



R and D Cleevely  
c/o Giles Quarme Architects  
7 Bishops Terrace  
London SE11 4UE

Date: 20th May 2021

Our Ref: PREAPP/21/00166

Your Ref:

By email: Giulia@quarme.com

Dear R and D Cleevely

## **TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**PLANNING REFERENCE:** PREAPP/21/00166

**PROPOSAL:** Proposed repair, restoration, alterations of existing barns to provide recreational facilities.

**LOCATION:** Aston Hall, Aston Munslow, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9ER.

### **Advice Summary**

A planning application based on the submission is likely to be supported in principle though significant amendments are required.

**Attachments**- consultation responses which I trust are self-explanatory, and should be read in conjunction with this letter:

Conservation  
Archaeology  
Highways  
Ecology  
Drainage/SUDS

### **Policies**

The following planning guidelines and policies apply:  
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
Adopted Core Strategy CS5, CS6, CS17  
Adopted SAMDev Plan MD2, MD12, MD13.  
SPD Type and Affordability of Housing (Housing SPD)

## **Site Description**

The application relates to a group of traditional and extensive barns associated with Aston Hall which is a Grade 2\* listed dwelling just outside the village of Aston Munslow.

The Hall has its own access direct from the main road connecting Much Wenlock to Craven Arms (B4368). The access road is an attractive (if narrow) @270m avenue through grazed pasture lands lined with trees. The avenue rises to the main frontage of the Hall which has extensive views across the Corvedale area.

The traditional barns for conversion are set out in three sides of a square, immediately behind the Hall. The barns are considered curtilage listed and are of considerable historic interest and character as most of the original fabric seems to remain relatively intact. The barns would formerly have been accessed by an alternative route (presumably for farm traffic) through Aston Munslow village, though due to fragmentation of the estate, this is no longer possible. The applicant's property is now limited to the Hall, converted coach house, and extensive unused buildings in its immediate curtilage, along with managed walled gardens, redundant tennis court, and limited pasture land either side of the avenue.

## **Proposal**

Thank you for the opportunity to visit Aston Hall with the Conservation Officer. I refer to the layout of the proposed conversion as set out in Section 10.2 of the Brochure submission. Broadly, the development proposed consists of:

- Convert the barns for leisure and small office uses, ancillary to the main dwelling. The conversion is to include swimming pool, sauna, office/meeting room, games/music room, gym, bike storage, toilets, showers and storage facilities for family use.
- New conservatory as an extension to the SW corner of the barns
- Renewable energy facility to include photovoltaic cells on the roof the barns, ground sourced heat pump buried in grazing pasture, solar array, with associated plant rooms and energy storage facility
- Additional tree planting and landscaping
- New, alternative access route around the side of Aston Hall, to dedicated parking area, in order to divert majority of vehicle traffic away from main frontage.

It is clear from the submission that a considerable amount of preparatory work has already been done in terms of design and supporting assessments.

## **Assessment**

Broadly, the concept of conversion of the historic buildings is supported for domestic ancillary leisure uses, as is sourcing energy from renewable or more sustainable sources. As discussed during the site meeting, renewable energy infrastructure will not always be compatible with historic buildings in terms of fabric, character and their setting. There will need to be careful attention to any conflict in any future planning application. The overarching aim should be to retain the historic fabric and character as far as possible, and also to maintain the traditional agricultural appearance of the buildings.

Taking each of the above components in turn, I comment as follows:

### **Barns conversion**

The Conservation Officer supports the principle of conversion and I would also concur

with her assessment in terms of details. There is no objection to the installation of an internal pool, and physical intervention may be extensive in any event due to the need to remedy structural issues. I am unclear how the “corner tower” platform above the pool, facing the yard would be designed, constructed and supported but this is an area that raises significant concern, for reasons of appearing dominant and incongruous in the agricultural setting. Similarly, the glazed colonnade has the potential to detract from the simple and functional elevations of the buildings facing into the yard, though I accept they may deliver some structural support for the main building. There is no objection to the use of the yard area for domestic space. However domestic structures and additional clutter should be kept to a minimum in order to maintain the open functional aspect of the yard.

### **Conservatory**

I would concur with the Conservation Officer’s comments

### **Renewable energy**

Where photovoltaic cells are to be installed on the roof, they should be limited to the rear roof pitch and a consistent roofing material should be used throughout, rather than slate on the rear and tiles on the front. There is no objection to the GSHP installation though associated infrastructure should as far as possible, make use of existing space within buildings, rather new outside buildings. The proposed solar array should form part of a detailed Historic Impact Assessment (HIA). Where new structures are necessary, they should be discreetly positioned and/or appropriately screened by landscaping.

### **Tree Planting and Landscaping**

Additional tree planting as illustrated on the submission is supported.

### **Alternative Access Route**

The alternative route leading off the access avenue would be a significant operation involving substantial ground works, re-modelling of existing boundary walls, and likely the loss or harm to significant trees/hedges. At the very least this part of the proposal should be assessed in an HIA and supported by an arboricultural assessment. Notwithstanding, I have significant concerns that these works may lead to unacceptable harm to the curtilage fabric of the listed building, and harm to its character and setting, to which existing trees contribute. In any event, the parking space as illustrated appears only large enough for a few cars, which during transit are unlikely to disrupt the amenity of occupiers of the Hall. Essentially the additional harm appears disproportionately large to the level of amenity gain, taking account all works are limited to ancillary domestic purposes.

### **Other observations**

The existing east elevation gable facing the drive is noted to be stone walled, with a simple opening, albeit currently timber slatted. The proposal is to install a bay window for 1<sup>st</sup> floor office space. This addition would cause significant harm to this very prominent traditional elevation and should therefore be strictly avoided, in favour of traditionally framed glass, if a window opening is desired.

At least three sets of electric gates are proposed on the indicative plan. The design of these, and any associated pillars/boundary walls will be critical to ensure harmony with the traditional character of the site. Although security may be essential, care should be taken that these, and any other security measures do not excessively modernise key access points. This observation applies equally to the B4368 junction.

If it is your intention to proceed, validation requirements can be found using the following link:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning/applications/>

Guidance on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) requirements can be found using the following link:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/>

Finally, the following standard advice applies:

I trust the above is helpful, but please note that it is an informal opinion based on the information you have provided at this stage. Any planning application submitted will be determined taking into account the details contained in the application; the policy of the Development Plan; Government planning policy; the outcome of any consultation with statutory or other consultees; any representations received and any other material consideration. Any expenditure incurred in preparing plans or making the application must be entirely at their own risk.

If you require any clarification of the above by all means let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Whitley

Technical Specialist Planning Officer

01743 251696

Southern Team

Shropshire Council, [planning.southern@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning.southern@shropshire.gov.uk) - 01743 258920