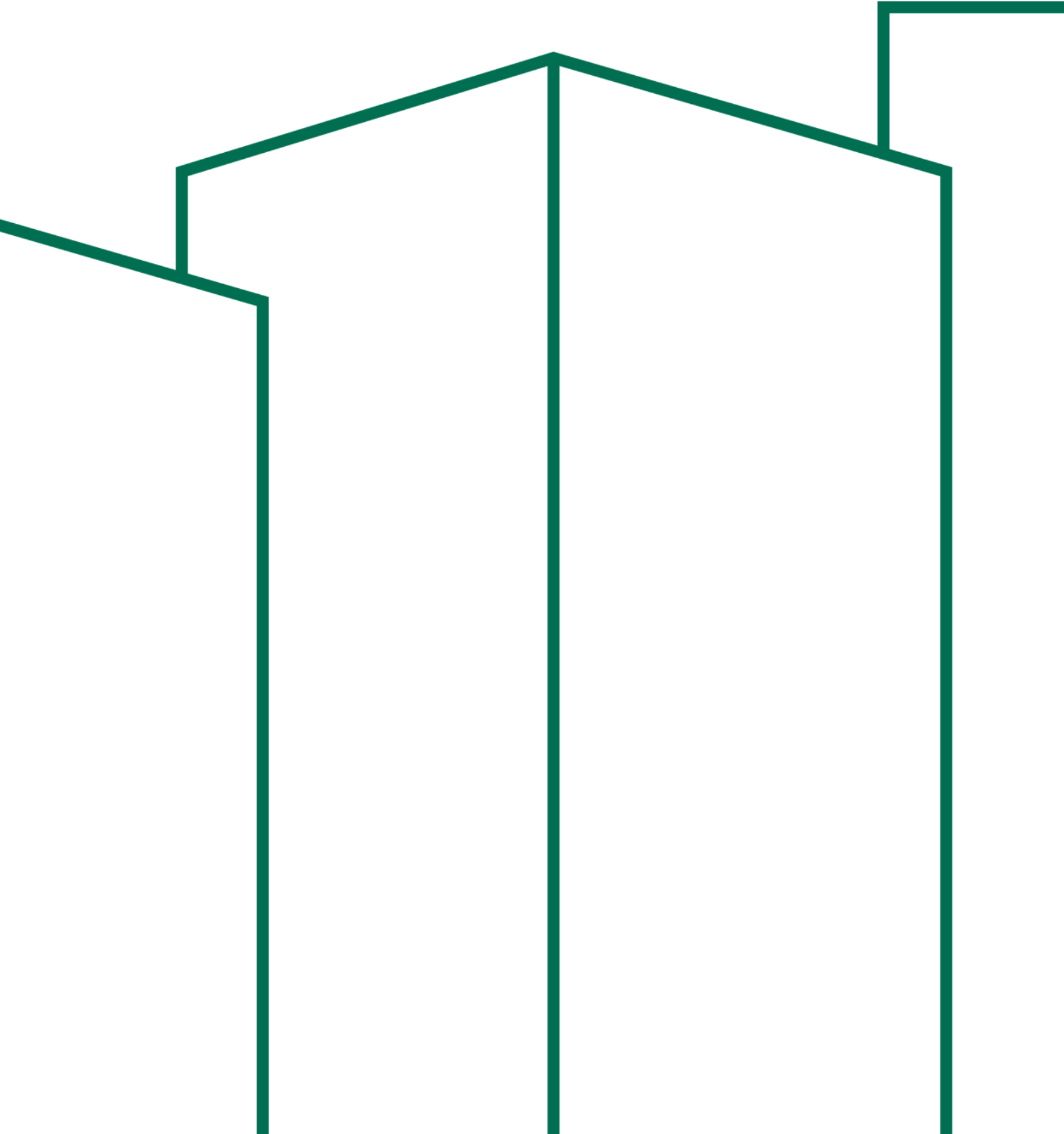


PLANNING STATEMENT

Oak Farm, Drayton Lane, Drayton Bassett,
Tamworth, Staffordshire B78 3EF



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application submitted to Lichfield District Council. The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of a polytunnel used for storage of equipment associated with the children's day nursery and the change of use and extension of the existing portal framed agricultural building to create 2no. 4-bed dwellings and detached garage.

The Application Site and its Surroundings

1.2 The application building is located at Oak Farm, north of Drayton Lane. The image below shows the application building, edged red, that is proposed to be extended and converted. Immediately to the north is the polytunnel which is proposed to be demolished.



- 1.3 The buildings are located north of an existing dwelling (Oak Farm Barn) and west of a children's day nursery which has been created by earlier conversions of former agricultural buildings of traditional design and form. To the west of the application building is an open paddock which is enclosed on all sides by mature hedgerow.
- 1.4 Access to the site is by way of an existing farm track which accesses Drayton Lane to the west of Oak Farm Barn, travels north and then sweeps eastward into the site.
- 1.5 The main barn to be converted is of blockwork construction with a higher level profile metal cladding. The images below show the plain west facing elevation (top image) and the east facing elevation looking towards the day nursery.



1.6 The application site is located within the Green Belt.

Proposed Development

1.7 Planning permission is sought for the change of use, and extension of an existing agricultural building to create 2no. 4-bed dwellings. The proposed conversion includes a modest single storey extension to either side elevation (north and south) and a two storey extension to the front (west).

1.8 The existing portal framed building will be demolished and replaced by a detached garage which will serve both barn conversions.

1.9 Vehicular access will be from the existing access to the west. The driveway will continue northwards and then turn eastwards to access the northern barn conversion. The southern barn conversion will be served via the existing driveway which runs immediately rear (north) of Oak Farm Barn.

1.10 The domestic curtilage for both dwellings will be situated to the west of the barns, subdivided by post and rail fencing with new hedgerow planting.

1.11 The existing barn will be over-clad with new cladding. Openings will be created in the west and east elevation; set between the existing portal framed structure.

Planning History

1.12 19/00924/PND - Prior Notification: Change of use of agricultural barn to form 2 no 3/4 bedroom dwellings and associated works. Withdrawn 20 August 2019

1.13 20/00369/FUL - Installation of access track to serve agricultural barn via existing field gate. Approved 30 June 2020

2.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)

- 2.1 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Three "overarching objectives" to achieving sustainable development in a planning context are set out in paragraph 8; economic, social and environmental.
- 2.2 At the heart of the Framework is a "presumption in favour of sustainable development".
- 2.3 Paragraph 60 sets out that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.
- 2.4 Paragraph 105 states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth but notes that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and that this should be taken into account in decision-making.
- 2.5 Section 11 refers to making effective use of land. Paragraph 119 requires decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment.
- 2.6 Section 12 sets out the Government's policies to achieve well-designed places. The section opens at paragraph 126 by stating that, "The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and

development process should achieve." Paragraph 130 sets out a series of objectives which development should achieve to ensure well-designed places.

2.7 Paragraph 137 sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It states that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

2.8 There are five purposes of Green Belt and these are set out in paragraph 138 of the Framework. Once Green Belts are established, paragraph 145 states that LPAs should plan to *inter alia* retain and enhance visual amenity.

2.9 Paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist "unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations".

2.10 Paragraph 150 sets out that the re-use of buildings is not inappropriate development provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

2.11 Paragraph 149(g) states that the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land is also appropriate provided it does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

2.12 Paragraph 149(c) states that the extension or alteration of a building is appropriate provided it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

The Development Plan

2.13 The Development Plan includes the Lichfield Local Plan Strategy (adopted in February 2015) and the Local Plan Allocations Document (LPAD) (adopted July 2019). There are no policies of the LPAD that are considered relevant to the determination of this planning application.

2.14 The following policies of the Local Plan Strategy (LPS) are considered relevant to the determination of this planning application and will be discussed in greater depth, where relevant, in the following sections of this Statement:-

- Core Policy 6 – Housing Delivery
- Policy NR2 – Development in Green Belt
- Policy NR3 - Biodiversity, Protected Species and their Habitats
- Policy BE1 – High Quality Development
- Core Policy 14 – Our Built and Historic Environment

2.15 The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) titled, 'Rural Development' was adopted in December 2015 and sets out the Local Planning Authority's approach to the re-use of rural buildings within Appendix B.

2.16 Paragraph 2.2 states that building isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances, for example, where the

development would re-use a redundant or disused building and lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting.

2.17 The LPA's Sustainable Design SPD sets out, amongst other things, the Council's guidance on separation standards, garden sizes and parking requirements.

3.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Planning applications are determined in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that they are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework is a material consideration of substantial weight.

Principle of Development

3.2 The application proposals raise the following issues:-

- i) Principle of Development, including the effect of the development upon the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it; and
- ii) Other material considerations, including ecology, trees and highways.

Issue 1: Principle of development & Green Belt

3.3 The application site is located within the Green Belt where inappropriate development will not be approved unless very special circumstances have been demonstrated. Paragraph 150(d) of the Framework sets out that the re-use of buildings is appropriate development within the Green Belt provided the building(s) is of permanent and substantial construction and its reuse would preserve openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. This is reflected in Policy NR2 of the LPS.

3.4 The proposed development involves the re-use of the existing building to create 2no. dwellings. The building is evidently of permanent and substantial construction, capable of conversion without significant structural alteration or

repair. The building is constructed in block work with a higher-level profile metal cladding and is thus permanent and substantial. Its structural condition, both existing and insofar as the ability for it to be converted and extended, is discussed in the submitted Structural Report. It is the view of the qualified engineer that the building is in good structural order and can be converted in the manner set out in the application drawings without cause for re-building.

- 3.5 In respect of the proposed extension, paragraph 149(c) of the Framework sets out that the “extension and alteration of a building” is not inappropriate within Green Belt, “provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building”.
- 3.6 The single storey extensions on the north and south side elevations are low level and have been designed to appear as modest, subservient additions to the barn. They retain the balance and symmetry and are proportionate the original building.
- 3.7 The two storey extension to the west facing elevation over looks the garden. This extension projects out from the barn a modest distance to better articulate, or break up, the massing of the original barn.
- 3.8 The existing barn has a footprint of some 359sqm and volume of 1771 cubic metres. Following its extension, the barn will have a footprint of some 472sqm and a volume of some 2250 cubic metres. This represents a 31% increase to the footprint and a 27% increase in volume, over and above the original building. It is evident, therefore, that in visual and spatial terms, the proposed extensions do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

- 3.9 Paragraph 149(g) also sets out that the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land is appropriate development provided it does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.
- 3.10 The definition of previously developed land is set out in Annex 2 of the Framework as being “**land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure...**”. It excludes land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings.
- 3.11 The polytunnel structure has been last used for storage, mainly associated with the day nursery (play equipment, spare desks, tables etc.) and additional stores for the family.
- 3.12 Having regard to the definition of previously developed land within the Framework, it is submitted that the polytunnel represents previously developed land.
- 3.13 The polytunnel will be replaced by a low level garage which is no greater in footprint to the polytunnel. The garage is light weight and open to reflect the form of the existing polytunnel. Although the garage is in a slightly different location, the visual impact of the garage on the openness of the Green Belt will be no greater; contained by the existing boundary hedgerows and having a minimal visual impact on account of its low height, flat roof design and subdued building materials.

- 3.14 The footprint of the existing structure is 125sqm and the volume is 456 cubic metres. In comparison, the proposed garage has a footprint of 85sqm and a volume of 275 cubic metres. This represents a 32% reduction in footprint and a 40% reduction in volume.
- 3.15 The garage will provide external storage for mowers, gardening equipment and vehicles which would otherwise be stored in the open or require additional buildings within the garden. This enhances the design of the proposed development and has further benefits on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.16 The extension of the existing driveway to the north, and then to the east as it heads to the barn, represents an engineering operation which is considered to adhere to paragraph 150(b) of the Framework. The materials will match those of the existing driveway which itself does not have a strong visual impact on openness.
- 3.17 The gardens for each of the properties will be formed by the enclosed area of land to the west of the existing barn. This is enclosed by high mature hedgerows which form a natural space to accommodate the private domestic curtilage. Given the visual containment of this space, it is considered that the location and size of the gardens will not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.18 In terms of the location of the building, Core Policy 6 of the LPS, sets out that **“changes of use and conversion schemes”** will be permitted in the **“remaining rural areas”** i.e. outside Lichfield, Burntwood or the Key Rural Settlements.

3.19 In light of the above, the proposed development is considered to represent appropriate development in the Green Belt as a matter of principle. It is also consistent with Core Policy 6 of the LPS. The principle of development is thus considered acceptable.

Green Belt Purposes

3.20 With regard to the purposes of including land in Green Belt, the proposed development would not result in encroachment into the surrounding countryside or result in urban sprawl. The proposed gardens are proportionate to the size of the building and contained by proposed hedgerow.

3.21 The proposed development would not result in neighbouring towns and villages merging into one and other or make this more likely. There are no Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas close to the application site; the proposed development will not therefore affect the preservation of the setting or the special character of a historic town.

3.22 It is thus submitted that the proposed development would not harm the openness of the Green Belt or conflict with any of the purposes of the Green Belt listed in paragraph 138 of the Framework. The proposals would not therefore represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Issue 2: Other Material Considerations

Ecology/Protected Species

- 3.23 The application is accompanied by a Bat and Bird Survey, prepared by Tamworth Property Services. The report concludes that there is no evidence of bats or birds using the application buildings as a place of shelter.

Highways

- 3.24 The proposed residential use of the barn will utilise the existing vehicular access on to Drayton Lane; a lightly trafficked rural lane of good width. The access is lawful and the uplift in traffic using the access will be modest when compared to its previous use. The change or impact on the local highway network is therefore considered limited and, in any event safe given that suitable visibility splays can be achieved in either direction.

Design

- 3.25 Successfully converting portal framed buildings such as this to residential properties can be a challenge, particularly in respect of reducing the bulk and mass to a domestic scale. The proposed extensions have created opportunities to break the mass of the existing building without losing its overall shape or simple form. The west elevation provides interest and relief with the two single storey side extensions providing shape and contrast at the lower level. Window openings are formed between the portal frame and again liven the building's elevation. Materials are suggested to be a mix of cladding and render; both of which can be affixed either over the existing block work or on the existing cladding rails at the higher level. The design is an interesting and modern approach which successfully converts a large mass in to 2no. dwellings with domestic character.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The proposed development involves the re-use of a building in the Green Belt. It is evident from viewing the building that it is of permanent and substantial construction.
- 4.2 The proposed extensions do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building and thus represents an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt.
- 4.3 The extension of the driveway is an engineering operation which has limited visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in it.
- 4.4 The replacement of the polytunnel for a low level, light weight garage represents the re-development of the previously developed part of the site and allows for a containment of domestic paraphernalia in a discrete part of the site.
- 4.5 Though sited outside the settlement boundary, the proposal is a conversion scheme with a modest extension that accords with the design objectives of the Rural Development SPD. The proposal is thus consistent with Core Policy 6 of the LPS and the Rural Development SPD.
- 4.6 The development does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

- 4.7 The proposed development utilises an existing vehicular access and the change in traffic from the site is considered to be modest. Visibility splays can be achieved in either direction.
- 4.8 The proposed design is high quality and will result in a significant enhancement to the immediate setting.
- 4.9 The proposed development is considered to represent appropriate development in the Green Belt and is consistent with Core Policy 6. No technical issues, including highways, ecology and design have been identified that represent 'other harm'. The proposals are therefore in accordance with the Development Plan and planning permission should be granted without delay.

WAB/JAG/5751

26 November 2021

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PLANNING STATEMENT

Oak Farm
Drayton Lane
Drayton Bassett
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Our Reference: WAB/JAG/5751

Date: 26 November 2021

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