

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan. Ref Expiry Date
MR P J WHITTAKER	Change of use of farmhouse and attached barns to form holiday let accommodation with reinstatement roof works to the attached barns; change of use of detached barn to create dwelling house with single storey extension; creation of new access track and parking area and remediation and reinstatement works to dovecot	GB LB	16/1028 16/1029
	Planning Application: 16/1028 Listed Building Consent: 16/1029		
	Stoney Lane Farm Stoney Lane Broad Green Bromsgrove		

16/1028 (Planning Application)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That **PLANNING PERMISSION** be **GRANTED**

16/1029 (Listed Building Consent)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That **LISTED BUILDING CONSENT** be **GRANTED**

Consultations

Worcestershire Highways

Consulted – final views received 26 January 2017:

- No objection subject to Conditions relating to:
- Visibility splays
- Access, turning and parking details
- Construction Management Plan

Drainage Engineer

Consulted – views received 25 November 2016:

- No objection

Conservation Officer

Consulted – views received 25 November 2016:

- No objection subject to Conditions relating to:
- All materials and joinery details at a scale of 1:5 will need to be approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works on site.
- The restoration and re-use of this group of buildings is welcome and the proposed scheme has come about after extensive pre-application discussion with the applicant and his architect.
- I also note that it is proposed to repair the dovecot despite the fact that it will not be converted, but hopefully its life will be prolonged if it is wind and watertight.

Worcestershire County Archaeologist

Consulted – views received 16 November 2016:

- No objection subject to Conditions relating to:
- Programme of Historic Building recording and Interpretation including a Written Scheme of Investigation

Building Control

Consulted – final views received 12 January 2017:

- No objection

Parks and Green Space Development Officer

Consulted 4 November 2016: views awaited

Tutnall and Cobley Parish Council

Consulted 4 November 2016: views awaited

Publicity

8 letters sent 4 November 2016 (expire 25 November 2016)

Site notices posted 18 November 2016 (expire 9 December 2016)

Press notices published 11 November 2016 (expire 25 November 2016)

No response received from any third party as a result of the publicity process.

The site and its surroundings

Stoney Lane Farm consists of a group of buildings comprising a Grade II listed Georgian farmhouse, connected to a 18th century timber-framed barn, a single storey range of 19th century brick barns and a separate brick dovecote. Gardens associated with the farmhouse extend to the west and south, demarcated by a stone ha-ha on the west; these lead onto agricultural land to the west and south mainly laid to grazing pasture. A courtyard to the east of the house is formed with a timber-framed range on the roadside and brick barns to the south.

The dwelling was substantially increased in size at the end of the 19th Century by a two storey brick service wing on its north-east side. It was at this date that an enclosed brick porch was added encasing the original door case. Later alterations include the construction of a bay window to the south elevation, and a covered link to the adjacent barn/stables.

To the south east of the dwelling linked by a high wall which separates the garden from the courtyard, is a dovecote. It is substantially brick built off a sandstone base and originally had a pyramidal roof with cupola but this is now missing. Nesting boxes built to the brickwork. The original low entrance into the dovecote was on the east side but this has been blocked and new openings formed on the north elevation. Built against the south elevation is a brick privy. The date of the dovecote would appear to pre-date that of the house it is built in a relatively thin handmade brick suggesting a construction dating to the mid-18th century.

The roadside barns incorporate the earliest structure on the site and suggests that the present dwelling replaced an earlier house on the site. Its date is likely to be late 17th century. The core of this range is a two bay timber framed barn of box frame construction, built off a sandstone plinth, now with brick infill panels and with a clay tiled roof. At the east end is a single bay built against the south wall also originally of framed construction, off a stone plinth but now substantially reconstructed in brick. At the end of the 19th century the barn was extended west alongside the road from which point there was a wide cart access. In the first quarter of the 20th century a further two storey brick bay was added at the west end of this range extending south, and subsequently the two rear bays were linked by a lean-to outshut.

The south range of outbuildings were constructed during the second half of the 19th century in two phases. These consist of a cart shed and stores to the east with slightly later coach house, stables and tack room to the west. They are of brick construction beneath a natural slate covered roof.

Stoney Lane Farmhouse is a designated Grade II Listed Building (date of listing: 16 July 1986). The buildings and structures surrounding the farmhouse as detailed above are Grade II curtilage listed.

The site is located in the Green Belt.

Background

Stoney Lane farm is owned by the Whittaker family who have been farming in Tardebigge since 1947 when Richard Henry Whittaker (the applicant's grand-father) bought the farm. The house was lived in by the family including the present owner's mother and father and 3 other siblings. The house was then split into two dwellings in 1956 to provide accommodation for a farm worker, what is currently known as 'The Cottage' (the Victorian range on the north-east side). The farm expanded in 1969 with the purchase of 96 acres of adjacent land. A new dairy unit was built in 1970 and more buildings were subsequently added. The dairy herd expanded to around 160 cows and permission was granted in 1979 for a new dwelling to be constructed (Longlands). Stoney Lane House continued as the main residence for the applicant's parents until 2010, when he purchased the property from his step-mother with the front field and outbuildings. The applicant's daughter and son-in-law lived in the farmhouse briefly but the building has been unoccupied since November 2014.

The outbuildings are generally still used for storage but the roadside barns are now unusable due to their poor condition.

Proposals

The main farmhouse and adjoining barns will be converted and used for holiday let use and the separate rear barns converted to form a single two-bedroom dwelling. It is also proposed to restore the dovecot as part of the programme of works.

The development will be in the form of:

- Unit 1* Seven double bedrooms, living, dining, kitchen and bathroom facilities providing holiday let accommodation for at least 14 people
- Unit 2*: Two double bedrooms, living, dining, kitchen and bathroom facilities providing holiday let accommodation for at 4 people.
- Unit 3A: Two double bedrooms, living, dining, kitchen and bathroom facilities providing holiday let accommodation for 4 people.
- Unit 3B: One double bedroom, living, dining, kitchen and bathroom facilities providing holiday let accommodation for 2 people.
- Unit 3C: Two double bedrooms, living, dining, kitchen and bathroom facilities providing holiday let accommodation for 4 people.

- Unit 4: Two double bedrooms, living, dining, kitchen and bathroom facilities forming a single dwelling. This will be on one level with access from the courtyard. It will have a private garden on the south and a small private area on the north side, sub-divided from the main courtyard with a 1.5 metre high brick wall. It is intended to restore the original openings on the north wall. A new window opening is proposed on the south side to provide a view onto the garden from the main bedroom and a new opening proposed for the main entrance into the house on the south side. Otherwise existing window openings are proposed to be re-used with new painted timber double-glazed units.

The unit currently has a section on its east end which sits behind the large agricultural unit to the north. It is proposed to extend this section to the north with a single storey extension.

* Unit 1 and 2 are interlinked to provide a larger unit for larger parties

The works include internal reconfiguration works, to include the insertion of new door openings, the blocking and re-opening of existing door openings and the formation of partitions to form en-suite bathrooms. Existing window openings are proposed to be re-used, renewed and blocked openings re-used. A number of new external openings are proposed. The later brick porch on the west elevation of the farmhouse will be removed to reveal the original timber door surround.

The full extent of the internal and external works to the farmhouse and the barns are detailed in Section 6 of the submitted Design and Access Statement.

The dovecote will be restored including the reconstruction of its original pyramidal form roof and will be used as shared storage for Unit 2 and 4.

The scheme also proposes a new vehicular access to the west from the access track leading off Stoney Lane (currently serving 1-3 Stoney Lane Cottages) across a field to an

area that will form a designated parking for eight vehicles (serving Unit 1 and Unit 2). Five parking spaces are proposed within the courtyard to serve Unit 3A, 3B, 3C and Unit 4. The access track and parking area will remain grassed as existing, with grass reinforcement mesh underneath the surface.

A Design and Access Statement, Statement of Significance, Structural Report and Bat Survey have accompanied the application and are available via Public Access should Members wish to view them.

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles

BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy

BDP4 Green Belt

BDP7 Housing Mix and Density

BDP12 Sustainable Communities

BDP13 New Employment Development

BDP15 Rural Renaissance

BDP16 Sustainable Transport

BDP19 High Quality Design

BDP20 Managing the Historic Environment

BDP21 Natural Environment

BDP23 Water Management

BDP 25 Health and Well Being

Others

SPG1

SPG4

NPPF

NPPG

Relevant Planning History

There is extensive planning history related to the agricultural use and associated buildings at Stoney Lane Farm but these are not reported here given this history is not relevant to the applications under consideration.

Notes

Following a Full Council Meeting on 25 January 2017, the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) has been adopted. The Bromsgrove District Local Plan (BDLP) has now been deleted and is no longer a material consideration in planning decisions.

The application site lies in the Green Belt. The main issues raised by this proposal are: (i) whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, taking into account the effect on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it; and, (ii) if the development is inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

The National Planning Framework indicates that the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt; strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings and the buildings are permanent and of substantial construction. This advice is reflected in Policy BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan.

Members must also consider the impact of the proposals on the integrity of the designated Listed Building and the associated curtilage Listed buildings.

Other issues for Members to consider are:

- Design
- The impact on the amenity of adjacent occupiers
- Highway implications
- Tree and landscaping
- Drainage issues
- Ecological and biodiversity issues

Green Belt Issues

Members will be aware that National Policy on development in the Green Belt is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework which advises that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances exist. Most new development should be regarded as inappropriate, but for certain defined exceptions.

Paragraph 89 of the Framework lists exceptions to inappropriate development within the Green Belt and in doing so states that any alteration to a building is not inappropriate provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Reinstating the dovecote roof and the roof to the roadside barn would not alter the original size of these structures. The single storey extension to Unit Four is proportionate. These aspects of the scheme would therefore meet the exception listed by Paragraph 89.

Policy BDP15.1 (c) states that the Council will support proposals that satisfy the social and economic needs of rural communities by encouraging the conversion of suitably located/constructed buildings. Paragraph 90 of the Framework lists other exceptions; the most relevant to the proposed development being the re-use of buildings, including any associated uses of land, provided that the buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction and subject to the openness of the Green Belt being preserved and the development not conflicting with the purposes of including land within it.

The farmhouse and single storey barn are in good condition and do not require substantial structural remedial repairs. I therefore consider these structures to be of a permanent and substantial construction.

The two-storey barn adjacent to Stoney Lane is not in a good condition and is in a relatively dilapidated state. Whilst I note the central and north-western section of the roof

are intact, it is clearly missing from the south-western end of the building. The failure of the roof has caused significant problems. Whilst the crux frame within the roof can be salvaged as could part of the roof to the left hand side front elevation, the rear and the lean-to structure have deteriorated to such a point that this cannot be used and the roof will require re-building. The submitted Structural Report comments that work is required to the timber framing to provide a tie between the roof elements, particularly to the roadside where the joints show signs of failure. The re-building of brickwork will be necessary in some of the panels. Given these circumstances whilst I am of the view that the two-storey barn is permanent, it clearly fails to be of substantial construction.

Members will note the proposal includes the formation of a new two-bedroom dwelling through the conversion of the south range of barns. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF advises that in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Paragraph 55 goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

- where such development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets; or
- where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting

I am of the view that the new dwelling complies with these requirements and in principle is acceptable.

The formation of the proposed vehicular access and area for parking to the west would constitute engineering operations. Paragraph 90 of the Framework lists engineering operations as an exception to inappropriate development within the Green Belt, provided that the openness of the Green Belt is preserved and the development does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

I raise no issue with the creation of domestic garden to serve Unit Four. This utilises a clearly defined area of land to the south with robust boundaries. Similarly, I raise no issue over the courtyard garden area serving Unit 4 and a proportion of the parking provision serving the scheme given the presence of existing hardstanding and the enclosure of this aspect of this site. Whilst I appreciate that the access track and parking area would be re-turfed following the installation of the membrane grid solution, the use of the track and the associated formal layout of eight parked vehicles would have an obvious physical and visual impact. Inevitably there would be a number of activities and vehicle movements associated with the proposed development, not least in association with the comings and goings of customers and the manoeuvring and delivery of supplies beyond that expected from the domestic use of Stoney Lane Farmhouse. Altogether, the proposed development would intensify the activities on the site which in turn would be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt.

I am therefore of the view that the access and parking arrangements would conflict with one of the purposes of including land within the Green Belt by virtue of not safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The proposed development would also result in a loss of openness, contrary to paragraph 79 of the Framework which seeks to keep land permanently open. In this respect, I am of the view that the parking and access aspect of

the scheme, together with the associated re-use of buildings (given the condition of the roadside barns) would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore contrary to the Framework. Paragraph 88 of the Framework states that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. For this reason the proposal would be contrary to the NPPF.

Paragraph 87 of the Framework states that inappropriate development, by definition, is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

In considering such matters, Members will note that the scheme will lead to the re-use of the Grade II Listed farmhouse and the associated Grade II curtilage listed buildings. The Conservation Officer is supportive of the scheme and clearly wishes to see the buildings repaired and back in use. The significance of the buildings as key components in the County's historic environment is also recognised by the Worcestershire Historic Farmstead Characterisation Project.

It is clear that the barns facing Stoney Lane are particularly at risk from further deterioration. The proposal will repair and renovate this nationally and locally important suite of Grade II Listed buildings and secure their future by having a new use. The evolution of the site is significant. The group of buildings have merit collectively and I consider that this cohesiveness is retained and maintained. Policy BDP20.5 states that in considering such applications regard will be paid to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of heritage assets, with support for the sensitive reuse of redundant historic buildings. The Policy makes specific reference to the encouragement of proposals which provide for a sustainable future for heritage assets, particularly those at risk. These are important factors that weigh in favour of the proposals.

The scheme will also lead to the employment of two people and a more general benefit via tourism and leisure opportunities which would result in capital investment which could in turn benefit and help diversify the local rural economy. Members also need to consider that the sustainability of the site and its proximity to local facilities may be less important for temporary holiday accommodation than for permanent residential use, particularly where visitors wish to experience the rural surroundings as part of a leisure activity. I have previously dealt with the sustainability matters in the consideration of the new dwelling given the parameters of Paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

Paragraph 28 of the NPPF supports economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity. In particular the development and diversification of agricultural businesses is encouraged by this paragraph of the NPPF. The BDP supports economic development in rural areas through policy BDP15 (Rural Renaissance) and specifically references rural diversification schemes and the reuse of historic farmsteads to promote them as assets in the landscape. These are factors pertinent to this application.

In terms of the access and parking arrangements, Members will note that no new surfacing is proposed to serve either the access route or the parking area itself. I accept that whilst the access and parking provision may not seriously impinge on the openness of this part of the Green Belt or adversely affect the rural character or appearance of the locality *per se*, the unrestricted coming and goings of customers using the access and the

use of the designated parking area by different vehicles will have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt. I have carefully considered this aspect of the scheme. It is my view that in the balancing exercise, the access and parking proposals is integral to providing the designated heritage asset with a new use and ultimately a future. An appropriate soft and hard landscaping scheme and external lighting scheme has accompanied the scheme that has been sensitively designed to reduce the impact of this aspect of the scheme.

I am of the view that the substantial weight given to the harm arising from inappropriate development and its effect on the openness of the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by the benefits identified. This amounts to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Design and Listed Building Issues

It is noted that the character of the existing buildings is retained. There is an element of new internal and external openings being proposed but the majority of existing openings are proposed to be used or re-used. The removal of the existing porch to the western elevation of the farmhouse is considered acceptable.

As such the conversion scheme has been sensitively approached and is respectful of the historic origins and character of the buildings. The scheme will fit into the context of the immediate and wider rural landscape and reinstate the grandeur of the farmhouse and the associated barns in this prominent location. This is welcomed.

Subject to clarification on the proposal to externally clad the timber frame barn raised by the Conservation Officer, I consider the scheme has been sensitively approached and will not adversely affect the historic character and integrity of the Listed farmhouse or curtilage listed buildings. I will update Members at your Committee on the cladding issue following the receipt of further information from the applicant.

The new dwelling is compliant with the guidance set out in SPG1.

Impact on the Amenity of Adjacent Occupiers

The new use would not lead to any adverse impact on residential amenity.

Highway Implications

The scheme proposes two elements of parking. The courtyard will accommodate five spaces (including two spaces to serve the residential dwelling) and will be accessed via the existing entrance leading onto Stoney Lane. Eight spaces are proposed to be located to the south of the farmhouse. These will be accessed via a new vehicular access to the west from the access track leading off Stoney Lane (currently serving 1-3 Stoney Lane Cottages). The existing track currently serving Stoney Lane Cottages is proposed to be widened on the east side by approximately 7 metres.

Worcestershire Highways has raised no objection to the scheme on highway safety matters or parking provision, subject to suitable Conditions relating to the securing of

suitable visibility splays, access, turning and parking details and a construction management plan.

Landscaping Issues

The scheme includes hard and soft landscaping, including a new flagstone path to the front of the farmhouse, a more formal courtyard garden to the rear of the farmhouse with structural box hedging planting and a 1.5 metre high boundary wall within the existing courtyard to provide the new dwelling with privacy. A 1.2 metre high estate fence will sit to the south of the access track across the field. A new hedge is proposed on the eastern side of the new access track.

The courtyard is proposed to be laid with blue brick pavers. Further clarification on the external lighting scheme has also been requested by the Conservation Officer and this can be conditioned to ensure any such scheme is appropriate for its setting.

The planting regime to the west will serve to filter views both of and toward the site, to the benefit of future users of the site and the wider rural landscape. The black finish estate fencing to the access track and parking area reinforces the agricultural context of the site.

Drainage Issues

The proposed development is located in Flood Zone 1 (little to no risk of fluvial or tidal flood risk) and it is sequentially appropriate. The proposed development is consistent with the appropriate uses for Flood Zone 1, as outlined in Table 1 of NPPF Technical Guidance Document.

The Drainage Engineer has raised the issue of surface water flooding within the courtyard. The applicant has responded by stating that this is caused by the inability of surface water to escape the confines of the courtyard given this competes with the existing farm drainage arising from the field to the front of the site and beyond. The applicant intends to increase the capacity for surface water drainage by implementing a scheme that will divert surface water from the buildings to an underground tank and onto an existing drainage soakaway. The existing soakaway acts like a balancing pond, with all output entering the underground aquifer.

The stated drainage works will be secured via a subsequent Building Regulation application.

Ecological and Biodiversity Issues

A Bat Survey Report (incorporating bird activity) has accompanied the application. The Report concludes that the outbuildings have low suitability for bat use. No evidence was found during survey visits conducted in January 2015 and May 2016. Given these circumstances no further survey work is warranted and I raise no issue on protected species matters.

Nesting birds have been observed within the main outbuildings. The timing of works will need to comply with the requirement to protect active bird's nests in compliance with legislation.

Conclusions

Members will be aware that the adopted Bromsgrove District Plan now forms the Development Plan for the area, and any decision needs to be made in accordance with these policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Advice within the NPPF and policies within the BDP makes it clear that the impact upon the character of the locality, as well as the relationship of proposed developments to the surrounding area to be legitimate material factors to take into account in the determination of planning proposals. Indeed, the Framework advocates the rejection of poorly designed developments, including those that are clearly incompatible with their surroundings.

In the approach to Green Belt matters, the development represents inappropriate development. I am of the view that the substantial weight given to the harm arising from inappropriate development and its effect on the openness of the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by the benefits identified earlier in this report. The sensitive and positive approach to the conversion of an important group of heritage assets that respects the historic context and surrounding rural landscape, the implementation of new hard and soft landscaping and the benefits of tourism and leisure gain that contribute to rural renaissance are all of local benefit which are factors that weigh in favour of the proposals. Of critical importance, the scheme will re-use listed structures that have been vacant since at least 2014, thereby saving these buildings from further deterioration and ensuring the future protection of a valuable historic and traditional element of Bromsgrove's rural heritage. These considerations amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

The scheme raises no issues affecting highway safety, residential amenity or flooding and will have no adverse impact on any identified protected species.

I am thus mindful to grant full planning permission and Listed Building Consent.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

16/1028 (Planning Application)

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That **PLANNING PERMISSION** be **GRANTED**
-

16/1029 (Listed Building Consent)

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That **LISTED BUILDING CONSENT** be **GRANTED**
-

For the reference of Members I intend to impose suitable Conditions on both applications (as applicable according to application type) relating to:

- Time (three year consent)
- Compliance with approved drawings
- Highway matters:
 - Visibility splays
 - Access, turning and parking details
 - Construction Management Plan
- The use of the development hereby permitted relating to Unit 1, Unit 2, Unit 3A, Unit 3B, and Unit 3C shall only be used for holiday accommodation purposes and not for any other residential use falling within Class C3 of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended) (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification). **Note:** “any other residential use” would include a person or persons’ main residence, or a permanent residential unit of occupation
- External materials and finish (to include brick/tiles/doors and door frames/windows and window frames/rainwater goods)
- Joinery details (internal and external) at a scale of 1:5
- Full details of the dovecot restoration works
- Location, number and full specification of the external lighting scheme
- Soft landscaping five year retention
- Hard landscaping (to include specific approval of the courtyard pavers)
- Written scheme of archaeological investigation

Informatives

- Mud on highway
- Private apparatus within the highway
- Alteration of highway to provide new or amend vehicle crossover

Case Officer: Dale Birch
Telephone: 01527 881341
Email: d.birch@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
