

Application No: 11/3662N

Location: OLD HALL FARM, COOLE LANE, BADDINGTON, NANTWICH, CHESHIRE, CW5 8AS

Proposal: Listed Building Consent to Dismantle a Grade II Listed Building, Restore, Re-erect on a New Site at Old Hall Farm and Convert to Residential Accommodation with Ancillary Accommodation

Applicant: Mrs J Sadler, The Sadler Family

Expiry Date: 24-Nov-2011

MAIN ISSUES

The main issues are:-

- **Efforts To Sustain Existing Uses Or Find Viable And Compatible Alternative Uses**
- **Proposals For Redevelopment**
- **Salvage of Historically Important Features/Materials for Reuse**
- **Full Record Of The Building**

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions.

REFERRAL

This application is referred to the Strategic Planning Board because the development is a departure from the Replacement Local Plan.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION AND DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal involves the careful dismantling of an existing listed barn, currently located in the centre of the existing Old Hall Farm complex, and the restoration and re-erection of the structure on the application site, which forms another parcel of land within the farm. Upon re-erection the barn would be converted to residential use. A parallel application for Planning Permission is considered elsewhere on this agenda.

The barn is described in the list description as follows:

"Barn, late C16, now multi-use farm building. Part brick-nogged and part weather-boarded timber frame with corrugated metal sheet roof. 5 truss-bays, single storey and loft. Fairly close studding with single middle rail and passing braces. Built on sandstone plinth. Full and half-heck softwood doors mainly unpainted. Square oak loft doors on strap hinges. Softwood cladding, north end repaired in brickwork. Interior: Very heavy posts support the ends of high

collar queen post trusses which have side struts. Original wind braced purlins, ridge tree and rafters. The softwood loft floor is a later addition."

On assessing the barn, in addition to the Listed Building description, the architect, has noted the following additional items:

1. There are four bays, including the very heavy posts supporting the ends of the high collar queen post trusses, which have side struts to the south of two bays of later construction incorporating secondary use of timber members.
2. The floor construction throughout the building appears to have been a later addition, but includes secondary use of large oak timber beams, some of which have chamfers and stop-end mouldings.
3. The softwood loft floor construction is in part supported on large brick piers on the centre line of the four bays to the south.
4. Each main side wall of the building, within the four bays with the very heavy post supports to the trusses includes a threshing door opening, later infilled. The finding of the threshing door openings and the potential to reinstate them is significant.
5. The heavy posts and high collar queen post truss bottom tie does not have evidence of oak uprights below on the south gable roof truss, as if this construction was once possibly part of the interior of a longer barn.
6. The heavy posts which support the ends of the high collar queen post trusses have internal large braces, which span almost to the centre of the building.
7. It appears the longer barn frame may have been reduced and replaced by the 2-storey adjacent brick stables with storage over.

It is considered that the above features, and particularly the original threshing door openings, increase the historic significance of the oak framed barn building – there being no knowledge of similar medieval oak framed barns with threshing openings in East Cheshire. Whilst the barn is a Grade II Listed Building, once dismantled it will be de-Listed but it is proposed to apply for re-Listing upon re-erection and completion of the proposed works. Re-listing was successfully achieved for the Old Hall following dismantling and re-erection in 1973, which was overseen by the same architect.

The proposed site for re-erection (the application site) comprises an area of approximately 0.383ha of agricultural land, used primarily for grazing which is located in the south east corner of a larger field of approximately 2.59ha in area. The site is located to the east of Coole Lane and is bounded to the north side by agricultural land and the Old Hall Farm complex. The site is surrounded to the east by adjacent agricultural land belonging to Old Hall Farm and to the south by a bridleway and shared driveway in the ownership of the applicant beyond which lies further agricultural land, which also forms part of Old Hall Farm.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There are no relevant previous applications relating to this site. However, in 2004 a planning application for the re-erection of the barn and conversion to single dwelling, on land at Junction of Cinder Hill and Foxwist Green was submitted to Vale Royal Borough Council. A simultaneous application for listed building consent (P04/1122) for the dismantling of the barn and re-erection on another site was submitted to Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council. The planning application was refused by Vale Royal Borough Council on the 17th November 2004 on the grounds that there is a presumption against the building of new residential premises in the open countryside and the listed building consent application was refused by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council on the 10th

November 2004 on the grounds that the applicant could not demonstrate that there is a likely chance of re-erecting the building on an alternative site.

A further planning application was submitted to Vale Royal Borough Council in February 2009. This application sought to address the reasons for refusal, namely planning policy, but also any previous concerns expressed regarding the design of the development. The application was refused on the 9th February 2010 on the same grounds as previously. The applicant lodged an appeal against this decision. It was subsequently dismissed. However, the Inspector stated that the proposal has much to commend it and, if the removal of the building from its present site were approved, it would largely achieve the primary objective of the immediate preservation of the special interest of the historic timber-framed structure.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

The development plan includes the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2021 (RSS) and the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP). The relevant development plan policies are:

Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011

BE.2 (Design Standards)
BE.9: Listed Buildings : Alterations And Extensions
BE.10: Changes Of Use For Listed Buildings
BE.11: Demolition Of Listed Buildings

Other Material Considerations

PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment)

4. OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES

English Heritage:

Do not wish to comment in detail, but offer the following general observations:

- The proposal to dismantle and re-erect this listed barn building has been part of an ongoing discussion with the local authority for a number of years. The barn is partially potentially a medieval construction and, as such, a rare survival and of national interest. Unfortunately, the previous dismantling and removal of the main building (grade II* before dismantling) resulted in loss of an important part of its context. The barn has since become redundant and, as many former farm buildings without active use, has fallen into disrepair. This is a very regretful scenario and the poor condition of the building should not be weighted in to the decision of whether moving the barn is acceptable or not. Dismantling of a listed structure will always result in loss of historic fabric and authenticity as well as loss of its historic setting and the preference is to keep it in its original location. However, in this case we accept that the current setting, which has been compromised by the removal of the main hall makes it difficult to find a suitable use for the building. The proposal is to keep the barn within the grounds, repaired and converted to residential use. We accept a careful dismantling and re erection of the building on the proposed

site, subject to continued advice by the conservation officer and per photographic recording. A re-assessment of the buildings significance will have to be made after the re-erection.

- English Heritage recommends that this application be determined in accordance with national land local policy guidance and on the basis the Council's own expert conservation advice. It is not necessary for them to be consulted again.

5. VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Sound and District Parish Council has no comments.

6. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No other representations have been received at the time of report preparation.

7. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- Design and Access Statement
- Land Contamination Report
- Planning Statement
- Landscape Design Observations
- Structural Engineers Report
- Ecological Survey

8. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Main Issues

The main issues are the impact on the historic and architectural interest of the listed building. Policy BE.11 of the Local Plan deals with the demolition of listed buildings and states that this will only be approved provided it can be demonstrated that:

- there is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find viable and compatible alternative uses and that these efforts have failed. these efforts should embrace financial, structural and technical matters;
- detailed proposals for redevelopment have been approved, and an uninterrupted phased programme for demolition and redevelopment have been agreed;
- there is agreement for a full record of the building to be made and deposited with relevant authorities; and
- there is agreement to salvage historically important features/materials for reuse in the redevelopment or elsewhere.

Efforts to Sustain Existing Uses or Find Viable and Compatible Alternative Uses

The barn, which is Grade II listed, is currently located in the midst of a modern working farm, and is surrounded by modern portal framed agricultural buildings. In this location it cannot be seen and enjoyed by the general public. It was formerly associated with Austerston Old Hall, the latter having been dismantled and re-located to Yarnall Green Alvanley (Vale Royal) in 1973.

The barn has been redundant since 1981 and the owners were advised by ADAS that this historic building was no longer suitable for use for agriculture in 2001. It is in very poor structural condition, and is deteriorating and will continue to deteriorate. The oak frame has racked, (i.e. parts of the structure which have rotted away) resulting in twisting of the oak framed structure and the opening up of existing medieval morticed, tenoned and pegged joints which will be extremely difficult to repair and bring together in-situ. The structure is also settling as the ends of posts within the structure continue to deteriorate. The framed and timber clad gable is deteriorating as the framing timber is deformed and elements have fallen away from the elevation. The first floor boarding is rotting away and it is not considered safe to walk on. The building is not water-tight and is at the mercy of the elements.

During the course of the Appeal process, referred to above, as a result of gale force winds, it was noted that the oak framed barn structure had moved, and that it had bowed outwards to the east, to the extent that the joints in the oak frame, which had previously opened up, had opened up more, and that the barn was moving off its foundations at the centre of the building, on its east side. Following an assessment of the movement by the Architect and a specialist Consulting Engineer, it was necessary to incorporate structural scaffolding into the building, to assist to stabilise the barn structure and provide lateral restraint across the width of the barn, for the full length of the barn

The owners have been seeking to secure the restoration of and a long term viable future for the building for some time. A number of alternative uses for the building have been considered. An appraisal by Wright Manley, providing information on the financial costs of dismantling, repair and reinstatement of the barn accompanies the applications for planning permission and Listed Building Consent. The report concludes that the conversion of the barn to residential use creates the best opportunity to generate value to repay the costs of dismantling, repair and reinstatement of the barn. Conversion to commercial uses, including offices, would not generate sufficient income to fund the cost of the work.

Conversion of the building to a dwelling in-situ, however, would be impractical, as it is located within a complex of existing buildings comprising a working farm. Consequently, there is insufficient space around the building to provide an adequate domestic curtilage. Residential amenity of future occupiers would be severely diminished by the proximity to the working farm buildings and the creation of an "island" of separately owned property in the centre of the farm complex would create significant management / health and safety difficulties as well as impeding the operation of the farm. The new dwelling would also need to share an access with the farm, which is used by all the associated farm vehicle traffic. Furthermore, in this location, as a result of the factors referred to above, the value of the completed property would be severely depressed and would not generate sufficient funds to cover the cost of restoration. It is also considered that the existing modern farm buildings detract from the character and appearance of the setting of the listed building and obscure it from public view.

As English Heritage have pointed out dismantling of a listed structure will always result in loss of historic fabric and authenticity as well as loss of its historic setting and the preference is to keep it in its original location. However, relocation carries with it:

- the benefits of securing a new use for the building,
- a long term sustainable future,
- a setting which is befitting of its status, where it can be seen from the public domain
- will maximise the value of the finished property to ensure that the scheme is financially viable and can be completed. Consequently, English Heritage has raised no objection.

Therefore, having due regard to financial, structural and technical matters full consideration has been given to securing an alternative use for the building in-situ. However, for the reasons stated above, this is not considered to be viable.

Proposals for Redevelopment

A number of alternative sites within the applicant's farm were investigated and considered prior to the application being submitted. The field in question has been selected, in consultation with Planning Officers, on the basis that it would have the least impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside, the amenity of neighbouring properties, and taking into account constraints such as susceptibility to flooding. The broad principle of the location is therefore considered to be acceptable.

The barn is to be sited in the south east corner of the field. In this location it will be visible from both Coole Lane and the bridleway running to the south of the site, and, unlike its current location, it can be enjoyed by passing members of the public. However, it will not appear overly prominent and visually intrusive, which would be the case, if it were located in the south west corner of the field, adjacent to Coole Lane.

The barn is to be erected on a broadly north south alignment, which reflects its original use as a threshing barn. The proposed ancillary accommodation building would be located on a broadly east-west alignment, which, along with the existing field boundaries to the east and south would form an enclosed space, typical in size and shape to a traditional farm yard. This would be simply and sympathetically landscaped to maintain a simple, agricultural, setting to the building. However, in order to create a more informal and organic appearance to the grouping, the 2 buildings would not be at perfect right angles to each other.

The area of the south east corner of the field which would be provided as residential curtilage for the proposed dwelling, is considered to be sufficiently large to reflect the fact that this would be a substantial detached dwelling in the open countryside, and the resultant expectations of prospective purchasers. This will help to ensure a sufficiently high sales value to cover the cost of the restoration. However the area is not considered to be unreasonably large, such that it would have a severe impact on the open character and appearance of the countryside. As stated above, the curtilage would be simply landscaped and would be mainly laid to grass, with post and rail fencing and native hedgerow planting to the boundaries. A parking and turning area would be provided between the ancillary building and the northern site boundary, which, along with the driveway would be surfaced using loose gravel, which would help to maintain the rural character and appearance of the site. Only a small hard surfaced footpath is proposed around the building, which would widen out to each side of the threshing barn doors and between the buildings. This would be finished in Indian Stone flags and sets.

Given that this would be a substantial and prestigious dwelling located in the open countryside, it is likely that future occupants would require ancillary accommodation such as ample garaging, workshop or stable space. By taking into account the likely domestic needs of future occupants at the design stage, and providing all these facilities within a sympathetically designed and sited ancillary building, it is hoped that future applications for extensions and additional buildings can be avoided. Permitted development rights would be removed to ensure that the curtilage did not become cluttered with ancillary domestic structures to the detriment of the setting of the listed building and the openness of the countryside. It is also proposed to remove permitted development rights for all extensions and other alterations.

Overall, it is considered that in layout terms the proposal represents a high quality design, which will respect the character and appearance of the open countryside and will provide a worthy setting for the re-erected listed building.

To turn to the elevational detail of the scheme, the existing oak framed barn is covered with black corrugated iron roofing sheets. The long walls of the barn and one gable wall are faced with modern timber cladding over the oak framed structure, and the south gable is covered by a brick built stables and storage building. A part of one long wall is built in brickwork where the oak framed structure collapsed some years ago.

There are a number of shuttered pitch holes for loading hay to the upper part of the barn, and there are several stable doors and openings on the elevations, and a sliding door to an opening in the brick wall. The majority of the original oak framed lower cill beams have rotted away and brickwork has been introduced to support the remaining oak framing above. There is evidence of sandstone cill stones to the lower perimeter of the building. Generally, the barn is settling as framing is deteriorating, and the exposed gable has oak framing timbers breaking away from the face of the gable.

The proposed two storey re-erected oak framed building will rise from sandstone perimeter cill stones, or a brickwork cill wall, and will have horizontal oak boarded outer walls. The roof, with new or salvaged handmade clay ridge tiles and roof tiles, will appear traditional and will have traditional cast metal gutters and downspouts, with outfalls to typical agricultural dished clay gully tops with cast iron inserts to collect rainwater.

Door and pitch-hole openings and other openings will be reinstated in their original locations, but will include contemporary fenestration in oak frames and will have external oak shutters/doors which can be opened and closed. When closed the barn would look as it did when first erected.

The original threshing door openings will be reinstated in their original locations. Each threshing door opening in the east and west elevations will have large contemporary double glazed screens introduced into each opening, with solid oak central entrance doors within the glazed screens to each elevation. The contemporary glazed framing enables the threshing door openings to be appreciated for much of the time. When closed the threshing doors will appear as they did when the barn was first constructed.

Internally, a cellar is proposed in order to maximise the internal accommodation, without requiring the addition of extensions to the building. This will be finished with stone paving, exposed brickwork walls, oak doors and staircase, which will be traditional in appearance. The ground floor stone internal paving layout will run with the length of the barn, but at the location of the threshing doors it will change direction for the width of the threshing door openings, and continue beyond the openings to east and west as a paved area as an indication that people, horses and carts passed through the openings.

The oak framed structure, including the whole of the roof structure, rafters, ridge, purlins and wind braces, the walls with their wall plates, vertical and horizontal framing members, cill beams and braces, first floor construction with oak beams and joists, will all be exposed, and will be buff coloured as found. They will not change in appearance with ageing as their colour has remained unchanged since originally constructed.

The infill panels, first floor ceiling soffits and roof covering between the rafters will all be painted off white/cream so as to enhance the colour of the exposed oak members. The first floor oak floorboards, doors and door frames, staircase and handrails will all be oak and compliment the oak framed structure.

The two story full height will be retained in the centre four bays of the building, which corresponds with the two full height threshing barn doors to each side. This will allow the viewer to appreciate the original form of the building. Mezzanine floors will be installed at each end of the building, accessed by two separate stair cases to provide the first floor bedrooms and balcony study area. Glazed panels will be used for balustrading and the upper portion of the bathroom enclosure to allow the oak structure to be viewed and appreciated even where the first floor has been installed.

Overall, therefore, as well as the second criterion of Policy BE.11, it is considered that the redevelopment proposals comply with policies BE9 and BE10 of the adopted Local Plan. These policies state that the alterations, extension and change of use of listed buildings will only be permitted provided that the special architectural or historic interest of the building, its curtilage structures and its setting are preserved; the proposal respects the scale, materials, colour, detailing and other significant features of the building concerned; and does not detract from the character or setting of the building concerned, especially with regard to its surrounding gardens, landscape, street scene or relationship with adjoining buildings and significant views.

Salvage of Historically Important Features/Materials for Reuse

In conservation terms, the numbering of the existing wooden members and the proposal to retain as much of the original materials as possible, replacing only missing, defective members and splicing in new elements of oak where deteriorated, will serve to ensure the integrity of the original building is retained.

Similarly the proposed attention to be given to the works to repair the building and to execute its conversion, as indicated in the design and access statement and in the detailed drawings will also assist in ensuring that the integrity of the original building is retained.

It is therefore concluded that the proposal adequately demonstrated that historically important features/materials will be salvaged for reuse in the redevelopment and as a result it complies with criterion 4 of policy BE.11.

Full Record of The Building

Full survey drawings have been provided within the application and a condition will be imposed to ensure that a full photographic record is also made of the building. Subject to this condition it is considered that the proposal fulfils the requirements of policy BE.11.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, having due regard to financial, structural and technical matters full consideration has been given to securing an alternative use for the building in-situ. However, for the reasons stated above, this is not considered to be viable. Appraisals have demonstrated that the only way in which sufficient funds for the necessary restoration can be generated is through conversion to a dwelling. Conversion of the building in situ is considered to be impractical, due to the fact that it is located in the centre of a working farm, which would create practical difficulties, an inadequate standard of amenity for future occupiers and would adversely affect the sales value of the completed dwelling. This would jeopardise the financial viability of the project.

Relocation carries with it the benefits of securing a new use for the building, a long term sustainable future, and a setting which is befitting of its status, where it can be seen from the public domain and will maximise the value of the finished property will be maximised to ensure that the scheme is financially viable and can be completed.

This application provides full details of the proposed re-erection of the building and the salvage and re-use of all the remaining historically important features and materials within that development. Overall it is considered that the design approach that has been taken to the redevelopment is extremely sensitive and will ensure that the integrity of the remaining historic fabric is preserved and that it is sympathetically complimented by new additions to restore the building and facilitate its conversion to a sustainable long-term use without detriment to its historic and architectural interest.

The Conservation Officer and English Heritage, satisfied with the approach that is being taken to the dismantling, conservation and re-erection of the building, and subject to appropriate conditions, raises no objection. Consequently the scheme is considered to be acceptable in conservation and design terms and in accordance with the relevant local plan policies.

Therefore, for the reasons stated above and having due regard to the relevant local plan policies, and all other material considerations raised, the proposal is recommended for approval subject to appropriate conditions.

10. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. All repair and detailing works to be carried out in accordance with the detailed A3 plans and drawings submitted;**
- 4. Submission and approval of materials including surfacing materials**
- 5. All repairs and replacement of oak to be in oak;**
- 6. Oak frame to remain exposed as detailed in design access and heritage statement;**
- 7. All timber cladding shiplap boarding to be oak;**
- 8. All repairs or replacement of plinth/cill stones to be in matching materials;**
- 9. All roof tiles and ridge tiles to be in clay;**
- 10. All roof lights to be recessed to lie flush with the roof plane;**
- 11. All rainwater goods and downpipes to be black cast metal;**
- 12. All windows to be oak framed;**
- 13. All doors to be in oak;**
- 14. Brickwork and lime mortar to walls of ancillary accommodation to be agreed;**
- 15. All roof tiles and ridge tiles to ancillary accommodation to be in clay to match barn;**
- 16. Photographic recording of building**
- 17. Building to be re-erected in accordance with Planning Permission 11/3661N within 2 years of commencement of dismantling.**

