

Rob Duncan  
Planning  
Consultancy



# **PLANNING STATEMENT**

**STABLES AT HORSLEY LANE  
CHESTERFIELD**

**JUNE 2021**

**Site Address:**

Stables at Horsley Lane, Chesterfield, Nr. Wall, Staffordshire, WS14 0EJ

**Applicant:**

Mr. R. Castledine

**Proposal:**

Conversion, extension and alteration of stable block to form 1no.  
dwellinghouse

**Planning Statement:**

**Date Issued:** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021

**Job Reference:** RDP/2021/059

**Report Prepared By:**

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy Ltd. has been instructed by Mr. R. Castledine to seek full planning permission for the conversion, extension and alteration to an existing stable block to residential use on land off Horsley Lane, Chesterfield.
  - 1.2 The existing building comprises a rectangular shaped stable building that is constructed from brickwork with a tiled roof. It is served by an existing vehicular access off Horsley Lane and comprises of 5no. stables and a tack room.
  - 1.3 The application proposes the erection of single storey extensions to the front and rear elevations of the building, and its conversion to a single dwellinghouse comprising of an open plan kitchen / diner, utility and w.c. living room, study, two bedrooms and a bathroom. The resultant dwelling will have a gross floor area of 129.2 square metres. Externally it is proposed to create an area of private amenity space enclosed by existing boundary vegetation and a new indigenous hedgerow, along with off-street parking for three vehicles taken via the existing vehicular access off Horsley Lane.
  - 1.4 The application has been subject to pre-application discussions with the Local Authority where it was confirmed that the principle of converting the building to a dwelling was acceptable, provided that a Structural Survey is submitted to demonstrate that the building is structurally capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding work. It was also confirmed that the proposed extensions would be proportionate to the size of the original building and so are also acceptable. The Local Authority also commented that the proposal appears to be acceptable in terms of its design and appearance and will retain the rural appearance of the building.
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## **2 Site Description**

- 2.1 The application site lies within the West Midlands Green Belt and constitutes a rectangular shaped stable building that occupies a footprint of 115 square metres. The building is single storey in nature and is constructed from brickwork with a grey tiled roof. It currently comprises of 5no. stables and a tack room and is served by an existing vehicular access off Horsley Lane which encloses the western boundary of the site.
- 2.2 A paddock area extends to the south of the building, beyond which lies the applicant's existing property 'Ellastone'. Open fields and paddocks extend to the east and north of the site, separated by indigenous hedgerows. Public Footpath Wall 0.427 follows the route of Horsley Lane, connecting Raikes Lane to the south, with Bullmoor Lane to the northwest. The nearest neighbouring residential properties lie to the east / southeast, approximately 180m + distant.

### **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 Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy (2015) of which the following policies are considered to be of relevance:

3.1 Core Policy 2 of the Local Plan Strategy 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 always work pro-actively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.2 Policy NR2 of the Local Plan Strategy relates to 'Development in the Green Belt' and states that all development within the Green Belt must retain its character and openness. It goes on to confirm that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and will not be approved except in very special circumstances. The policy furthermore confirms that the construction of new buildings will be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, unless it is for one of the exceptions listed in the National Planning Policy Framework.

3.3 Policy NR3 of the Core Strategy relates to 'Biodiversity, Protected Species and Their Habitats' and states that development will only be permitted where it:

- Protects, enhances, restores and implements appropriate conservation management of the biodiversity and/or geodiversity value of the land and buildings
- Minimises fragmentation and maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancements and connection of natural habitats (including links to habitats outside Lichfield District); and
- Incorporates beneficial biodiversity and/or geodiversity conservation features, including features that will help wildlife to adapt to climate change where appropriate
- Delivers a net gain for biodiversity and /or geodiversity in the district

3.4 Policy NR4 of the Local Plan Strategy relates to 'Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows' and states that Lichfield District's trees, woodland and hedgerows are important visual and ecological assets In our towns, villages and countryside. In order to retain and provide local distinctiveness in the landscape, trees, veteran trees, woodland, ancient woodland, and hedgerows, are of particular significance. Trees and woodland will be protected from damage and retained, unless it can be demonstrated that removal is necessary and appropriate mitigation can be achieved. The removal of large mature species and their replacement with smaller shorter-lived species will be resisted. Sufficient space within developments must be reserved for the planting and sustainable growth of large trees in order to retain the important tree canopy cover in conservation areas and the built environment, and to improve tree canopy cover in the District as a whole. Potential long term conflict between retained trees, hedgerows and built form will be designed out at the planning stage.

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3.5 Core Policy 6 of the Local Plan Strategy relates to 'Housing Delivery' and confirms that outside the key urban and rural settlements only the following residential development will be permitted:

- Infill development within a defined village settlement boundary
- Affordable housing
- Changes of use and conversion schemes
- Small-scale development supported by local communities
- Agricultural, forestry and other occupational workers dwellings

3.6 Core Policy 6 goes on to state that residential development will be expected to contribute to the achievement of sustainable communities, incorporate high quality design, assist in meeting identified housing needs and deliver the required, identified physical, green, social and community infrastructure requirements necessary to support sustainable communities.

3.7 Policy H1 of the Local Plan Strategy relates to 'A Balanced Housing Market' and states that new residential developments will include an integrated mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures based on the latest assessment of housing need. There is currently an imbalance of dwelling types within the District. To redress this, the District Council will actively promote the delivery of smaller properties including two bed apartments and two and three bed houses to increase local housing choice and contribute to the development of mixed and sustainable communities. The District Council will also promote the delivery of supported housing and care homes to reflect the needs of the changing demographic profile of the District's population to 2029.

3.8 Policy BE1 of the Local Plan Strategy relates to ‘High Quality Development’ and states that all development proposals should ensure that a high quality sustainable built environment can be achieved. Development will be permitted where it can be clearly and convincingly demonstrated that it will have a positive impact on the area. It goes on to list a number of criteria which will be considered, which require that (amongst others):

- *New development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings, should carefully respect the character of the surrounding area and development in terms of layout, size, scale, architectural design and public views.*
- *Avoiding development which causes disturbance through unreasonable traffic generation, noise, light, dust, fumes or other disturbance.*
- *Effective hard and soft landscaping will be required and should be implemented in an integrated manner making use of green corridors for movement of people as well as biodiversity.*



#### **4 Other Material Considerations**

##### **National Planning Policy Framework (2019)**

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to secure the delivery of sustainable development and sets out policies *inter-alia* in respect of safeguarding the Green Belt, delivering rural housing, securing high quality design, safeguarding highway safety and securing a net gain to biodiversity. The content of the NPPF has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

##### **LDC Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document (2015)**

- 4.2 The Rural Development SPD sets out further detail to the policies relating to development within the rural areas, and sets out guidance, *inter-alia*, in respect of the reuse of rural buildings. The content of the SPD has been taken into consideration in the preparation of this application.

## **5 Planning Assessment**

### **Green Belt**

- 5.1 The application site is located within the Green Belt and proposes the conversion and extension of the existing stable building to form 1no. dwellinghouse. Paragraph 146 of the NPPF and policy NR2 of the Local Plan Strategy allow for the reuse of buildings within the Green Belt provided that the buildings are of a permanent and substantial construction and that the development preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the five purposes of including land within it.
- 5.2 The application is accompanied by a Structural Survey which confirms that the building is in a robust physical condition and that there are no structural reasons why the building could not be converted to residential use. As a consequence, the proposal involves the reuse of a building that has been demonstrably shown to be of a permanent and substantial construction. Its reuse for residential purposes will furthermore not give rise to any material harm to the openness of the Green Belt or the five purposes of including land within it, with the development being served by a modest area of domestic curtilage that will be enclosed by existing boundary vegetation and a new indigenous hedgerow along the southern site boundary and remaining open in nature. The proposal therefore amounts to an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 146(d) of the NPPF and policy NR2 of the Local Plan Strategy.
- 5.3 The application also proposes extensions to the front and rear of the existing building to provide a living room and study. Paragraph 145 of the NPPF and policy NR2 of the Local Plan Strategy allow for the extension or alteration or a building within the Green Belt provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
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- 5.4 A review of historic Ordnance Survey maps reveals that the building as it stands today constitutes the original building. That original building has a volume of approximately 330.4 cubic metres, and the proposed extensions represent an increase in volume of approximately 30.5%. Such an increase in size is considered to be proportionate to the original building, and as a consequence the proposed extensions also constitute an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt, in accordance with paragraph 145(c) of the NPPF and policy NR2 of the Local Plan Strategy.

### **Rural Housing**

- 5.5 Core Policy 6 of the Local Plan Strategy allows for the change of use of existing buildings to residential use within the rural areas. The submitted proposal relates to the conversion of an existing building to form a single dwellinghouse, and consequently is in accordance with Core Policy 6 of the Local Plan Strategy.

- 5.6 The application also proposes the creation of a two-bedroomed dwellinghouse. Policy H1 of the Local Plan Strategy specifically seeks to encourage the delivery of smaller properties, including two and three bedroomed dwellings, in order to redress the existing imbalance of house types within the District. The submitted proposal fully accords with this objective.

### **Design & Layout**

- 5.7 The submitted proposal adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion and extension of this existing building, respecting its scale and massing, and reinforcing its proportions and roof style within the two extensions. The proposal also makes beneficial reuse of existing openings, with proposed new openings being of scale and size that respect the existing openings within the building. The resultant accommodation will be flooded with natural light

thereby contributing to reducing reliance upon artificial sources of illumination.

- 5.8 The proposed extensions will not give rise to any material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and will give the building a visually pleasing external appearance, whilst also respecting its rural appearance. There are no immediate neighbours who would be adversely affected by the proposed development.
- 5.9 The proposed area of domestic curtilage is also tightly defined to minimise the impact of private amenity space on the character and appearance of the area. New planting, and retention of planting to existing site boundaries, will serve to soften the impact of the development and ensure that no harm to the character and appearance of the area will arise. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policy BE1 of the Local Plan Strategy and paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

#### **Impact on Trees**

- 5.10 Along the western boundary of the existing paddock with Horsley Lane, there are four mature Ash trees, of which three (TP30, TP31 and TP32) form part of a Tree Preservation Order (no.49). Those three protected trees lie outside the confines of the application site, and thus will be unaffected by the proposed development.
- 5.11 The fourth tree is not subject to the Tree Preservation Order but is nevertheless a mature specimen that the applicant wishes to retain and safeguard. The submitted block plan demonstrates that the physical works to convert and extend the building will lie some 11.5 metres from the trunk of tree T4, and consequently will not give rise to any harm to its health or longevity.

5.12 The extent of the proposed parking and turning areas have been carefully considered to avoid the Root Protection Area of Tree T4, which extends to 7.2 metres from its trunk, and details of Tree Protection Measures and material storage areas are shown on the submitted block plan. The means of vehicular access into the site is already existing and laid to hardstanding so the reuse of that access will not give rise to any greater impacts to tree T4 than the existing use of the access for the stables. The proposed development therefore meets the requirements of Policy NR4 of the Local Plan Strategy.

#### **Impact on Protected Species**

5.13 The application is accompanied by a Bat and Bird Survey which serves to demonstrate that there is no evidence of bats using the building as a place of shelter, and no evidence of one roosting opportunity being used. A remote bat detector was installed on site between 26<sup>th</sup> August – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to monitor this roosting opportunity, but no bats were recorded using it. Birds were nevertheless noted to be nesting within the building. As a consequence, it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will not give rise to any harm to protected species. A net gain to biodiversity will be secured by carrying out the bat and bird enhancement measures set out within the report – to be secured by planning condition. In doing so the development will meet the requirements of policy NR3 of the Local Plan Strategy and paragraph 175 of the NPPF.

#### **Highway Safety**

5.14 The application site benefits from an existing vehicular access onto Horsley Lane which connects with Raikes Lane to the south. The road is infrequently used and has grassed over in places but is nevertheless an established means of vehicular access to this site. The proposed development incorporates off street parking space for three vehicles, along with associated turning and

manouvering space, and consequently will not give rise to any adverse impact to highway safety in the locality. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF in this regard.

## **6 Conclusion**

6.1 The submitted proposal constitutes a sustainable form of development having regard to the following conclusions:

- The proposal involves the reuse of an existing building that is of a permanent and substantial construction and will not give rise to harm to the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with the five purposes of including land within it, and the proposed extensions will not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building
- The proposal is in full accordance with the Local Authority's housing delivery policies
- The proposal adopts a sensitive approach to the conversion and extension of the existing building and will preserve its rural character
- The proposal will safeguard important trees within the vicinity of the site, and will secure a net gain to biodiversity
- The proposal will not give rise to harm to highway safety within the locality, and will provide adequate off-street parking to meet the needs of the dwellinghouse

6.2 The proposed development is therefore in accordance with policies NR2, NR3, NR4, CP6, H1 and BE1 of the Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Rural Development SPD.