

JUNE 2021

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

SPRIGG FARM, CLEVEDON ROAD, WESTON-IN-
GORDANO, BS20 8PR

ON BEHALF OF: **EMMA HARRIS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Stokes Morgan Planning Ltd on behalf of Mrs Emma Harris. It accompanies a full planning application for the change of use of an existing stable block to holiday accommodation.

1.2 The purpose of this statement is to explain the background to the scheme and provide an assessment of the key planning issues set against the context of national and local planning policy and guidance, and any relevant material considerations.

1.3 This statement should be read in conjunction with the following supporting information:

- Application form and ownership certificates;
- Drawing no.3914.PL01 Rev. A – Site location plan;
- Drawing no. 3914-PL-02 - Existing plans and elevations;
- Drawing no. 3914-PL-03 – Proposed plans and elevations;
- Drawing no. 3914-PL-04 Rev. A – Existing site plan;
- Drawing no. 3914-PL-05 Rev. A – Proposed site plan, and;
- Energy statement.

1.4 This document is structured as follows:

- Application Site and Surroundings;
- Authorised Use and Planning History;
- Proposed Development;
- Planning Policy Analysis/Balance; and
- Conclusions.

2. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

LOCATION AND AMENITIES

- 2.1 The site lies within the Gordano Valley ward, under the jurisdiction of North Somerset Council, and within the parish of Weston-in-Gordano. It lies in the open countryside.
- 2.2 The site falls within the Bristol/Bath Green Belt (cell 74 – Southwest of Portishead) and is outside of the adjacent Weston-in-Gordano Conservation Area. There are no Listed Buildings on site, and no Tree Preservation Orders apply.
- 2.3 A Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) lies 120 metres to the north (Walton Common to Seven Acre Wood). The Weston-in-Gordano SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) borders the wider Sprigg Farm site to the east, and beyond this, the Weston Big Wood SSSI (550 metres to the northeast). There is a Public Right of Way (LA18/4/10) along the western boundary of the wider site, and a second PROW through the Weston-in-Gordano SSSI (LA18/3/10) which commences from the southeast corner of the wider site. The site is within Flood Zone 1.

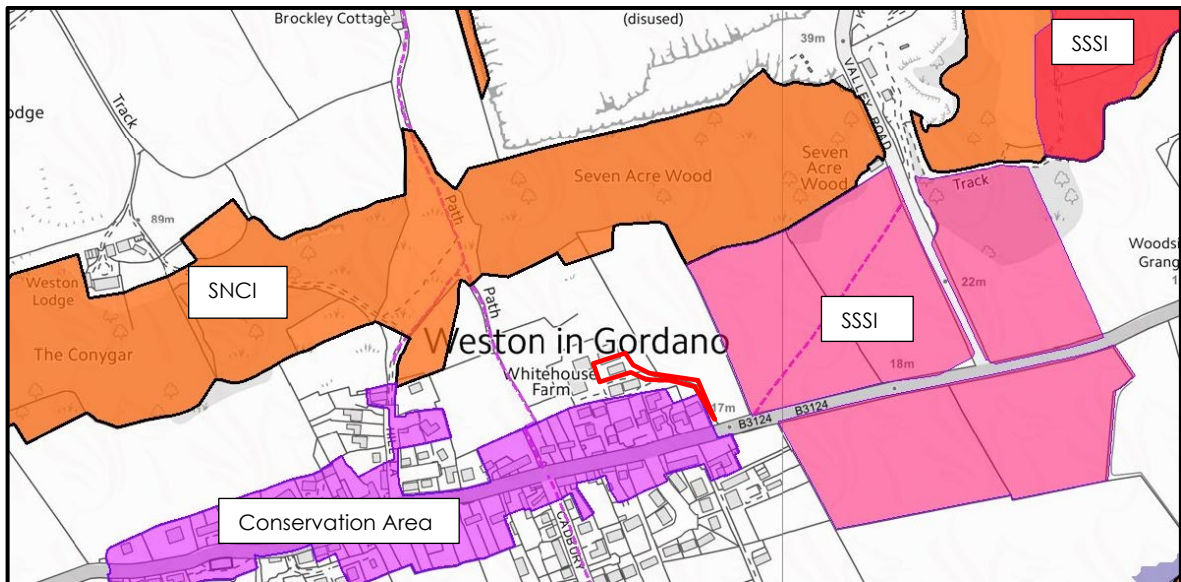


Figure 1 – policy constraints map (Green Belt not shown)

THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.4 The 0.15ha application site lies to the north of Clevedon Road, at the eastern end of the village of Weston-on-Gordano.
- 2.5 The wider Sprigg Farm comprises several agricultural buildings including stables, barns, workshops and stores, and a structure (two caravans connected by a timber structure) which has a personal planning permission for use as a residential dwelling by Mr Paul Harris.

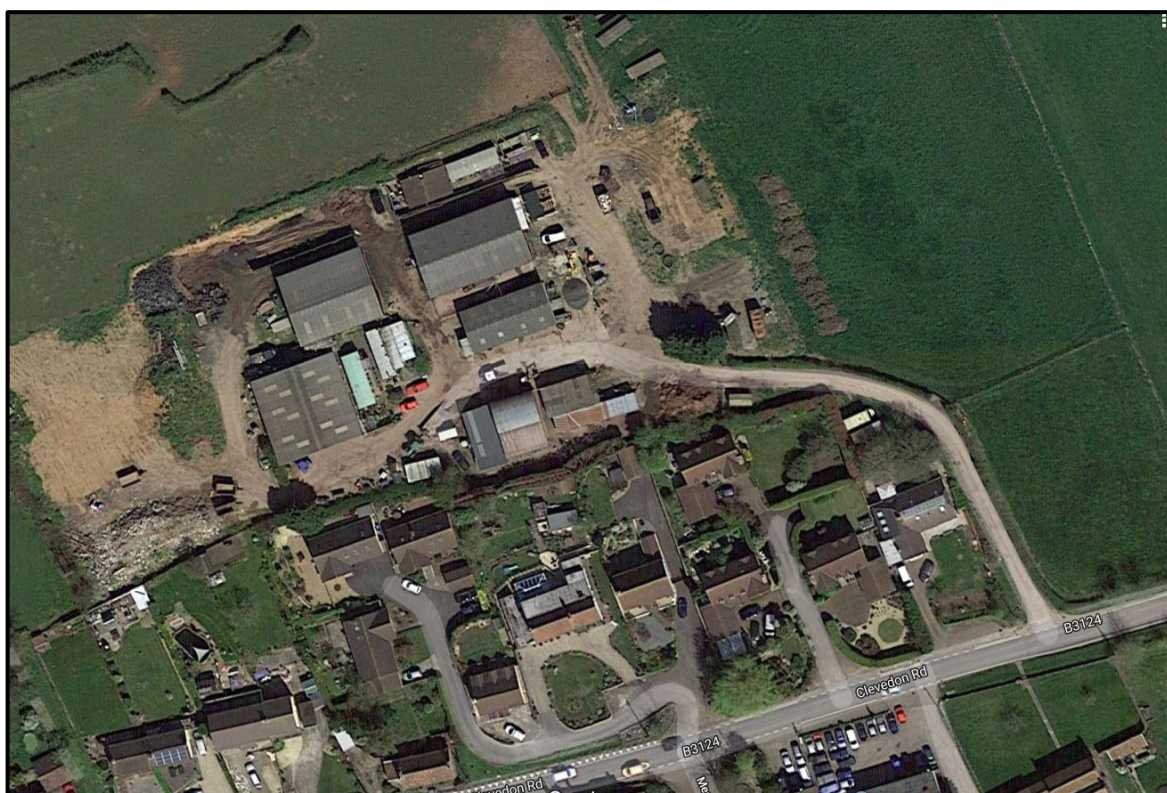


Figure 2 – aerial view of site and adjoining properties

- 2.6 The site is surrounded by agricultural land to the north, east and west. To the south there are a number of residential dwellings. Whitehouse Farm (the original farmhouse to the Sprigg Farm site) lies immediately to the south of the site. The land to the west and east of Whitehouse Farm has been developed over the last thirty years, with five dwellings now served by Sprigg Drive (to the west) and a further five dwellings to the east. The gardens of a number of these properties adjoin the application site.

- 2.7 Weston-in-Gordano has a limited number of local services, including a church, public house and the motor repair garage. There are bus stops within 200 metres of the site, on Clevedon Road, with the X5 bus service operating hourly in both directions between Weston-super-Mare (via Clevedon) and Cribbs Causeway (via Portishead).
- 2.8 Local tourist attractions include the towns of Clevedon and Portishead, Quad Nation (Quad Biking), 1km to the northwest, Gordano Valley Riding Centre (1.6km to the east), Tickenham Golf Course (2.5km to the south), Noah's Ark Zoo (3.8km) and Tyntesfield (5.2km). The site is well situated for exploring the local area on foot and by bike, with nearby Public Rights of Way connecting to Weston Big Wood, and Cadbury Camp, via Weston Moor. The Gordano Round (Long Distance Path) runs within 1km of the site, as does the Avon Cycleway (National Cycle Route 410), an 85-mile circular route around Bristol.

3. AUTHORISED USE & PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site originally formed part of Whitehouse Farm, and was separated from the farmhouse when that building became a separate residential dwelling.
- 3.2 The site has been the subject of several planning applications, and a recent public inquiry (enforcement notice and lawful development certificate). During the course of this appeal (lead case ref: APP/D0121/C/17/3182448) it was established that the lawful use of the planning is a mixed use (Sui Generis), comprising agricultural contractor's yard, agricultural, and equestrian uses. It should also be noted that prior approval applications for agricultural buildings (see planning history below) have been refused within the last 18 months, on the basis of the mixed use of the site. This is relevant because this means that the use of the site falls within the definition of previously developed land as defined in the NPPF.
- 3.3 The stables were confirmed as lawful in 2004 (ref: 04/P/1731/LUE), the use having been established for more than ten years at the time.

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- 3.4 Further to this, a lawful development certificate was issued with regards to the building comprising two caravans connected by a timber structure. A personal planning permission has since been granted for the residential use of this building by Mr Paul Harris.
- 3.5 Planning permission was recently granted for the erection of a new detached dwelling (ref: 20/P/3168/FUL) following demolition of two barns, a wood store, and the existing dwelling with the personal planning permission attached. This permission remains extant, and has not yet been commenced.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The proposed description of development is as follows:

"Change of use of existing stables to holiday accommodation, including the erection of a single storey side extension."

4.2 The existing stables are of solid and permanent construction, with blockwork walls and fibre cement roof sheeting. There is a small lean-to extension attached to the western/side elevation. The building has a floor area of 175sqm.

4.3 The proposed holiday accommodation would utilise the existing building, including a small extension to square off the building by extending the lean-to. The resulting building would have a floor area of 190sqm.

4.4 Internally, the building has been designed to operate as either a six-bedroom property, or a four-bedroom and a two-bedroom property. Two kitchens are proposed to enable this greater degree of flexibility, with a dividing door than can be locked when required.

4.5 The building would be clad in timber, with an engineering brick plinth, and a new standing seam lead-grey roof. Grey aluminium fenestration is proposed, to the north and south elevations.

4.6 3no. parking spaces are proposed (2no. for the 4-bed and 1no for the 2-bed unit when in use as separate units), and two courtyards, with 1.4m high stone boundary walls, to the north of the building.

5. PLANNING ANALYSIS/BALANCE

5.1 The key policy tests and material considerations to be assessed in the determination of this proposal, are:

- Is the principle of tourist accommodation in this location acceptable?
- Would the proposal be appropriate development in the Green Belt?

5.2 Further considerations, are:

- Is the proposed development acceptable in highway safety and parking terms?
- Does the proposal address matters of energy efficiency and renewable energy provision?
- Would the proposal preserve or enhance the adjacent Conservation Area?
- Does the site have ecological value?

5.3 These considerations are addressed separately below.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Is the principle of tourist accommodation in this location acceptable?

5.4 Policy CS22 supports new tourist accommodation of an appropriate scale and quality, where it would maximise where possible, access by means other than car, support conservation and economic development objectives, and have no adverse impact on the environment, local amenity and the character of the area.

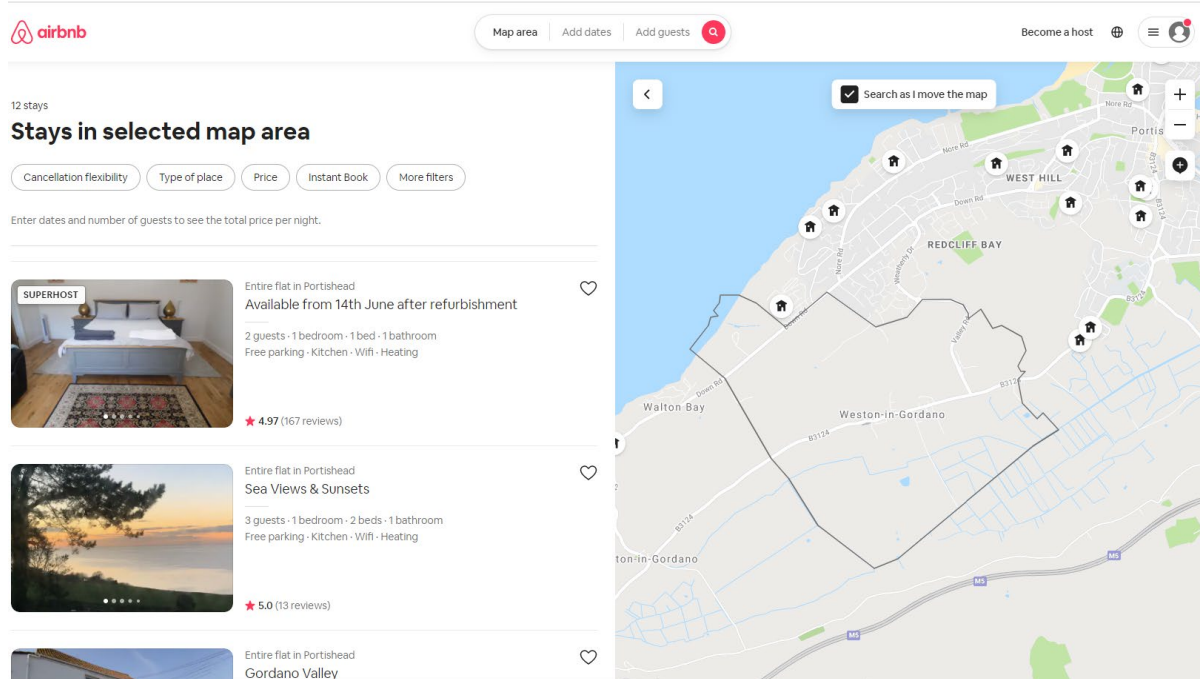
5.5 Policy DM57 expands on this and issues of scale, quality and amenity are discussed below. With regards to minimising the use of private motor vehicles, as noted in paragraph 2.8 above, the site is served by regular public transport, and this situation will further improve upon the opening of the Portishead branch line. The site is also conveniently located for exploring the local area on foot and by bike. The proposed

accommodation would also support farm diversification, thereby addressing economic development objectives.

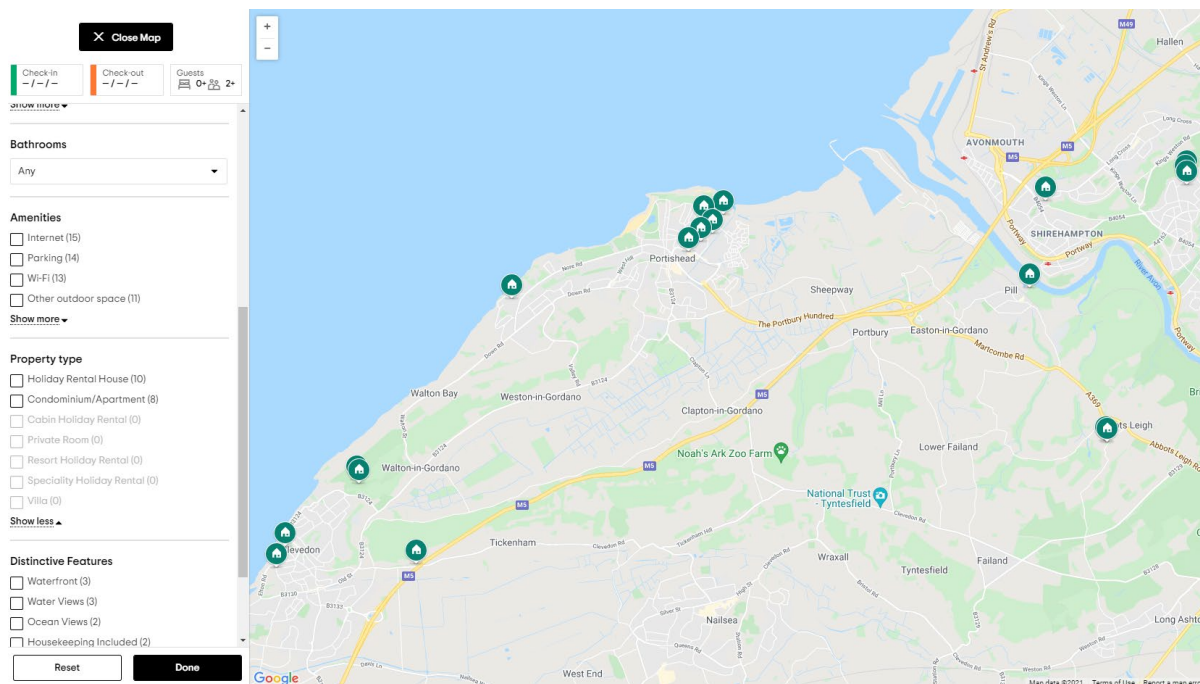
- 5.6 Policy DM57 supports the conversion or re-use of rural buildings for visitor accommodation, subject to six criteria. In response to these, the building is both permanent and substantial, and externally, requires only cladding and re-roofing as part of the conversion works. The extension proposed measures 15sqm, which would amount to an 8% increase in floor space and cannot be considered disproportionate. Similarly, the extension of the existing lean-to would respect the scale and setting of the building and its setting.
- 5.7 With regards to criterion iii, a search of the Airbnb website (see below) shows there to be no holiday properties within the Weston-in-Gordano area. The nearest available properties (both in Portishead) are at Charlcombe Rise (1.25km to the northwest) and George Street, 1.5km to the east. Trip Advisor shows there to be no available holiday homes in the vicinity, with the nearest properties located within Clevedon and Portishead, and the nearest catered properties (eg hotels, bed and breakfasts), also to be in Portishead. As such, the proposal would not result in the proliferation of tourist accommodation in the area, to the detriment of the character of the area. It is clear that there is currently a sparsity of such accommodation in the Gordano Valley, which the proposal would help address.

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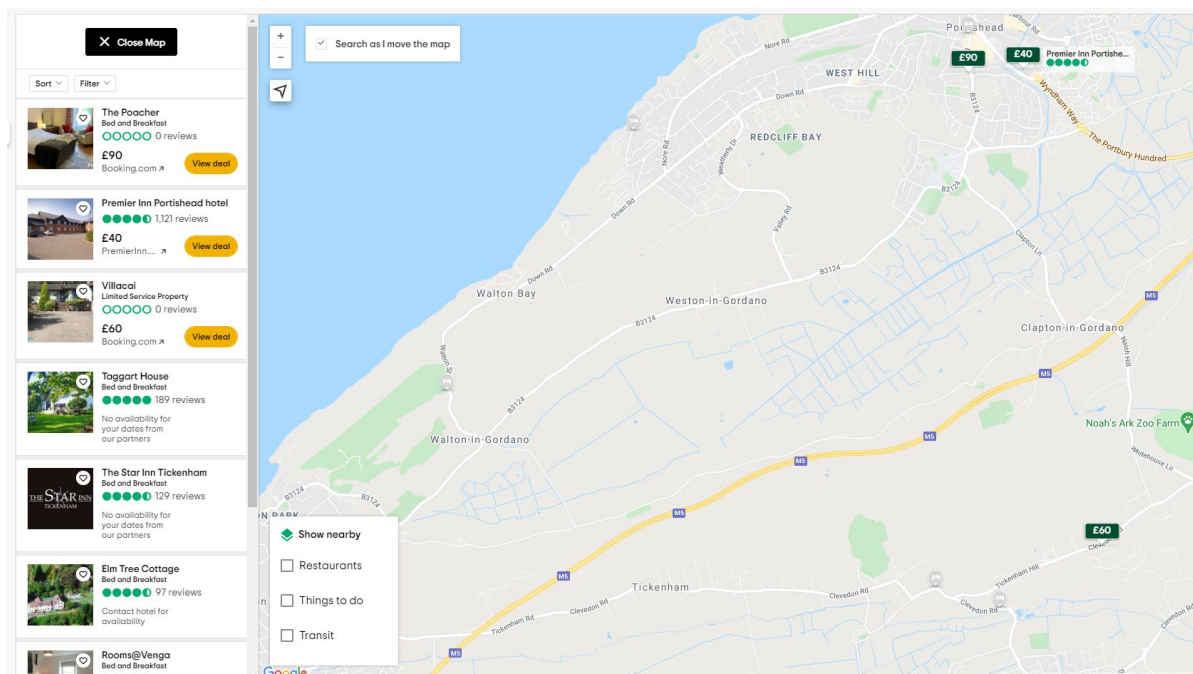
Airbnb search results



Trip Advisor search results (self-catering)

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Trip Advisor search results (catered)

- 5.8 Criterion iv requires the building to be capable of providing a high standard of holiday accommodation. The building has been designed to operate as both a six-bed/12 person unit, and as two separate units for 8 people (4 beds) and 4 people (2 beds), which would provide greater flexibility. An internal lockable door would allow the unit to be split into two separate units if required. The 4-bed unit would have 56sqm of communal accommodation (sitting room, kitchen and dining area), whilst the 2-bed unit would have 26sqm. For the 6-bed unit, this amounts to 82sqm. Overall, the two units would have 118sqm and 54sqm of floorspace respectively, with 172sqm available to the 12-person unit. Details of the management of the property, including membership and details of an appropriate quality standard (eg VisitEngland) can be secured by condition.
- 5.9 A 1.4m stone boundary wall is proposed to provide courtyard areas for the divided units (with both spaces available to the six-bed unit), which would enhance the setting of the building, whilst respecting the rural character. 3 parking spaces are proposed, to the side of the building, which would not be visible from the public realm. As such, criterion v would be met.

- 5.10 The final criterion relates to the living conditions of adjoining occupiers and the operation of working farms. With regards to the former, the approved new dwelling would lie 9 metres to the south of the proposed accommodation, and separated by a 2-metre high boundary wall. No windows have been proposed to the north elevation of the approved dwelling, and therefore no overlooking issues would arise. Both the new dwelling and the holiday accommodation would share an access, between the two buildings, leading through to the approved double garage for the new dwelling. Whilst the permission has not yet been commenced, it is anticipated that the existing structures will be demolished in the Autumn of this year, ahead of building works commencing.
- 5.11 The lawful use of the wider site, as identified earlier in this report, includes agriculture within the mix of uses, and there are agricultural barns to the north and west of the existing building. The holiday accommodation would be advertised as within a working farm, which would form part of its appeal, and would not impact on the functioning of the agricultural parts of the lawful mix of uses.
- 5.12 The site is therefore suitable for holiday accommodation, provided the proposal is considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt. This is addressed in the next section.

Would the proposal be appropriate development be Green Belt?

- 5.13 The application site comprises a building of permanent and substantial construction, and previously developed land (as confirmed at recent appeals), within the Green Belt.
- 5.14 National and local planning policy seeks to protect Green Belt land. Policy DM12, in line with paragraph 146(d) of the NPPF, supports the re-use of buildings of permanent and substantial construction. Paragraph 145(g) of the NPPF further states that the redevelopment of previously developed land is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, providing it has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. This approach is similarly supported by DM12.

- 5.15 Given that the proposal has been shown to comply with policy DM57, and would see the re-use of a building of permanent and substantial construction, the change of use to holiday accommodation would constitute not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Other than the cladding of the building and new roofing material, no structural alterations are required. In the alternative, the proposal would constitute the redevelopment of previously developed land, with only a small increase in footprint proposed. As such, the development is deemed to be appropriate within the Green Belt.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Is the proposed development acceptable in highway safety and parking terms?

- 5.16 Policy DM28 states that car parking provision should meet the Council's standards for the parking of motor vehicles and bicycles, and that development will not be permitted if car parking arrangements would unacceptably harm the character of the area or the safe and effective operation of the local transport network. The Parking Standards SPD provides the current parking standards.
- 5.17 The SPD specifies a minimum effective dimension for a parking bay of 2.4 metres x 4.8 metres. There are no parking standards for tourist accommodation, however, Appendix A specifies three spaces for dwellings with four or more bedrooms.
- 5.18 Parking is provided in the form of three off-street parking spaces to the side of the building, which would be in compliance with the requirements for a 4-bed C3 dwelling. When the building operates as two units, two would be allocated to the 4-bed unit, and one space to the 2-bed unit. Given that as smaller units, they would likely be occupied by single family units, this is considered to be sufficient provision.
- 5.19 The scheme would utilise the existing access on to Clevedon Road, from which is there adequate visibility for this 30mph stretch of road, whilst the additional trips generated (4-10 per day when occupied) by the units would have a minimal impact on the highway network.
- 5.20 Consequently, the proposal is acceptable in highway safety and parking terms.

Does the proposal address matters of energy efficiency and renewable energy provision?

- 5.21 Core Strategy policy CS1 seeks to reduce carbon emissions in development by reducing energy demand, generating renewable energy where feasible, encouraging adherence to standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes, maximising opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport to facilitate a shift towards more sustainable transport modes, re-using previously developed land, and encouraging sustainable resource use.
- 5.22 Core Strategy policy CS2 requires that designs should be energy efficient and that minor residential schemes should provide a minimum of 10% of their energy requirements through the use of on-site renewable energy generation.
- 5.23 Policy DM2 links to and supports policies CS1 and CS2 but adds criteria for consideration including the impact of renewable energy generation proposals on designated heritage assets, including Conservation Areas.
- 5.24 The application is accompanied by a Sustainability Statement which concludes that a fabric-first approach, together with the installation of pv panels, will result in a minimum of 10% of the overall energy demand can be met through renewable energy sources and that the overall sites CO₂ emissions can be appropriately reduced through renewable energy sources.
- 5.25 Given the backland location of the development and relatively low roof heights, pv panels are suitable for this location, and would not result in a harmful impact on the adjacent conservation area.
- 5.26 The above analysis demonstrates that the development will achieve a good standard of energy efficiency. It will therefore meet the requirements and aims of policies CS1 and CS2 of the Core Strategy, and policy DM2 of the Site Management Policies Plan.

Would the proposal preserve or enhance the adjacent Conservation Area?

- 5.27 Core Strategy policy CS5 states that the historic environment of North Somerset will be conserved, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as Conservation Areas.
- 5.28 Core Strategy policy CS12 seeks to achieve high quality architecture and urban design that has clearly considered the existing context and, where appropriate, seeks to enhance it.
- 5.29 Policy DM3 states that development within or affecting a Conservation Area will be permitted provided that it preserves or enhances its character, appearance, features of special interest, and any other elements that make a positive contribution to its quality. Buildings that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area will be protected from demolition unless it can be demonstrated that there is no viable alternative use. In determining applications, the Council will consider matters such as bulk, height, materials, colour, vertical or horizontal emphasis and design.
- 5.30 The site would not be visible from the public views within the Conservation Area, and there are no public views of the Conservation Area from the north (from public rights of way for example) that the proposed accommodation would impact upon, particularly given the surrounding structures, and the new dwelling approved between the conservation area boundary and the application site. In this instance, paragraph 201 of the NPPF is of relevance, and the part of the conservation area adjacent to the wider site is not considered to make a contribution to its significance.

Does the site have ecological value?

- 5.31 The site falls within consultation zone B within the North Somerset and Mendips SAC Guidance SPD. It should be noted however that the building is less than 30 years old, does not have any exposed brick or stone, or wood-framed roofs, and the roof void is exposed. Under the current validation criteria, a Bat Survey is not required. The site was surveyed for the presence of and potential for protected species in April 2019, and it was concluded that there was no potential for bats.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 DM57 is supportive of tourist accommodation in appropriate locations, to aid farm diversification, subject to six criteria.
- 6.2 As detailed in this statement, the proposal would comply with the criteria, whilst the re-use of an existing building would constitute sustainable development. Economic benefits would ensue from the provision of tourist accommodation in a part of the district not currently well-served by such facilities. Social benefits would ensue from the provision of tourist accommodation in a location well-served by footpaths and cycle routes, and within the countryside.
- 6.3 The proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of the re-use of previously developed land, and the re-use of permanent buildings, which would not result in material harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- 6.4 For these reasons, it is hoped that the Council can therefore support the proposed development.