

ITEM

Application Reference	DC/075742
Location:	Barn Adjacent To Threeways Farm Blossoms Lane Woodford Stockport SK7 1RE
PROPOSAL:	Change of use of barn from agricultural to residential and erection of a single storey side extension
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	23.01.2020
Expiry Date:	20200319
Case Officer:	Jane Chase
Applicant:	Gordon Yoxall
Agent:	Steve Lamb

DELEGATION/COMMITTEE STATUS

Departure – Planning & Highways Committee. Called up – Cllr Bagnall

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The application proposes the conversion of a redundant agricultural barn to a single residential dwelling together with a single storey side extension. In detail, the following is proposed:-

- The demolition of a single storey storage lean to attached to the western side elevation of the barn.
- The demolition of a double height tractor storage area attached to the northern rear elevation of the barn.
- The demolition of stables attached to the eastern side elevation of the shippon.
- The erection of a single storey side extension measuring 4m wide, 5.55m deep and 2.75m high with a flat roof. This extension will be mainly glazed with dark timber cladding and a glazed lantern to the roof.
- The conversion of the resulting barn and part of the redundant shippon to form a 2 bedroom house.
- Elevational alterations to form window and door openings together with the insertion of conservation style rooflights to the front and rear roof slope of the main barn.
- Externally the dwelling will benefit from a front, side and rear garden enclosed by a 2m high timber boarded fence together with 2 parking spaces.

The application is supported by a Planning Statement and Protected Species Survey.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is located on Blossoms Lane in Woodford and accommodates a redundant barn, redundant shippon, tractor shed and a farm storage shed. The site lies within the wider curtilage of Threeways Farm (within the ownership of the applicant) with the main farmhouse being positioned in front of the barn with other

farm buildings and caravan storage to the rear. Outside of the wider site is open farmland with Blossoms Kennels and Cattery to the north east of the site being the closest neighbour. The site benefits from vehicle access onto Blossoms Lane.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“PCPA 2004”) requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan includes-

Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review adopted 31st May 2006 which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; &

Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted 17th March 2011.

Policies set out in the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan adopted September 2019.

Saved policies of the SUDP Review

NE1.2 Sites of Nature Importance
LCR1.1 Landscape Character Areas
GBA1.1 Extent of Green Belt
GBA1.2 Control of Development in Green Belt
GBA1.5 Residential Development in Green Belt
L1.1 Land for Active Recreation
L1.2 Children's Play

Policies of the LDF Core Strategy

SD-3 Delivering the Energies Opportunities Plans - New Development
SD-6 Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change
CS2 Housing Provision
CS4 Distribution of Housing
H-1 Design of Residential Development
H-2 Housing Phasing
CS8 Safeguarding & Improving the Environment
SIE-1 Quality Places
SIE-2 Provision of Recreation and Amenity Open Space in New Developments
CS9 Transport & Development
T-1 Transport & Development
T-2 Parking in Developments
T-3 Safety & Capacity on the Highway Network

Policies of the Woodford Neighbourhood Plan

EMP3 Use of Rural Buildings
ENV4 Supporting Biodiversity
DEV4 Design of New Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance does not form part of the Statutory Development Plan; nevertheless it does provide non-statutory Council approved guidance that is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Design of Residential Development

National Planning Policy Framework

A Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 19th February 2019 replaced the previous NPPF (originally issued 2012 & revised 2018). The NPPF has not altered the fundamental legal requirement under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations (such as the NPPF) indicate otherwise.

The NPPF representing the governments up-to-date planning policy which should be taken into account in dealing with applications focuses on achieving a lasting housing reform, facilitating the delivery of a greater number of homes, ensuring that we get planning for the right homes built in the right places of the right quality at the same time as protecting our environment. If decision takers choose not to follow the NPPF, then clear and convincing reasons for doing so are needed.

N.B. In respect of decision-taking the revised NPPF constitutes a “material consideration”.

Para.1 “The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied”.

Para.2 “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

Para.7 “The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development”.

Para.8 “Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) an economic objective*
- b) a social objective*
- c) an environmental objective”*

Para.11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole”.

Para.12 “.....Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed”.

Para.38 “Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way..... Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.

Para.47 “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing”.

Para.59 “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, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”

Para.109 “Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”

Para.117 “Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.”

Para. 118 “Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure).”

Para.122 *“Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:*

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;*
- b) local market conditions and viability;*
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;*
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and*
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.”*

Para.123 *“Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In these circumstances:*

- a) plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. This will be tested robustly at examination, and should include the use of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. These standards should seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate;*
- b) the use of minimum density standards should also be considered for other parts of the plan area. It may be appropriate to set out a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, rather than one broad density range; and*
- c) local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land, taking into account the policies in this Framework. In this context, when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).”*

Para.124 *“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.*

Para.127 *“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users⁴⁶; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the*

quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

Para.130 “Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development”.

Para.133 “*The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence*”.

Para.134 “*Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- *to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land”.*

Para.141 “*Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land*”.

Para.143 “*Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances*”.

Para.144 “*When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. “Very special circumstances” will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations*”.

Para.145 “*A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:*

c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Para.146 “*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 reuse of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction

Para.153 states “*In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:*

a) comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and

b) take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption”.

Para.213 “existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)”.

Planning Practice Guidance

The Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place (launched in March 2014) and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

DC072172 - Prior approval for Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a Dwellinghouse (Class C3), and for associated operational development – Prior Approval not required 6th March 2019

DC075716 - Prior approval for the change of use of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Class C3) and for associated operational development (revision to DC072172 to include a greater element of the shippon) – Prior Approval not required 2nd March 2020

NEIGHBOUR'S VIEWS

The receipt of this application has been publicised by way of a site and press notice. No representations have been received.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Highway Engineer - This application follows a prior approval for conversion of the barn and seeks a permission to extend the prospective dwelling with the necessary change of use. As with the previous prior approval notification I see no reason to express concern. Noting this is a formal planning application I see it as reason and justification to seek to regulate the development with appropriate conditions and I seek imposition of conditions relating to cycle and electric vehicle parking.

Nature Development Officer - The site has no nature conservation designations, legal or otherwise.

Many buildings have the potential to support roosting bats. The application area is located near suitable bat foraging habitat which increases the likelihood that a bat roost may be present. All species of bats, and their roosts, are protected under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The latter implements the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Bats are included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations as ‘European Protected Species of animals’ (EPS).

Under the Regulations it is an offence to:

- 1) Deliberately capture or kill a wild EPS

- 2) Deliberately disturb a wild EPS in such a way that significantly affects:
 - a) the ability of a significant group to survive, breed, rear or nurture young.
 - b) the local distribution of that species.
- 3) Damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal.

Buildings can also offer suitable nesting bird habitat. All breeding birds and their nests are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species such as barn owl receive additional protection through inclusion under Schedule 1 of the Act.

A bat and barn owl survey has been carried out and submitted with the application. The survey was carried out in November 2018 by a suitably experienced ecologist (Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd, 2018) and followed best practice survey guidance. The survey involved an internal and external inspection of the property to search for signs of bats and nesting birds and assess the potential for a bat roost/barn owl to be present.

No evidence of bats was observed during the survey. The barn was assessed as having negligible suitability to support a bat roost. Tiles were found to be flush to one another, no cavity walls and internally the barn was found to be draughty and joists were densely cobwebbed (suggesting no recent bat use).

No signs of barn owl were recorded during the survey. Vacant swallow nests (approx. 12) were observed along with evidence of pigeons using the building.

There are records for great crested newts (GCN) within the wider landscape – the nearest record is approximately 340m away. The closest pond to the application site is approximately 190m away – previous surveys of this pond (in 2011) have not recorded GCN but this does not necessarily mean that GCN are currently absent as the species can move between different ponds between different breeding seasons. GCN can travel up to 500m from a pond but their 'core' habitat – where they are typically found – tends to be within 100m. There is however a hedgerow that links the closest pond to the application site and although the application site itself is on hard standing (unsuitable habitat for GCN), some potential GCN habitat may occur through the presence of brick/rubble piles.

Paragraph 016 of the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance states that the local authority should only request a survey if they consider there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected by development. Providing Reasonable Avoidance Measures are followed during the proposed works I would consider the risk of GCN being impacted to be low and therefore do not consider it reasonable to request further GCN survey as part of the current application in this instance.

Recommendations:

The proposed works are assessed as being of low risk to roosting bats. Bats are highly cryptic in their roosting behaviour however and can sometimes roost in seemingly unlikely places. As a precautionary measure it is therefore advised that an informative is attached to any planning consent granted so that the applicant is aware of the potential for bats to be present. It should also state that the granting of planning permission does not negate the need to abide by the legislation in place to protect biodiversity and if at any time during works bats (or any other protected species such as breeding birds/GCN) are discovered on site during works, works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist be contacted for advice.

If the proposed works have not commenced by November 2020 (i.e. within two survey seasons of the 2018 surveys) it is recommended that an update survey is carried out in advance of works to ensure the baseline and assessment of impacts in respect of bats and other potential ecological receptors remains current.

In relation to breeding birds, building works should be timed to avoid the nesting season (which is March – August inclusive). Where this is not possible a pre-works check for nesting birds must be carried out by a suitably experienced person no more than 48 hours in advance of works commencing to confirm presence/absence of nesting birds. If evidence of breeding birds is discovered a buffer will need to be implemented and works within that area delayed until chicks have fledged and nesting has finished. This can be secured by condition.

To mitigate for the loss of nesting habitat (swallow nests were recorded within the barn), it is advised that replacement nesting features for birds are provided within the renovated building. The proposed number, location and type of bird nesting feature should be provided to the LPA for review. This can be secured by condition.

Opportunities for biodiversity enhancements should be sought within the development in line with national and local planning policy (NPPF and paragraph 3.345 of the LDF). Suitable measures include the provision of bat roosting facilities within/on the building. Furthermore, any landscape planting should comprise a mix of species beneficial to wildlife (ideally locally native).

It is advised that Reasonable Avoidance Measures are followed during works to minimise the risk of impacting GCN. Such measures include, clearing any rubble/brick piles etc. by hand and storing materials on raised pallets so as not to create potential GCN refugia. These measures should be secured via condition. An informative should also be used so that the applicant is aware of the potential for GCN to be present on site. If GCN should be discovered on site at any time during works then works must stop and a suitably experienced ecologist contacted for advice.

Any proposed lighting should be sensitively designed so as to minimise impacts on wildlife associated with light disturbance (following the principles outlined in Bat Conservation Trust guidance).

Woodford Neighbourhood Forum - The barn conversion proposals appear to respect the character of the original building and the location, which is in one of the most rural parts of the village. We note that the written statement recognises that it is an “attractive historic building”, a sentiment which we support. The design appears to be compliant with WNP DEV4.

The small extension will not be visible from the road, or have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt, or the character of the Neighbourhood Area. As with all new development, we emphasise the need to be mindful of climate change and the need to mitigate human impacts on the environment. We encourage adherence to:

- WNP policies ENV3 by retention of natural features where possible.
- WNP ENV4 by landscaping to include vegetation to absorb carbon dioxide, encourage biodiversity and support wildlife, where possible.
- Environment Agency advice in WNP: Further to consultation with the Environment Agency, the Neighbourhood Forum would like to see new development being designed to maximise the retention of surface water on the development site and measures to minimise runoff; for surface water drainage to be considered in liaison with the Local Lead Flood Agency, the public sewerage undertaker and the

Environment Agency; and for surface water to be discharged in the following order of priority: An adequate soakaway or some other form of infiltration system; An attenuated discharge to watercourse or other water body; An attenuated discharge to public surface water sewer or an attenuated discharge to public combined sewer.

- Swallows are a treasured part of the wildlife around Blossoms Lane and we welcome the condition associated with the previous application DC/072172 to secure the provision of replacement nesting boxes within the barn to be converted.

In summary the Woodford Neighbourhood Forum has no objections to this application.

ANALYSIS

Members are advised that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para10). Para 11 of the NPPF reconfirms this position and advises that for decision making this means:-

- approving developments that accord with an up to date development plan or
- where the policies which are most important for the determination of the application are out of date (this includes for applications involving the provision of housing, situations where the LPA cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing), granting planning permission unless:
 - the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of importance (that is those specifically relating to Green Belt development) provides a clear reason for refusing planning permission or
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.

In this respect, given that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year deliverable supply of housing, the relevant elements of Core Strategy policies CS4 and H2 which seek to deliver housing supply that are considered to be out of date. That being the case, the tilted balance as referred to in para 11 of the NPPF directs that permission should be approved unless:

- there are compelling reasons in relation to the impact of the development upon the Green Belt to refuse planning permission or
- the adverse impacts of approving planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

The main issues for consideration are as follows:-

- The loss of an agricultural building
- Principle of residential development
- Impact on the character of the locality
- Impact on residential amenity
- Highway impacts
- Other matters such as ecology, energy efficient design and drainage.

Having regard to this presumption in favour of residential development, Members are advised accordingly:

Principles of Development

There is no objection to the loss of the agricultural use of the barn and part of the shippon noting that Part 3, Class Q of the General Permitted Development Order confirms that a change of use of a building (or part of a building) from agricultural use to a dwelling house is permitted development (subject to the Local Planning Authority confirming that prior approval is not required in relation to certain aspects of the development). Members will note that 2 applications have already

been submitted in this respect and that in relation to both, this Authority has determined that prior approval is not required. As such, the conversion of the existing building can be undertaken without the need for express planning permission. As it is now however proposed to extend the building as part of the conversion to residential planning permission is required for the proposal as a whole (i.e the conversion and extension) hence this current planning application seeking full planning permission.

Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy directs new residential development towards the more accessible parts of the Borough identifying 3 spatial priority areas (Central Housing Area; Neighbourhood Priority Areas and the catchment areas of District/Large Local Centres; and other accessible locations). Policy H-2 confirms that when there is less than a 5 year deliverable supply of housing (as is currently the case) the required accessibility scores will be lowered to allow the deliverable supply to be topped up by other sites in accessible locations. This position has been regularly assessed to ensure that the score reflects the ability to 'top up' supply to a 5 year position. However, the scale of shortfall is such that in order to genuinely reflect the current position in that regard the accessibility score has been reduced to zero.

As referred to at the start of this analysis, the fact that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing means that elements of Core Strategy policies CS4 and H2 are considered to be out of date. As such the tilted balance in favour of the residential redevelopment of the site as set out in para 11 of the NPPF is engaged.

The application site is situated within an accessible location and the proposal is therefore in compliance with policies CS4 and H2 of the Core Strategy. The proposal is also consistent with para 118 (d) of the NPPF which confirms that planning decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.

Policy L1.2 of the UDP Review and SIE-2 of the Core Strategy seek to ensure that residential development makes an appropriate contribution towards the provision of children's play and formal recreation. This policy position is supported by the Council's SPD Open Space Provision and Commuted Sum Payments. Compliance with this policy position can be secured by condition in the event that planning permission is approved.

As confirmed by para 2 of the NPPF, planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Whilst the conversion of the barn has already been approved through applications DC072172 and DC075716 both of these applications however relate only to the conversion of the existing building under Permitted Development. This current application proposes also the extension of the building and as such planning permission is required not only for that but also the conversion of the building as well.

Whilst DC072172 and DC075716 are material to the consideration of this application, they do not present a fall back position sufficient to warrant an exception to the application of policies L1.2 and SIE2 as they do not secure the same development as that which is the subject of this application. The development plan through these policies confirms that residential development should make a contribution towards the provision of children's play and formal

sports and as such, it is appropriate that in the event that planning permission is approved for the extension and conversion of the barn, that a condition be imposed to secure compliance with these policies.

Policy SD-3 requires an assessment of how the proposed development can contribute to becoming carbon neutral through the use of micro regeneration technologies in order to reduce CO2 emissions. Given the small scale of the proposed development there is however no policy requirement to incorporate any of these technologies. The applicant has provided a statement in this respect however it does not consider the use of technologies (such as photovoltaics, wind, micro hydro, district heating, solar hot water, heat pumps or biomass boilers). As such the statement submitted is not policy compliant, however, this can be rectified through the imposition of a condition in the event that planning permission is approved.

Policy SD-6 requires developments to demonstrate that development is designed in such a way as to avoid, mitigate or reduce the impacts of climate change. Development will be required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems so as to manage the run off of water from the site. This positioned is supported by the NPPF at para's 163 and 165. Given that the application proposes the conversion of an existing building with only a small extension (of a smaller size than the buildings to be demolished), it is not considered that there will be a significant change in surface water run off from the site. As such, and noting that such details are generally not required on applications seeking permission for small scale extensions, it would be considered unreasonable and disproportionate to expect the application to detail the drainage for the site.

Impact on the Green Belt

The application site is located within the Green Belt and therefore the proposed development is subject to saved policies GBA1.2, GBA1.5 and GBA1.6 of the UDP Review together with para's 145 and 146 of the NPPF.

Policies in the UDP Review allow for the reuse of buildings of permanent and substantial construction (GBA1.5 and GBA1.6) provided that the building would not be used for purposes other than wholly residential.

In response to this policy position Members are advised that the inclusion within saved policy GBA1.6 of a requirement that the building be used for purposes other than wholly residential stems back to a desire at the time the UDP Review was drafted to protect rural employment. This position is however not reflected in the NPPF which forms the most up to date policy position and as such, it is advised that reduced weight be given to this element of policy GBA1.6 as has been the case in the determination of many similar applications seeking conversion of buildings in the Green Belt to a residential use. Notwithstanding this it is noted that part of the shippon within the ownership of the applicant would remain in agricultural use thus complying with policy GBA1.6.

The creation of a garden and parking area would maintain openness noting that the lawful use of the site generates the external storage of equipment and parking demand. The external alterations together with the general improvement of the curtilage around the building would also safeguard and improve the appearance of the rural environment.

On this basis it is concluded that the proposed development in relation to the conversion of the building is compliant with saved policy GBA1.6 and para 146 of the NPPF.

Policy EMP3 of the WNP confirms that proposals for the reuse of redundant buildings will be supported. The proposed development complies with this policy position.

In terms of the extension of the building, saved policies in the UDP Review do not allow for the extension of non residential buildings and as such, the proposal is contrary to saved policy GBA1.2 (hence the need to refer the application to the Planning & Highways Committee in the event that Members agree the recommendation). Para 145c of the NPPF which presents the most up to date policy position confirms however that the extension of a building is appropriate in the Green Belt provided that it does not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

In this respect Members are advised that in planning terms, the original building is that which was in existence on 1st July 1948 or as originally built if after that date. It would appear that the main barn and shippon to be converted pre date 1948 as well as the lean to storage extension to the side which is to be demolished. The date of the tractor shed and stables to be removed is unclear.

The volume of the main barn, shippon and lean to storage shed is circa 712m³. The proposed single storey side extension positioned to the west of the existing barn where the storage shed is currently located would have a volume of circa 61m³. As such the proposed extension represents a 8.5% increase in the size of the building. There is no definition of what constitutes a disproportionate addition but as a general guideline, extensions that increase the volume of the original dwelling by more than approximately one third are unlikely to be acceptable.

The proposed extension would clearly be significantly less than one third the volume of that existing and as such will not be disproportionate to the original dwelling. It is also noted that the resulting building will have a volume less than that existing due to the demolition of the larger stables and tractor shed. On this basis the proposal complies with para 145c of the NPPF.

Policy LCR1.1 states that development in the countryside will be strictly controlled and will not be permitted unless it protects or enhances the quality and character of the rural area. The policy also requires that proposals protect or improve existing recreational land, not impede public access, protect or enhance the natural environment, conserve or enhance buildings which contribute to the character or history of the area and improve the appearance of the countryside by removing or screening unsightly development.

The application site is in private ownership, does not include any recreational land and does not impede public access. The application will conserve and enhance the existing barn thus contributing to the character and history of the area. The demolition of the stables, tractor shed and storage shed which are somewhat tired in their appearance and suffering will enhance the appearance of the building and in turn the quality and character of the rural area. On this basis the development is compliant with policy LCR1.1

Impact on the Character of the Locality and Residential Amenity

The removal of the unsightly stables and sheds together with the renovation of the barn will enhance the character of the locality. The closest neighbour outside of curtilage of the farm is Blossoms Kennels and Cattery to the north east. This premises is sufficiently distant from the application site (circa 50m) not to be adversely affected in any way from the proposed development.

It is noted that the main farmhouse (in the ownership of the applicant) is positioned to the south west of the barn. Only the garage/workshop to this dwelling is positioned directly opposite the barn with the main farmhouse being off set. As such, it is not considered that a loss of amenity would occur to the main farmhouse through the conversion and extension of the barn.

On this basis the proposal is considered compliant with policies H1, CS8 and SIE1 of the Core Strategy DPD and DEV4 of the WNP.

Other Matters

Policy EMP3 of the WNP confirms that proposals for the reuse of redundant buildings will be supported. The proposed development complies with this policy position.

The comments of the Highway Engineer are noted. The barn will benefit from a vehicle access that is practical and safe to use. Parking for the barn is proposed in accordance with the Council's maximum standards. Details of cycle parking and electric vehicle charging can be secured by condition. On this basis the proposed development is compliant with policies CS9, T1, T2 and T3 of the Core Strategy DPD.

In terms of ecology, no evidence of bats or barn owls in the buildings has been recorded however the presence of swallows nests is noted together with the potential for Great Crested Newt habitat to be present in brick/rubble piles within the site. Conditions and informatives can be imposed as requested by the Nature Development. On this basis it is considered that the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the ecology of the site and is in accordance with policy NE1.2 of the UDP Review, policy SIE3 of the Core Strategy DPD and policy ENV4 of the WNP.

Conclusion

Having regard to the tilted balance in favour of the residential development of this site as set out at para 11 of the NPPF, it is considered that planning permission as set out in the application submitted should be approved. The application of policies to protect areas of importance (the Green Belt) do not provide clear reason to refuse the development proposed and there would be no adverse impacts of granting planning permission.

As such the application is recommended for approval subject to the conditions reference in this report together with others not specifically referenced but considered reasonable and necessary.

As the application is contrary to Green Belt policies in the UDP Review (which do not allow for the extension of non residential buildings) the application must be referred to the Planning & Highways Committee in the event that members agree the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION GRANT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS AND INFORMATIVES