the provision of public open space, sports and other leisure facilities.
- k) **Resource Use:** New development should be designed to facilitate the efficient use of resources and support the reuse and recycling of waste throughout the lifecycle of all developments from design, construction, use and after use. New development should provide adequate space for the storage of waste and where appropriate the treatment or collection of waste.

3.6 **Policy INF2** of the Local Plan Part 1 relates to 'Sustainable Transport' and states that development should include appropriate car parking provision having regard to:

- a) parking standards, to be published as a Supplementary Planning Document;
- b) the need to ensure that development would not have an undue detrimental impact on pedestrian and cyclist movement and highway safety;
- c) the need to encourage travel on foot, by cycle and by public transport in preference to the private car by minimising parking provision;
- d) the need to provide sufficient conveniently located spaces to meet the needs of people with impaired mobility;
- e) the conclusions of any Transport Assessment undertaken in accordance with Part 2 of this policy;

- f) the need to encourage the use of low emission vehicles.

Local Plan Part 2

3.7 **Policy H28** of the Local Plan Part 2 relates to ‘Residential Conversions’ and states that outside settlement boundaries the conversion of a building to provide residential accommodation will be permitted provided the building:

- i) Is of a permanent and substantial construction; and
- ii) Is suitable for conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding and/or extension; or
- iii) Constitutes the re-use of a suitable redundant or disused building or would secure the future use of a heritage asset.

3.8 **Policy BNE5** of the Local Plan Part 2 relates to ‘Development in Rural Areas’ and states that outside of settlement boundaries within the rural areas of the District, planning permission will be granted where the development is:

- i) Allowed for by policies H1, H22, E7, INF10, H24, H25, H26, H27 or H28; or
- ii) Otherwise essential to a rural based activity; or
- iii) Unavoidable outside settlement boundaries; or
- iv) Considered to be infill that is in keeping with the character of the locality and represents the infilling of a small gap for not normally more than two dwellings, within small groups of housing; and
- v) Will not unduly impact on: landscape character and quality, biodiversity, best and most versatile agricultural land, and heritage assets.

4 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting sustainable development sets out guidance, inter-alia, aimed at promoting the reuse of buildings, securing high quality design and enhancing biodiversity. The content of the National Planning Policy Framework has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

5 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application proposes the reuse of an existing building within the rural areas, and one which is considered to be of a permanent and substantial construction, and which is suitable for conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding and/or extension. The accompanying Structural Survey prepared by Fairclough Consulting Structural Engineers confirms that there are no signs of any current structurally significant defect to the structural load bearing elements of the building, and that the building is entirely suitable for conversion to habitable use with any further re-building or repair works. Pre-application discussions with the Local Authority have confirmed that the principle of development is acceptable, and consequently the proposed development is considered to accord with the provisions of policy H1 of the Local Plan Part 1, and policies BNE5 and H28 of the Local Plan Part 2.

Impact on the Character of the Area

- 5.2 The proposed development represents a sympathetic approach to the conversion and alteration of the existing building. The works include the insertion of a full height glazed opening, positioned centrally within the

western elevation of the building, along with the provision of two windows on either side of that opening. The intent is to maximise views over the surrounding landscape to the west, something which is not currently possible. The applicants also wish to erect a modest extension to the eastern end of the building to create a double garage and domestic store, as well as making some alterations to some of the existing openings within the re-constructed part of the building.

- 5.3 Whilst the proposed alterations will change the existing external appearance of the building, the western elevation in particular, it is highlighted that this is not a traditional agricultural building. The general scale and massing of the building is largely similar to that which originally existed when the building was an agricultural building, but when it was reconstructed in 2010 it assumed a distinctly residential character, with symmetrical openings either side of the doorway in the eastern elevation, and the creation of symmetrical openings at first floor level in the southern elevation. Any agrarian character that the building may once have had has long since been lost.
- 5.4 It is submitted that the introduction of the full height glazed opening with traditionally proportioned windows either side is appropriate for this building, and will not compete visually with the adjacent farmhouse, which is heavily glazed. The building will also maintain a reasonably high solid to void ratio. The alterations proposed also give a nod to the former agricultural nature of the building, with the central glazed window reflecting that of a traditional threshing barn, and the windows provided with traditional arched header detailing. During pre-application discussions it was confirmed that these alterations were acceptable.
- 5.5 The works to create the garage accommodation are also considered to be appropriate. The intent here is to provide a secure means of parking and

domestic storage area for use by future occupants. The garage extension respects the general 'L' shaped form of the existing building and will continue the linear form of the eastern gable, connecting up to the existing range of outbuildings to the east. The resultant effect will be to create an enclosed yard area, which is considered to be appropriate within this rural locality.

5.6 The Local Authority have expressed some reservations about this element of the proposal, indicating a preference for the extension to be set back behind the southern elevation in order to achieve a subservient appearance. However, doing so would prevent the extension being used as garaging and a store, owing to its insufficient depth. It is not unreasonable for accommodation of this nature to have an enclosed garage, and the submitted proposal achieves this, meeting the required parking space dimensions. Whilst it is acknowledged that the extension will project forward of the existing elevation, this will not have any appreciable wider visual impact, and the extension will, in any event, achieve a subservient relationship to the main building, as it will have a substantially lower ridgeline than the existing building. The garage extension will connect to the existing range of outbuildings to the east thereby providing an enclosed yard area which is not considered to be out-of-keeping with this rural locality.

5.7 The proposed development also seeks to further respect the existing character of the building by incorporating appropriate cill detailing, arched header detailing and in the case of the garage, a complimentary palette of materials. Flush fitting conservation rooflights are also proposed. The resultant effect will be a development that makes beneficial reuse of an otherwise redundant building, and which will enhance the setting and appearance of the existing building and give rise to a high quality development. The proposed development will not give rise to any substantive adverse impact to the character and appearance of the wider

area, and consequently the proposal is considered to accord with the provisions of policy BNE1 of the Local Plan Part 1.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 5.8 The internal layout of the development has been carefully considered in order to ensure that the resultant residential accommodation is afforded an appropriate level of residential amenity, and to ensure that the occupants of the dwelling will not cause a loss of amenity to existing neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.9 The existing dwelling (Park Farm) has windows and doors located in its northern elevation facing onto the yard area which will form part of the domestic curtilage to the new dwelling. The application proposes to install obscure glazing to both of the existing windows in the northern elevation, as well as bricking up the existing doorway, retaining the external door in the interests of maintaining the existing character of the property. The application also proposes the erection of a new boundary wall as a continuation of the gable end of the building, connecting to the range of single storey outbuildings at the eastern end of the site. The resultant effect will be to create an enclosed yard area for the new dwelling that is free from overlooking by the occupants of Park Farm. A separate area of private amenity space is proposed to the front of the building, and this will be enclosed by post and rail fencing supplemented by indigenous hedgerow.
- 5.10 During pre-application discussions concerns were raised about the potential impact of the development on the amenity of occupiers of The Piggery, specifically from the kitchen window at first floor level. The Local Authority's distance guidelines indicate that the interface distance between a kitchen window and a neighbouring principal window will vary between 18 and 21 metres. In this case the kitchen window at first floor will be located

approximately 15 metres from the principal windows of The Piggery, and consequently to allay concerns about overlooking and loss of privacy the applicants propose that the lower half of this opening will be bricked up, such that the cill sits 1.7m above floor level, thereby precluding overlooking of the neighbouring property, but maintaining views of the wider countryside beyond. In doing so the development will not give rise to any adverse impact to the neighbouring occupiers. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policy BNE1 of the Local Plan Part 1.

Highway Safety & Parking

- 5.11 The application site is to be accessed via the existing vehicular access that serves Park Farm and other neighbouring properties, which is located some 655 metres to the northwest of the existing building. The track has passing points along its length, and has good forward visibility. There is also good visibility in both directions on egress onto High Street.
- 5.12 Closer to the site the track splits, with the existing access serving the yard area between Park Farm and the application building to be retained for exclusive use by the occupants of the new dwelling. As part of the application it is proposed to create a new double garage to provide an area of enclosed, secure parking for use by future occupiers, and the existing yard area will provide additional space for parking, as well as manouvering space to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. The proposed development will therefore not result in any conflict with the provisions of policy INF2 of the Local Plan Part 1.

Impact on Protected Species

- 5.13 The application is accompanied by a Bat Survey prepared by Tamworth Property Services. Surveys of the building were carried out in 2013 and 2017, with evidence of bats identified, including bat droppings. The emergence surveys were undertaken in 2017 and are still deemed to be valid. The survey confirms that the proposal will have a negative impact on bats owing to the loss of roosting for the individual Brown long-eared bat and Common Pipistrelle bat identified. The survey nevertheless recognises that bat access slots have already been provided in the building, which will give access to the cavity walls which will be suitable for use by Common Pipistrelle bats. It also recommends that a bat box be affixed to the gable wall of the building to provide a roosting space for Brown Eared bats. In order to ensure a net gain to biodiversity it is also recommended that two additional bat boxes be installed nearby on existing trees. The applicants are agreeable to implementing the mitigation measures set out within the bat survey, and in doing so the development will accord with the provisions of paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 Paragraph 186 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. It goes on to state in paragraph 187 that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.2 The proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development that is acceptable in planning terms having regard to the following conclusions:

- *The proposal involves the reuse of a redundant building of permanent and substantial construction and which is suitable for conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding and/or extension;*
- *The proposed alterations to the building are sympathetic to its character and appearance, which is distinctly residential in nature, and will not materially detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area;*
- *The proposed development will not derive any material adverse impact to the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers;*
- *The proposal provides adequate off-street parking and manoeuvring space to enable vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear and is generally acceptable from a highway safety perspective;*
- *The proposed development will adequately mitigate its impact on local bat populations, producing a net gain in biodiversity.*

6.3 The proposal development is therefore considered to accord with the provisions of policies H1, BNE1 and INF2 of the South Derbyshire Local Plan Part 1, policies BNE5 and H28 of the South Derbyshire Local Plan Part 2, and guidance set out within the National Planning Policy Framework. The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission for the proposed development in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in policy S2 of the Local Plan.