
Planning Statement

Conversion of
traditional rural
building to holiday
accommodation and
all associated works
at:

Mount Pleasant
Farm
Hopton
Nescliffe
Shrewsbury
SY4 1DJ

Prepared for:
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The logo for Roger Parry & Partners is located in the bottom left corner. It consists of a dark blue square with a white border. Inside the square, the text "Roger Parry" is written in a large, bold, yellow sans-serif font, and "& Partners" is written in a smaller, white sans-serif font below it. A yellow diagonal shape is visible at the bottom right corner of the square.

Roger
Parry
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This supporting statement considers the planning issues relating to the application proposals to convert a traditional rural building at Mount Pleasant Farm, Nescliffe into detached holiday accommodation, and forms part of the application. The information included within this statement is intended to assist the Planning Officer in making their decision.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The building in question is a traditional rural building which is redundant from modern agriculture. The building is not viable for agriculture due to modern technological advances and machinery sizes. The building is accessible from a private access.

3.0 THE PLANNING APPLICATION PROPOSAL

The full planning application is submitted in respect of conversion of a traditional building into holiday let accommodation.

Full drawings are submitted in support of the application:

The planning application comprises of conversion of a traditional farm building into holiday accommodation.

3.1 Overview of the Scheme

It is anticipated that the conversion will have very little impact on the surroundings whilst preserving the traditional building.

The following sections cover the relevant issues surrounding the re-development of the site.

3.2 Sustainable Development – Location

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies sustainability as a core element of policy noting at paragraph 2.7:

“The objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

The proposed development assists in sustainable development because it involves a sympathetic conversion of a redundant traditional building whilst supporting sustainable development. The proposal also prevents the neglect of the building and ensures that the traditional structure remains part of the rural countryside.

Mount Pleasant Farm located just north of Nescliffe in Hopton, has excellent network links to Shrewsbury and Oswestry being sited just off the A5. The proposed development has good public transport connections, with a bus stop in Nescliffe travelling to Shrewsbury and Oswestry which have connections to Telford, Newport and Wellington. As well as bus routes, train stations close to the proposed development are Gobowen and Shrewsbury, all having connections on to direct lines. This correlating with planning policy CS7 focusing on communications and transport allowing for jobs to be created, meaning therefore businesses can remain open, contributing to sustainable development.

3.3 Sustainable Development

The proposed conversion will be insulated (roof, walls and floors) according to the most recent building regulation standards in order to reduce heat loss in winter and excess solar gains in summer. Glazing will be sealed double glazing and ‘low E glazing’ to reduce heat loss. Wherever possible materials will be sourced and produced locally and will come from a source that can be renewed without harm to the environment. High quality reclaimed materials can save resources and may also provide a better match with the surrounding development.

The development of the building will contribute to the aim of sustainability through the productive use of this vacant building.

The above points will ensure that the property is ‘sustainable’ in terms of its building design and the supply and use of energy in accordance with the Council’s policies, according to policy MD2 part of the SAMDev agreement of sustainable development.

The widening of the county’s tourist offering for the benefits of residents and non-residents of the county alike and the formation of a revenue generating rural enterprise weigh in favour of the development meeting the economic and social criteria of sustainable development. The holiday let would not represent isolated development while there is a network of public rights of way that could be easily accessed on foot from the site and heading in all directions.

3.4 Design of the Development

Good design and layout from new developments can help to achieve the objectives of making the best use of previously undeveloped buildings and improving the quality and attractiveness of the rural countryside. Good design, local distinctiveness and the integration of the development into the existing built environment will ensure that there will be a positive impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.

The design proposal can be seen on the drawings accompanying the application. It has been designed sympathetically to retain the character of the building.

3.5 Use

It is proposed to convert the building into a two-bedroom open plan holiday accommodation with a private access, patio and parking area.

3.6 Amount

The proposal would result in a single holiday let unit.

3.7 Layout

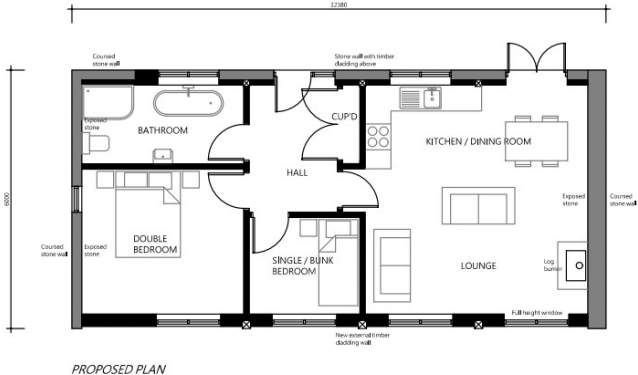
The site layout has been designed to provide a single holiday let unit whilst keeping the external design as unchanged as possible to retain the agricultural feel. The overall layout will remain unchanged.

The layout can be seen on the proposed Elevations and Floor Plan and provides a viable way of utilising the space.

3.8 Scale

The overall size and scale of the proposed conversion will not increase, the footprint will not change internally, as the design maximises the floor area of the traditional building.

The overall height, scale and size of the conversion will be the same size as the existing farm building.



3.9 External Appearance

Please see the elevation drawings submitted for more information.

The appearance of the proposed conversion has been designed to respect and reflect traditional appearance of the existing rural building, retaining its original character and style. The windows and doors are obsolete and will be replaced with newer versions of the same style utilising some of the existing openings.

The building is in red coursed stone and timber cladding, and when converted will keep the original materials, with the new wall being timber clad in keeping with the current look.



The appearance of the barns is to be maintained within the new design, the roof will keep its current grey slates.



PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION

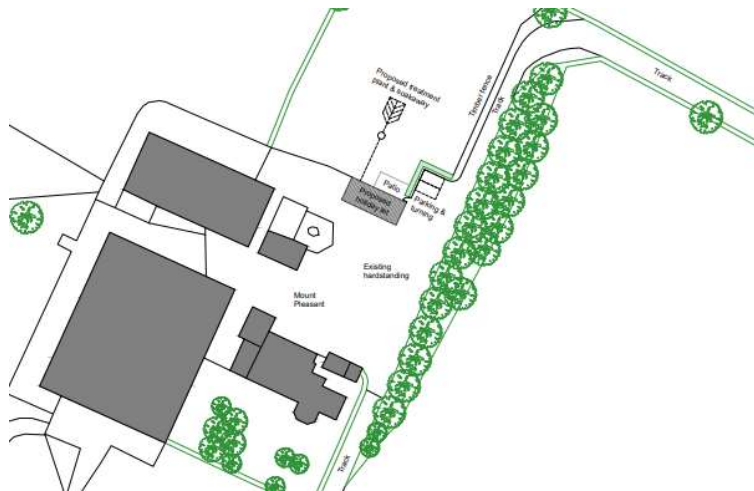
The proposal would see the existing footprint, scale and height of the building retained. The proposed works would not result in the building becoming unduly prominent within the wider countryside, from the public highway or in relation to the setting of the residential farmhouse. The proposed use of natural materials would be in-keeping with the rural vernacular of the historic character of the original elements of the building and the farmhouse. The works would have little change the general appearance of the building, openings have been altered to ensure the holiday accommodation can maximise the existing space.

3.10 Siting

The site sits to the north of Mount Pleasant Farm where it shares the private access. The site is within a landscape which is typical of the area, agricultural land surrounds the site.

The building proposed for conversion is situated near Hopton village and accessed via a private access. The barn is situated within the same yard as Mount Pleasant Farm house and buildings.

Parking spaces and turning area have been allocated as showing the proposed site plan.



3.11 Amenity and Landscaping

Amenity areas will surround the barn, this will include private patio area along with private parking.

3.12 Highways Access

The access will be off an existing private track accessed off a wide country lane located near the village of Hopton. The access is deemed to comply with Highway regulations. We believe that the development would not result in comprising highway safety.

3.13 Drainage

The proposed converted building will be connected to the proposed treatment plant and soakaway situated to the north of the building.

3.14 Ecology

Arbor Vitae Environment Ltd were commissioned by Roger Parry and Partners to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal in order to assess the impact of the development at Mount Pleasant Farm on habitats and protected species to provide supporting information for a planning application for the conversion of the barn. The survey has is designed to identify and record habitats and important ecological features on site and any impact the development may have on these.

The site was not shown to support any active roosting bats or nesting birds. One pond mapped within 250m of the site was found to be dry and vegetated with no open water at the time of the survey so is highly unlikely that any great crested newts are present locally, with no records of any within 1km of the site.

The development can proceed without the loss of habitat of significant value, and without the loss of the favourable conservation status of any protected species. Although there are no active breeding birds, the barn has the potential of this with the open side being easily accessible. Precautionary measures will be adopted, to include: sealing the building to prevent birds from gaining access to the barn and a pre-commencement check before work begins. As there is no evidence of protected species within and around the development site, there is no requirement to address the three tests under Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

The avoidance, mitigation and enhancement recommendations are included in the report. Other than those listed above, there are no ecological constraints to the development as currently proposed.

3.15 Structural Survey

A structural survey was completed as part of this application, the survey concluded the barn is structurally sound and capable of conversion.

The barn is in good structural condition and free from any significant damage, beyond some localised distortion. The original features remain largely in-tact and can be mostly retained during conversion.

3.16 Heritage

The Scheme addresses the tenets of the NPPF and the Shropshire Core Strategy by presenting a sensitively designed holiday accommodation conversion scheme compatible with the location, retaining the especial natural and built heritage characteristics of the site and the former farm buildings. It is very much a sustainable development reusing a historic building complex with a noteworthy contribution to the understanding of agricultural history. It involves minimal alteration to established character and thus is a very subtle approach to updating a grouping of heritage assets to secure their long-term maintenance and survival.

There are no buildings or houses at Mount Pleasant Farm which are listed.

3.17 Physical Context of the Development

The proposed site for the holiday let unit is on land at Mount Pleasant Farm, Nescliffe.

The building is to be converted because there is currently no use for the agricultural building as it is inaccessible for modern machinery. The site is owned by the applicants.

The character will be derived from the existing site features and will remain intact as much as possible.

The barn is suitable for conversion and is no longer suitable or required for its original use. However, the agricultural merit of the buildings can be retained via conversion. The barn offers significant historical merit in the context of the local area and forms an important part of the local industry and landscape. Conversion will inevitably require alterations to form a complete envelope to the structures with some alterations to existing opens but most remaining the same, however the existing shape and aesthetic form can be respected and maintained.

3.18 Social Context of the Development

The conversion of this building will not result in the addition of any further agricultural buildings because it has already been redundant from modern agriculture for a number of years. Providing an alternative use in the form of additional accommodation will help to preserve and enhance the future of the existing building.

People in the locality will not be affected by the development. There will be very little change to the external appearance of the barns.

3.19 Economic Context of the Development

The economic contribution that the development will have on the local economy will be by providing employment to local building companies within the area, to assist in the conversion of the building.

3.20 Local Area

The proposed development in Nescliffe is an ideal location for tourists wanting a peaceful country escape but also still having easy access to local attractions and bustling towns. It sits only 20 minutes from Shrewsbury which is the country town of Shropshire and its largest town, where tourism is an essential economic component with many local businesses relying on it to produce growing demand for their products and services. It is full of activities and events for all ages, many of which are provided by small independent companies where custom fluctuates seasonally through the year. The proposed development is the perfect example of what travellers would be attracted to book during the quieter months of the year for shorter breaks. This would provide more consistent business and income to those companies that would otherwise suffer financially if they relied solely on trade from residents of the area.

In Nescliffe itself and on the doorstep of the site is the very scenic woodland country park and Kynaston Cave, the perfect place to explore or for a quick evening walk without having to go too far from base. The Old Three Pigeons pub in the village provides a range of food and drink only minutes away, with other options slightly further away being The Talbot Inn, Ruyton-XI-Towns or The New Inn, Baschurch. A bus stop in Nescliffe gives a convenient transport option to either Oswestry or Shrewsbury and is in a walkable distance of 25 minutes from Mount Pleasant Farm. From Shrewsbury there is then the opportunity to use the train to go further through Shropshire and beyond.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

“Where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

Shropshire Council Core Strategy adopted on 24th February 20211

Policy CS5- Countryside and Green Belt

“Development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefit, particularly where they relate to:

- ***Conversion of rural buildings which take account of and make a positive contribution to the character of the buildings and the countryside.*** Proposals for conversions will be considered with regard to the principles of PPS4, giving equal priority to the following uses:
 - **small scale economic development/employment generating use, including live-work proposals and tourism uses;**
 - affordable housing to meet local need (including agricultural workers dwellings);
 - other uses appropriate to a countryside location
- Open market residential conversions will only be considered where :-
 - respect for the heritage asset (as also required by Policy CS17) and high standards of sustainability are achieved;
 - a contribution to infrastructure requirements is made in accordance with Policy CS9; and,
 - except where the buildings are listed, a financial contribution for the provision of affordable housing to be delivered off site is provided in accordance with Policy CS11.
- In all cases, development proposals should be consistent with the requirements of Policies CS6 and CS17”.
- CS6: Sustainable Design and Development Principles
States the policy requires for development to protect, restore, conserve and enhance the natural, built and historic environment and be appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design, taking into account the local context and character.

Of which MD2 is supports CS6, providing further detail and information on how sustainable development is achieved, particularly focusing on Shropshire’s natural heritage assets, like the Shropshire Hills AONB. This works to recognise that each place in Shropshire has its own characteristics including visually, built and the natural environment as well as the local place functions and identity.

Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan Adopted Plan adopted on 17th December 2015

Policy MD7b- General Management of Development in the Countryside

3.64 “In order to promote a sustainable approach to development, proposals which minimise the impacts of new development, appropriately conserve the existing historic and landscape resource, and/or provide environmental amelioration are encouraged. This will include the appropriate re-use of existing suitable buildings and previously developed land”.

3.65 “Shropshire has a wealth of traditional rural buildings which can be important landscape features and form part of the heritage resource but may no longer be particularly suitable for their original purpose. Alternative uses, as identified in Policy CS5, which can help ensure that these buildings are retained, limit the visual impact of new construction and provide recycling of the building resource, are generally encouraged by the Local Plan. In order to ensure that the benefits of a conversion scheme are maintained and that future visual impacts on the building and setting are managed, this Policy allows subsequent changes to converted properties to be controlled through conditions attached to the planning permission for conversion”.

The proposal is a sympathetic conversion of an existing rural buildings and will preserve the traditional building for future use. The proposal makes best use of the existing building with minimal change to vehicular access and amenity of the public. The proposal will have no effect on nature conservation with no loss of habitats. There will be no increase in flood risk elsewhere. We feel that the proposals fully comply with policy MD7b.

Meanwhile, Core Strategy Policy CS16 supports the provision of high-quality visitor accommodation and in rural areas, it requires such proposals to be close to or within rural settlement, of an appropriate scale and character for the surroundings and where possible to promote the reuse of existing buildings. Policy CS13 seeks to support rural enterprise and diversification of the economy.

Policy MD11 of the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan clarifies that accommodation which would neither reuse appropriate existing buildings or meet the statutory definition of a caravan will be resisted, thereby reducing the potential for new-build market housing in the countryside. A structural survey has been submitted which states that the building would be capable of conversion.

Policy MD11 – Tourism Facilities and Visitor Accommodation

3.100 “Policy MD11 supports delivery of Core Strategy Policy CS16 which sets out a positive approach to tourism, leisure and recreation development that balances the benefits to the economy with the need to protect the qualities of Shropshire in line with

the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). CS16 supports sustainable proposals in appropriate locations in Shrewsbury and the market towns/key centres. Within the countryside there has to be a balance between positive benefits and potential negative impacts of tourism development which can be felt immediately adjoining the site and within the wider area from the use of the site, for example, through increased journeys to the facility. All proposals in the countryside must also meet relevant considerations within Policies CS5, CS16 and MD7b.”

As the proposal is for a conversion of an existing building with no change in size or shape of the building, it will very minimal negative impacts on the surrounding area. Although there will be a slight increase in journeys to the facility it will be outweighed by the benefit of the custom it will bring to local businesses.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING POLICY

This application site for the proposed conversion of an existing rural building, which is situated on the edge of a settlement in the countryside and forms part of Hopton where for planning purposes any development must accord with core strategy CS5 and SAMDev policies MD7b. These policies strictly control new development in rural areas seeking to ensure the countryside vitality and character is maintained and enhanced. New development is only normally permitted where it improves sustainability or rural communities by bringing economic community benefits.

Policy CS5 encourages small-scale new economic development which diversifies the rural economy and in regard to the conversion of the existing rural building, a priority is given to small economic development/ employment generating uses, including to live, work and other tourism opportunities.

Paragraph 4.71 of the explanatory text of this policies states that ‘The policy seeks to enhance the broader social and economic well-being of rural communities, facilitating development that supports appropriate land and resource-based uses and economic diversification and that provides for local needs. The text goes onto to state that whilst the policy seeks to facilitate rural development, the policies must comply with CS6 and MD2 of the SAMDev plan and such development should be in scale and character and be appropriately sited. There is significant emphasis on achieving sustainable development and proposals which result in isolated, sporadic, or otherwise unacceptable development and which erode the character of the countryside are not acceptable.

Policies CS6 and CS17 seek to ensure that development protects, restores, conserves, and enhances the natural, built and historic environment and does not adversely the heritage values and functions of these assets. MD2 further states that for development to be

considered acceptable, it is required to contribute to and respect locally distinctive or valued character and existing amenity value and this includes 'Protecting, conserving and enhancing the historic context and character of heritage assets, their significance and setting, in accordance with MD13'. MD13 states that Shropshire's heritage assets will be protected, conserved, sympathetically enhanced and restored by ensuring proposals avoid harm or loss to significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. It goes on to say that proposals which are likely to have an adverse effect on the significance of non-designated heritage assets, including their setting, will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the adverse impact.

Policy MD13 takes a similar approach as the NPPF as outlined in paragraphs 189 – 208, insofar as it requires proposals to justify any harm to a heritage asset and demonstrate the overriding public benefits which would outweigh the damage to that asset or its setting. Significance is defined in the NPPF as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF makes clear that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application and in weighing applications that affect (directly or indirectly) non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

The NPPF, published February 2019, at paragraph 81, states that planning policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan, allow for new and flexible working practices (such as live-work accommodation), and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances. With regard to the rural economy the NPPF states that planning policy and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, including through the conversion of existing buildings.

6.0 Conclusion

The proposed scheme is for full planning permission to convert a redundant traditional building to holiday let accommodation.

The design and scale of the proposed accommodation has been sympathetically designed to preserve and enhance its character & setting and reflects the scale and character of the area with traditional features of the building throughout, which complies with relevant policies of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) adopted in December 2015 and guidance notes.

The traditional red-stone building requires a viable and useful use if it is to remain in good order. The proposed development accords with the local plan and will create a development providing comfortable holiday accommodation. It is anticipated that our proposal will be found to be an acceptable form of development for the buildings, enabling it to provide a positive contribution to the local economy.

The proposed accommodation has been designed to an appropriate scale and design, which is in keeping with the overall character and appearance of the traditional building whilst also complying with all relevant SAMDev Policies.

The proposed development on this site would retain the character of the traditional building and prevent it from simply falling down in disrepair thus enhancing the surrounding landscape.

On the basis of the above, the applicant considers that this scheme would result in no demonstrable harm to any interests of acknowledged importance.

The single storey building would be at a sufficient distance from the nearest neighbouring residential properties to ensure no undue harm to their amenity.

Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The current scheme proposals have significant merit, meets the policy requirements of the SAMDev Plan and National Planning Guidance and as there does not appear to be any material consideration of sufficient weight to justify the refusal of this application.

Core Strategy Policy CS5 states that development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits, particularly where they relate to small scale development diversifying the rural economy. The policy is supportive of the conversion of rural buildings which take account of and make a positive contribution to the character of the buildings and the countryside, and which would bring about small-scale economic development/employment generating use, including tourism uses.

It has been established that the proposal would widen the county's tourist offering albeit on a small scale and would see the formation of a revenue generating rural enterprise.

Policy CS5 is supportive of the conversion of rural buildings which takes account of and make a positive contribution to the character of the buildings and the countryside, and which would bring about small-scale economic development/employment generating use, including tourism uses. It is considered that the proposal would make a positive contribution to the character of the building and the immediate site. In light of the visual improvement to the building as well as securing the ongoing use of the historic element and the enhancement of the setting of the farmhouse, there is sufficient weight in favour of allowing this small-scale tourist enterprise.

The development would support small-scale economic development and tourism and would make a distinctly positive contribution towards visual amenity and preserving and enhancing the significance of non-designated heritage assets. The development would not raise undue concerns regarding residential amenity, highways or local ecology.