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DATE: 26 February 2024

YOUR REF:

OUR REF: SZW

FAO Ms Brooke Pride
Planning Department
Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex CM15 8AY

Dear Brooke,

Land east of Courtyard Barn, Horseman Side, Navestock, Brentwood, CM14 5SS

Application for conversion of the existing outbuilding into a 3-bedroom single storey dwellinghouse; demolition of two pole barns and development to provide two further 3-bedroom single storey dwellinghouses, one with an integral garage the other two with dedicated linked carport parking; all with associated amenity space, communal space, parking and landscaping.

Further to our very helpful pre-application on-site meeting and subsequent correspondence, I am pleased to submit this planning application on behalf of my client, Mr & Mrs John Hibberd. This letter should be read in conjunction with the plans and other documentation listed in the schedule attached to this letter and submitted to the Council via the Planning Portal.

The Site

The site comprises 0.098 hectares (approx. 980 sq metres) of previously developed land used for agricultural related purposes adjacent to the Grade II listed Courtyard Barn. There are four existing buildings on the site: an outbuilding converted to ancillary residential use in 2014 pursuant to planning permission 13/00920/FUL (see below); two pole barns previously used for agricultural uses, and a further pole barn/stable block previously used for agricultural use. The existing floorspace totals 486 sq metres. Access into the site is direct from Horseman Side.

Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought to convert the existing outbuilding into a 3-bedroom single storey dwellinghouse; demolition of two pole barns and development to provide two further 3-bedroom single storey dwellinghouses, one with an integral garage the other two with dedicated linked carport parking; all with associated amenity space, communal space, parking and landscaping.

The proposed development has been carefully designed to create a quality development reflecting the rural farmstead location and respect the neighbouring listed building. Following discussions with yourself and the Historic Buildings Officer, the initial design has been further refined to reflect those comments. In particular, please note the following:

1. Barn 1 has been repositioned further away from the listed Courtyard Barn in order to enhance the setting of the listed building;
2. Barn 2 has been repositioned and redesigned to complete the courtyard and provide a focal building at the eastern end of the site;
3. Barn 1 and the northern wing of Barn 2 to have been set back to provide a slightly larger courtyard area between Barns 2 and 3 to improve privacy, living conditions and outdoor amenity space;
4. The roof heights have been varied in order to reinforce the rural farmstead feel of the buildings;

5. The car parking has been reorganised in order to provide 2 spaces per dwelling; for Barns 1 and 3, these are provided in the linked carport between Barns 1 and 2. Barn 2 now incorporates an integral garage.
6. The building materials have been carefully chosen to reflect the local rural farmstead vernacular and following the guidance set out in the Essex Design Guide. The main palette consists of: black painted timber feather-edge siding, plain clay roof tiles, red stock brick plinths, metal rainwater goods and black painted timber window frames.
7. Additional rural farmstead features such as timber shutters have been incorporated to minimise the impact of glazing;
8. Additional storage has also now been designed into the scheme.

The proposed residential units will comply with all Technical Housing Standards (minimum floorspace, bedroom sizes and daylight/sunlight requirements). Amenity space in accordance with the Council's standards is also provided together with two car parking spaces for each dwelling.

Sustainability measures will include sustainable drainage systems (water butts, rain gardens, permeable surfaces and use of sustainable materials). At least one EV point per dwelling will be provided and where possible, the dwellings will be capable of being connected to high speed broadband.

The access into the site will be from Horseman Side as existing. Parking will be in accordance with the Council's parking standards.

Further detail of the proposed design is set out in the Design and Access Statement.

Previous Permissions

Planning permission was granted on 19 March 2014 for the demolition of two pole barns and change of use of land to residential curtilage, erection of enclosed swimming pool building and conversion of former stable building to double garage and gymnasium ancillary to the dwelling of Courtyard Barn (ref:13/00920/FUL). That permission was implemented in 2014 in relation to the conversion of the former stable building. The swimming pool element of the consent has not been built. No other planning permissions have been granted.

Planning Policy

You helpfully set out the policy background in your pre-application response to us dated 31 July 2023 and we adopt it below.

The Brentwood Local Plan 2016-2033 was adopted as the Development Plan for the Borough on 23 March 2022. At the same time the Brentwood Replacement Local Plan was revoked. The new Local Plan is the starting point for determining planning applications. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023 is also a material consideration.

The application site is located on the northern side of Horseman Side, occupied by a Grade II listed converted barn, and to the east of the dwellinghouse an ancillary building to the main dwellinghouse and former storage barns all single storey and low-level buildings. The main dwellinghouse is accessed from its own access to the west of the dwelling and the low level buildings are accessed by a separate access to the east of the main dwellinghouse. The site is set within a rural location, with sporadic development along Horseman Side. The site and surrounding area is washed over by the Metropolitan Green Belt which is one of the main considerations of the pre application assessment, alongside the adjacent heritage asset.

Policies relevant to any redevelopment of the site requiring planning permission are:

Policy BE14 – which seeks to create successful places ensuring new development meets high design standards (including materials) and delivers safe, inclusive, attractive and accessible places. Buildings should be sustainable including the surrounding places and spaces capable of adapting to changing conditions. Proposals should respond positively and sympathetically to their context building upon existing strengths and characteristics and, where appropriate, retain or enhance existing features which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance or significance of the local area (including natural and heritage assets). The integration of the natural environment to enhance biodiversity should be incorporated into designs and seek to incorporate trees into development. Proposals should also

protect the amenities of future occupiers and neighbours living conditions, provide suitable parking provision and refuse/recycling points whilst mitigating the impact of air, noise, and other pollution.

Policy BE16 requires development that affects a heritage asset to be of a siting, design and scale that will preserve or enhance its character or appearance and important views into and out of the area, and where possible to enhance the significance of the asset and its settings. The policy requires development to be supported by a Heritage Statement providing sufficient information on the significance of the heritage asset, the potential impacts of the proposal on the character and significance of the asset, its setting and how the proposal has been designed to take these factors into account. The statement should make an assessment of the impact of the development on the asset and its setting and the level of harm that is likely to result (if any) from the proposed development. Clear justification should be provided for any works that would lead to harm.

Policy BE13 is also relevant and requires new development to meet the standards set out within the adopted parking standards are set out in the EPOA Parking Standards document and require 1 parking space per bedroom to be provided off-street; this may be relaxed within highly sustainable areas and formal advice will be sought from the Highway Authority at application stage.

Policy HPO6 Standards for New Housing policy is also relevant and has incorporated the nationally described space standards for internal and external spaces. This should be a consideration when developing future proposals to ensure the future living conditions of occupiers are protected.

Policy BE02 Water Efficiency and Management; Policy BE04 Managing Heat Risk; Policy BE11 Electric and Low Emission Vehicles are also relevant and require new development to meet certain standards of sustainability to help emit carbon emissions and provide sustainable living conditions for the future occupiers.

Policies MG02 Green Belt and MG03 Settlement Hierarchy are also relevant and require development coming forward in non-allocated Green Belt locations will be assessed in accordance with Strategic Policy MG02 Green Belt and national policy on Green Belt. Development will be considered inappropriate and refused unless very special circumstances are demonstrated and/or where the exceptions apply.

The proposed development complies with each of the Brentwood Local Plan policies listed above. Inevitably, the key issue is the principle of the development within the Green Belt and we adopt and agree with your own analysis set out in your pre-application response and set out below.

Principle of Development

National Planning Policy relating to new development in the Green Belt is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework chapter 13. The current local development plan is also relevant, in particular policies MG02 and MG03 which are compliant with the Framework.

Local Plan policies MG02 and MG03 aim to control development and that development will be considered inappropriate unless very special circumstances are demonstrated or where exceptions apply in line with paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF.

The proposal seeks to reuse one of the buildings, and redevelop the remainder of the plot in replacing the three buildings with two dwellings and a carport.

Proposals for new buildings in the green belt can be acceptable in a limited number of circumstances. Turning to the proposal, most relevant is National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) para 154 (g) and 155 (d), as follows:

Paragraph 154: A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- (g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or

not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

The proposal does not relate to affordable housing so the last bullet point can be discounted.

Paragraph 155: Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;

The re-use of the Barn 3 would not result in any extensions, only fenestration alterations as discussed. The part of the proposal would fall within para.155 (d) of the NPPF.

The replacement and redevelopment of Barn 1, Barn 2 and the car port in between, would fall within the para.154 (g) which allows the redevelopment of previously developed land, provided the development would not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

We endorse your approach to the assessment of openness set out in your pre-application response and agree that the most appropriate method to assess new build elements to be a visual comparison of the massing, spread and position of existing and proposed buildings, taking volume to mean massing rather than a mathematical calculation. We have therefore provided plans and elevations to show the comparison between the existing and proposed development. While there is an increase in floorspace and in heights in some places, we do not believe that this has a detrimental impact on openness and, in fact, improves the visual and functional design of the development and enhances the setting of the adjacent listed building.

We have sought to adopt all the design changes proposed during the pre-application process and welcome your conclusion that, in principle, the redevelopment of the site as proposed within the Green Belt is acceptable.

Impact on the Heritage Assets (Policy BE16)

The applicant commissioned a report from specialist heritage consultants, Vetrivius Heritage, which is submitted in support of this application. A summary of the report follows.

The site lies within the setting of two listed buildings: Waterhales Farmhouse and the Barn at Waterhales Farm (now known as the Courtyard barn). The farmhouse dates from the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries and the Courtyard Barn from the early 17th century. Whilst the two buildings originally formed part of the same landholding the barn has been converted to a dwellinghouse and separated from the grounds to the farmhouse with a hedge and fence. It has a separate access to the highway and is now called the Courtyard Barn. The significance of the two listed buildings is primarily contained within their historic fabric, internal layout, external elevations and detailing. The buildings each contain a high level of significance, primarily in terms of their architectural, archaeological and historic interest.

It is understood that the buildings on the application site, comprising two pole barns and a former stables were constructed by a local family, named Hawkes, circa 1960/70 for their own use - for stabling horses, storage.

The lack of any association between the application buildings and the two listed buildings, means that they fall outside of the listed curtilages. Therefore, whilst they fall within the setting of the listed farmhouse and barn, they were never part of their curtilage and do not make any contribution to their significance. The following identification of the significance of the relevant heritage assets and the buildings on site, has led to the conclusion of this assessment that the latter makes no contribution to the significance of any identified heritage assets.

The settings to both listed buildings have changed substantially over time, with the change of use of the land from a single agricultural unit, to multiple residential units, the erection of boundaries between buildings, the domestication of their grounds and formation of a new vehicular access. The proposals do not result in any harm to the identified heritage assets: the proposals will not result in any loss of architectural, artistic, archaeological or historic significance of the two listed buildings.

As no harm arises from the proposals (in fact there is actually a benefit), the presumption in favour of this sustainable development remains engaged.

Conclusions

In summary, this application is for a well-designed, high quality development which is sympathetic to the rural farmstead vernacular of this part of Essex. It makes the most of the opportunity to develop previously developed land in the Green Belt which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development and will enhance the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed building. The development has been designed to respond to address the concerns of the Historic Buildings Officer and will be constructed using appropriate, high quality materials. The development proposals comply with the relevant policies set out in the Brentwood Local Plan 2016-2033 and represents a form of development and reuse of buildings which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. For these reasons, we believe that planning permission should be granted.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



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Encs.

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Land east of Courtyard Barn
Schedule of Application Documents

Existing Development

- Drawing 1: Existing Site Plan
- Drawing 2: Existing Ground Floor Plan: Barn 1
- Drawing 3: Existing Front Elevation: Barn 1
- Drawing 4: Existing Side Elevations: Barn 1
- Drawing 5: Existing Rear Elevation: Barn 1
- Drawing 6: Existing Ground Floor Plan: Barn 2
- Drawing 7: Existing Front Elevation: Barn 2
- Drawing 8: Existing Side Elevations: Barn 2
- Drawing 9: Existing Rear Elevations: Barn 2
- Drawing 10: Existing Ground Floor Plan: Stable Block
- Drawing 11: Existing Elevations: Stable Block
- Drawing 12: Existing Ground Floor Plan: Barn 3
- Drawing 13: Existing Front Elevation: Barn 3
- Drawing 14: Existing Side Elevations: Barn 3
- Drawing 15: Existing Rear Elevation: Barn 3

Proposed Development

- Drawing 1: Proposed Site Plan
- Drawing 2: Proposed Site Plan with Existing Overlay
- Drawing 3: Proposed Site Elevation with Existing Overlay
- Drawing 4: Proposed Floorplans of the 3 Barns
- Drawing 5: Proposed Floorplans of the 3 Barns
- Drawing 6: Proposed Ground Floor Plan: Barn 1
- Drawing 7: Proposed Front Elevation: Barn 1

- Drawing 8: Proposed Elevations and Section AA
- Drawing 9: Proposed West Elevation: Barn 1
- Drawing 10: Proposed Ground Floor Plan: Barn 2
- Drawing 11: Proposed South Elevation: Barn 2
- Drawing 12: Proposed West Elevation: Barn 2
- Drawing 13: Proposed North Elevation: Barn 2
- Drawing 14: Proposed East Elevation: Barn 2
- Drawing 15: Proposed Section BB: Barn 2
- Drawing 16: Proposed Ground Floor Plan: Barn 3
- Drawing 17: Proposed North and South Elevations: Barn 3
- Drawing 18: Proposed East Elevation: Barn 3
- Drawing 19: Proposed West Elevation: Barn 3
- Drawing 20: Proposed Section BB: Barn 3

Other Documents

- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Pre-application advice letter