

Application No: 14/0786C

Location: Swanwick Hall, BOOTH BED LANE, GOOSTREY, CREWE, CHESHIRE, CW4 8NB

Proposal: Conversion of redundant barns to an equestrian use with part reconstruction, conversion of redundant barn to ancillary domestic use and provision of an outdoor riding arena

Applicant: Mr & Mrs C Dick

Expiry Date: 09-May-2014

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

The key issues for consideration are (i) the principle of development, (ii) design and conservation, (iii) ecological implications, (iv) highways (v) neighbouring amenity, (vi) public right of way

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is a small-scale major development.

2. DESCRIPTION AND SITE CONTEXT

This application relates to a grouping of rural barns associated with the property known as 'Swanwick Hall Farm' in Goostrey. The agricultural use of the barns has long since ceased and they are currently used for storage ancillary to main the dwelling and for the applicant's own use. The southern part of the complex comprises traditional brick built buildings with the northern quarter hosting more modern portal framed additions. The site is surrounded on all sides by open countryside designated fields. The site is accessed via a track leading some 430 metres from Boothbed Lane to the west. The main farmhouse is Grade II listed.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of the redundant barns to an equestrian use with part re-construction / conversion of redundant barn to ancillary domestic use and provision of an outdoor riding arena.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

13/4478C - Provision of an outdoor riding arena – Approved 18-Dec-2013

11/0381C - CHANGE OF USE OF REDUNDANT BARN TO LIVE WORK UNIT – Approved 27-Jun-2012

07/0486/LBC - Conversion of existing farm buildings into 4 dwellings and 4 new garages – Withdrawn 29.08.2007

5. POLICIES

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Congleton Local Plan Policy

PS8 - Open Countryside

GR1 - New Development

GR2 – Design

GR6 – Amenity

GR9 - Accessibility, Servicing & Parking Provision

GR16 – Footpath, Bridleway and Cycleway Networks

H1 & H2 - Housing Land Supply

H6 - Residential Development in the Open Countryside

BH4 – Listed Buildings (Effect of Proposals)

BH15 & BH16 - Conversion of Rural Buildings

NR2 - Wildlife & Nature Habitats

SPG2 - Private Open Space in New Residential Developments

SPD7 - The Re-Use of Rural Buildings

Local Plan Strategy Submission Version:

SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles
SE1 - Design

6. CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:
No objection

Environmental Health:
No objection subject to a condition restricting hours of construction

Environment Agency:
No objection

Public Rights of Way Unit:
No objection - The PROW Unit expects that the Planning department will ensure that any planning conditions concerning the right of way are fully complied with. There should be no changes to the surfacing of the right of way without consultation with the PROW Unit. If possible, pedestrian refuges should be provided along the extent of the access track. If the development will temporarily affect the right of way then the developer must apply for a temporary closure of the route (preferably providing a suitable alternative route).

Congleton Ramblers:
Object on the grounds that proposal would degrade the PROW, Goostrey FP12

Jodrell Bank (University of Manchester)
No objection subject to incorporation of electromagnetic screening features

7. VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council has no objection in principle, as long as the applicant works in conjunction with the footpaths group, and Highways. These comments are for safety reasons to protect the walkers on the footpath and the children and families using the play area on Boothbed Lane.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Letters have been received from 4 addresses expressing the following grounds:

- Restrictions already in place on previous permissions
- Traffic flow (safety, visibility) emerging at Boothbed lane children's playground and along public footpath
- Hours of business operation and traffic should be restricted
- Use Class should be restricted so that entirety of Class B1 and/or D2 do not apply
- Impact of construction traffic and heavy vehicles in terms of volume and parking
- Structural damage to neighbouring properties caused by large horseboxes
- Vehicles generate a large amount of dust which reduces neighbouring amenity
- What are the implications for traffic travelling up and down the public footpath
- Goostrey Footpath Group is supportive of the purpose of this Application

- The main length of the drive has been tarmac'd, centrally between fences, with no separate footway and little space either side for walkers, buggies and dogs to step aside to permit traffic to pass on the tarmac
- A special concern is the danger from reversing vehicles
- Ownership certificate 'A' wrongly signed by applicant as does not own all land over which application passes

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning Statement
 Design & Access Statement
 Protected Species Survey
 Access Statement

9. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Conversion

The principle of converting existing rural buildings into equestrian / residential use in the open countryside can be acceptable provided that the requirements of policies BH15, BH16 and SPD7 are met. The principle of converting the existing barns into a 'live-work' unit have already been accepted when planning permission was granted recently for planning ref; 11/0381C.

Policy BH15 states that schemes for residential conversion will only be permitted where the building is permanent and substantial and would not require extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension.

The newly adopted National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), advises that Local Planning Authorities should '*support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting*'. In addition it states that '*In considering applications for planning permission, Local Planning Authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and seek to find solutions to overcome any substantial planning objections where practical and consistent with the Framework.*'

Assessment

The barns are clustered around a small courtyard and comprises of an attractive two-storey traditional barn to the south with some smaller brick barns positioned on the opposite side of the courtyard with more modern portal structures attached on the opposite side. The two-storey element to the south would be converted to residential use ancillary to the main farmhouse with the northern components lending themselves to the stabling / equestrian business use.

The ancillary residential use of the barns would be acceptable in principle as the barns are in close proximity to the main farmhouse and are therefore read within this context. Their use as a residential unit has already previously been established.

With respect to the equestrian use, Local plan policy RC5 states that developments comprising of facilities for outdoor sport and recreation which preserve the openness of the countryside are considered to be acceptable. As such, Local Plan Policy is supportive of equestrian activities in

Open Countryside locations subject to compliance with other material considerations, these being design, residential amenity and highways.

In granting approval recently to convert the barns, it was established that generally the barns were in a reasonable condition and that significant rebuilding would not be required in order to facilitate the conversion. Whilst there are areas that would require localised repairs to the external brickwork, given that these areas are localised, it is considered that the buildings are capable of conversion and the proposal therefore complies with Policy BH15.

The proposed uses would comply with the requirements of policies BH15, BH16, SPD7 and would accord with the aims and aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design & Conservation

Where it is proposed to re-use or convert traditional rural buildings, it is important to retain as much of the original building fabric as possible and minimise alterations to help preserve the character of the building to help produce a successful conversion.

The two storey building to the south is an attractive traditional barn, which appears to date from the 19th century and has been extended through the addition of a single storey brick built lean-to on the north elevation. This lean-to would be replaced with a lean-to of similar size and proportions which would be predominantly glazed and would allow uninterrupted views of the original barn structure and as such would be acceptable.

There is a two-storey open fronted hay barn positioned at 90-degrees to the main barn which is linked by a pitched roof. The proposed residential conversion seeks to combine both elements by glazing the void beneath the linking roof slope on the south facing elevation. The elevation on the north side is bricked up at ground floor level so only the upper part would be glazed. This approach would respect the existing character of the barn.

The upper portions of the openings within the hay barn are already vertically boarded. It is proposed to continue the cladding down to the floor level to enclose the space and provide a storage area. Such treatment would respect the character and style of the barn, which has also been secured through amended plans and negotiation with the applicant. Within the main barn itself, use of the existing openings would be made and as such the conversion would allow the barn to retain its rural character and appearance.

With respect to the buildings towards the north of the site, the traditional brick built elements would be retained and converted sympathetically. Use of the existing openings would be made and where new are to be introduced, these would be formed by reopening previous openings and kept to a minimum. The existing portal structures which are attached to the northern portions be removed and in its place an American style barn will be constructed. This will not appear intrusive as it will not be significantly greater in size than existing structures and will be well contained by the more traditional structures surrounding it. Consequently, with the removal of the existing piggery, the proposals would not introduce any perceivable additional bulk within the open countryside and would improve the character and appearance of the site whilst being more sensitive to the setting of the nearby grade II listed farmhouse.

With respect to the treatment of the curtilage, an existing area of hardstanding situated to the rear (west) of the buildings would be given over to parking. This area would also accommodate a detached single storey moveable stable comprising of 2 small horseboxes (for quarantine) constructed using timber. The stables would be viewed against the back drop of the existing buildings and would not appear intrusive. Thus, the potential impact on the surrounding open countryside has been minimised to prevent an intrusive form of development. The design and considerations relating to conservation are deemed to be acceptable and the impact on the adjacent listed building would not be harmful.

Ecological Implications

Rural buildings are frequently used by protected species. In view of the fact that the development proposes conversion of a traditional barn, the existence of protected species needs consideration. The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places,

- in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment

and provided that there is

- no satisfactory alternative and
- no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range

The UK implemented the Directive by introducing The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 which contain two layers of protection

- a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (“LPAs”) to have regard to the Directive’s requirements above, and
- a licensing system administered by Natural England.

Local Plan Policy NR2 states that proposals for development that would result in the loss or damage of any site or habitat supporting species that are protected by law will not be permitted. In line with guidance in the national Planning Policy Framework, appropriate mitigation and enhancement should be secured if planning permission is granted.

The application is supported by a Protected Species Survey. Evidence of bat activity in the form of a minor roost of a relatively common bat species has been recorded within the barns. There is the possibility of a minor roost of a second widespread bat species also occurring on site but this was not confirmed during the submitted surveys. The usage of the building by bats is likely to be limited to single - small numbers of animals using the buildings for short periods and there is no evidence to suggest a significant maternity roost is present. The loss of the buildings on this site in the absence of mitigation is likely to have only a low impact upon on bats at the local level and a low impact upon the conservation status of the species as a whole.

With respect to Barn Owls, minor evidence of past barn owl activity was recorded. It appears unlikely that barn owls are currently active on site. Accordingly, the favourable conservation status of both species would be maintained. Whilst reference has been made to impacts of the ménage to the east of the site, this is already in situ and therefore does not form part of this application. As such the Council's Nature Conservation Officer has offered no objection to the application but does recommended conditions aimed at improving the surrounding habitat.

Highways

Policy GR9 states that proposals for development requiring access, servicing or parking facilities will only be permitted where a number of criteria are satisfied. These include adequate and safe provision for suitable access and egress by vehicles, pedestrians and other road users to a public highway.

This application is supported by a Transport Note which identifies the traffic generation from this site and identifies the adequate visibility splays available for emerging vehicles at the junction of the access drive with Booth Bed Lane. In traffic generation terms, the proposal would generate 20 trips (10 in and 10 out per day). The Strategic Highways Manager considers that this is a non-material impact on Booth Bed Lane and considers that the existing junction arrangement will operate appropriately. Visibility at the junction is acceptable and a site visit confirmed that turning movements are acceptable.

Sufficient parking and turning space will be provided within the curtilage of the site and it must be borne in mind that the previous application approved a live / work unit and before that the agricultural use of the site which would have generated movements from large vehicles. As such, it is considered that the access, parking and traffic generation are acceptable for this development and its use. Subject to conditions, the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with Policy GR9 and the concerns expressed by local residents and the Parish Council would not sustain a refusal on highways grounds.

Neighbouring Amenity

It is considered that a satisfactory standard of facilities could be obtained for the barn and it is not considered that any instances of direct overlooking or loss of light would result. Adequate separation would be maintained with the nearest neighbours. As the scale of the buildings would remain unaltered, there would no material harm to amenities by reason of loss of light or visual intrusion.

With respect to impact on amenity from construction vehicles using the track, this would be for a short period and would be no greater than the scheme which has already received approval. There would be no greater material harm. One neighbour has commented that the use class of the proposal should be restricted. However, this is not required as the proposal for livery / stables is a 'sui generis' use and therefore movement within the use classes would not be possible. The scheme is deemed to accord with policies GR6 and SPG2.

Public Right of Way

Public footpath Goostrey No. 12 runs along the access track and travels directly through the farmstead. The Public Rights of Way Unit (PROW) have been consulted on this application and have offered no objection to the proposals subject to conditions and informatives.

With respect to the use of the track, the proposed traffic generation would not be as significant to materially harm user's amenity of the right of way. It is also important to acknowledge that the lawful use as a farm would have potential to generate greater frequency of trips. However, it is recommended that a condition is attached which requires the provision of pedestrian refuges along the track to maintain pedestrian use. In the absence of objection from the PROW unit, it is considered that the proposal complies with local plan policy GR16 and a refusal could not be sustained on the grounds offered by objectors.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS TO APPROVE

In conclusion, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable. The conversion would preserve the identity and character of the building and its architectural features and historic interest. It is considered that the scheme would make a positive contribution to and would not detract from the environmental, visual and physical quality of the surrounding open countryside. The proposal would provide an acceptable standard of amenity for the occupiers and would not materially harm the existing amenity afforded to the neighbouring properties. Subject to compliance with mitigation, species protected by law would not be significantly harmed. The proposal would not lead to or exacerbate existing traffic problems and the public footpath would not be detrimentally affected. Subject to compliance with conditions, the proposal is deemed to be in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the adopted National Planning Policy Framework and as such is recommended for approval.

12. RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

- 1. Commence development within 3 years**
- 2. Development to be carried out in accordance with approved drawings**
- 3. Permission relates only to the conversion of the barn indicated on the approved drawing and does not grant consent for demolition/reconstruction except where indicated on plans**
- 4. Submission of details/samples of external materials**
- 5. Rainwater goods to be cast metal painted black**
- 6. Submission of details of fenestration**
- 7. Windows and doors to be timber and set behind a 100mm reveal**
- 8. External doors to be timber vertically boarded**
- 9. Roof lights to be conservation style**
- 10. Removal of permitted development rights for extensions, outbuildings and gates walls and fences.**
- 11. Submission of details of positions, design, materials and types of boundary treatments**
- 12. Submission of detailed design plan for the junction arrangement, visibility splays and vehicular crossing**

- 13. Submission of contaminated land assessment / remediation if required**
- 14. Limits on hours of construction including delivery vehicles.**
- 15. Submission of details for the incorporation of features for bats**
- 16. Existing dovecotes retained and filled with recessed brick and dyed mortar**
- 17. Developer to provide scheme for pedestrian refuges prior to first use**
- 18. Scheme for incorporation of `electromagnetic screening measures (Jodrell Bank)**

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