

**15. DEMOLITION OF EXISTING AGRICULTURAL BUILDING AND REPLACEMENT WITH A MODERN STORAGE BUILDING, AND THE CHANGE OF USE OF THE EXISTING TRADITIONAL BUILDING TO PROVIDE STORAGE AND OFFICE FACILITIES FOR THE ESTATE RANGER SERVICE OF THE NATIONAL PARK AT PUMP FARM, SCHOOL LANE, WARSLOW, (NP/SM/1017/1043/ P6601, 408763/358552, 11/10/2017/ALN**

**APPLICANT: PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

**Site and Surroundings**

Pump Farm is located on the south eastern edge of the village of Warslow. Access is gained from School Lane to the north. The property consists of a farmhouse, a range of traditional farm buildings to the east of the house (the subject of this application) and a range of modern farm buildings to the south. The property is within the Warslow Conservation Area and is considered to within (on the edge of) the named settlement of Warslow for planning policy purposes.

The traditional barns in question are two-storey and are L-shaped in plan form. They are constructed in natural gritstone under blue clay tiled roofs. The application site edged red relates to the south projecting wing of the barn only plus a single storey modern extension constructed in concrete blocks under a sheeted roof.

Pump Farm is owned by the National Park Authority as part of the Warslow Moors Estate. The farm is tenanted but the tenant farmer no longer uses the traditional range of buildings or the adjacent modern brick/concrete building as the farming activities are now concentrated within the remaining modern portal framed buildings.

**Proposals**

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the part of the buildings in question from agriculture to a mixed B1 (office) and B8 (storage) use in association with the provision of a new Estate base.

The traditional part of the building would be converted within its shell and would provide an office, meeting room and disabled toilet at ground floor and a further office, mess room and store at first floor. The adjacent blockwork shed would be demolished and replaced by a new building (as an extension to the barn) to provide a workshop and three machinery storage bays.

The new building would occupy largely the same footprint of the building to be demolished although it would be slightly (3m) longer and an existing south westwards projecting wing would be omitted. Overall the new building would measure 19m long by 6.1m wide. The ground levels drop away to the south east such that the eaves height of the new extension would be 2.8m where it meets the gable end of the original barn, and 4.2m high at its south-easternmost point.

The extension would be constructed with stone walls on the rear (north east) facing elevation, timber boarding over a stone plinth on the gable end and the yard facing elevation would have four large openings, three with double timber doors and one remaining open. The roof would be clad with Staffordshire blue clay tiles.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the application be APPROVED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. 3 year time limit**
- 2. Adopt submitted plans**

3. **Office/storage accommodation hereby approved to remain in the same ownership at Pump farmhouse.**
4. **New extension to be completed in accordance with approved plans before accommodation is first brought into use.**
5. **Parking and manoeuvring space to be provided and maintained.**
6. **Photograph survey including photographic scale of the internal fabric of the building to be undertaken and submitted prior to commencement.**
7. **Submission and agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring.**
8. **Minor Design Details**

#### **Key Issues**

1. The principle of the change of use from agricultural to B1 (office)/B8 (storage) use.
2. Impact on heritage assets.
3. Impact on ecology.
4. Residential amenity.

#### **History**

August 2008 – consent granted for proposed roofed building to existing agricultural feed areas.

September 1990 – consent granted for erection of slurry store and timber building.

#### **Consultations**

Highway Authority – no objections

District Council – no response

Parish Council – no response

Natural England – no objections with regard to impact on statutory mature conservation sites. Refer to standing advice with regard to protected species. Advise that the Authority should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site.

Authority's Conservation Officer – The proposed re-use and sympathetic restoration and alteration of the traditional barn is welcomed as this will help secure the longevity of the historic structure. The replacement modern building is more in keeping with the vernacular of the area and will enhance the farmstead. The proposed works would therefore improve the character and appearance of the Warslow Conservation Area in accordance with adopted policies.

Authority's Ecologist – no objections subject to conditions.

Authority's Archaeologist. The site is of archaeological and historic interest. The scheme is for a sensitively designed conversion in line with advice from Conservation Officers and the conversion will lead to minimum loss of historic fabric. However the change of use will inevitably alter the character of the buildings and loss of internal historic features. Therefore recommends the submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of Historic building

recording, the equivalent of a level 2 building survey. Also potential for exposure of archaeological remains through the demolition of the modern agricultural building, rebuilding on the footprint of this structure and any works to the floor of the barn. Recommends that these works are archaeologically monitored and recommends a condition for a Written Scheme of Investigation to cover this.

### **Main Policies**

Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L3, E1, RT1

Relevant Local Plan policies: LC4, LC5

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) is a material consideration which carries particular weight where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date.

Paragraph 115 of the Framework says that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should also be given great weight.

Paragraph 28 supports the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprises in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

### **Assessment**

#### **Issue 1: The principle of the change of use from agricultural to B1(office)/B8 (storage) use.**

The proposals are to convert and extend the building in question to provide office and storage space in association with the continued management of the Warslow Moors Estate. Core Strategy policy supports proposals for business development within named settlements provided the development is of a scale that is consistent with the needs of the local population and where possible proposals must re-use existing traditional buildings of historic or vernacular merit and take up opportunities for enhancement. Clearly also the provision of facilities to secure the long term management of the Authority's Estate would contribute towards securing National Park purposes in accordance with policy GSP1.

Information provided with the application explains that since the acquisition of the Warslow Moors Estate in 1986 the estate base has been located at Hayeshead, Newtown, Longnor. The Estate Ranger then lived at the dwelling at Hayes Head and a small building provided a workshop, store and mess room. However there were constraints with the property including that there was no undercover parking for machinery; there was no w.c. or meeting rooms for visiting staff; the base was disconnected from the core of tenanted area of the Estate around Warslow and therefore staff were not very visible to residents and visitors to the village; and finally security issues. The Warslow Moors Estate Business Plan (2011-2016) agreed a strategy whereby when the full-time Estate Ranger retired, the post would become non-resident and part time. It was agreed that Hayeshead would be let on a commercial basis and new base would be found.

An evaluation of possible sites on the Estate for a new base was carried out and Pump Farm was identified as the 'best fit' and the tenant is willing to surrender the required building and land from his tenancy. It is considered that the base would provide sufficient space for the needs of the Estate and potential wider Authority needs; can be suitably secure; and improves the 'visibility' of staff on the Estate.

In principle the conversion and extension of the barn would accord with adopted policies provided that the impact upon the character of the buildings and wider conservation area is acceptable and that opportunities for enhancement are acted upon; and subject to residential amenity, ecology, highways and parking and any other material considerations being adequately addressed.

#### Issue 2: Impact on heritage assets

Core Strategy policy GSP3 states that development must respect, conserve and enhance all valued characteristics of the site and building that are subject to the development proposals. Core Strategy policy L3 requires that development must conserve and where appropriate enhance or reveal significance of archaeological, artistic or historic asset and their setting, including statutory designation and other heritage assets of international, national, regional or local importance or special interest. Policy LC5 seeks to protect the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and policy LC4 seeks high standards of design.

Saved Local Plan Policy LC8 states that the conversion of buildings of historic or vernacular merit to a use other than that for which it was designed will be permitted provided that it can accommodate the new use without changes that would adversely affect its character (such changes include significant enlargement, or other alteration to form and mass, inappropriate new window spacings or doorways, major rebuilding).

Pump Farm is not listed but the farmstead and associated barn have some architectural and historic significance. The farmhouse and barns are laid out in a courtyard arrangement and the rear elevation of the barn in particular is prominent from the B5053 Cheadle Road on the approach into the village from the north east. As such the building pays a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. However the modern blockwork and sheeted extension is also prominent from the road and this currently detracts from the character of the host building and its setting.

The proposals seek to convert the southern wing of the L-shaped barn within its shell. Existing openings would be utilised and on the front (yard facing) elevation a former doorway (now a window) would be re-opened. Window frames would be in timber and would either be fixed or traditional inward opening hoppers. Two conservation rooflights would be provided on the roofslope facing the farmyard. Overall the scheme represents a sensitive conversion of the traditional building in accordance with policies GSP3, L3, LC4 and LC8.

The new extension would be subservient to the host building in that its roof would be lower. It would have simple detailing that would be reflective of the agricultural character of the site. The use of stone on the rear (north east) facing elevation in particular and the proposals to remove the existing sheeted roof and replace it with clay tiles would significantly enhance the appearance of the range of buildings when viewed from Cheadle Road. The omission of the existing forward facing lean-to is also welcomed.

In conclusion the proposals would conserve and enhance the character of the traditional range of buildings and their setting in the Conservation Area in accordance with adopted policies.

#### Issue 3: Impact upon ecology

Core Strategy Policy L2 states the development must conserve and enhance any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance and where appropriate their setting. Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to have an adverse impact on any site, features or species of biodiversity importance or their setting.

A protected species survey was submitted with the application. A single brown long eared bat and two pipistrelle bats have been confirmed as using the affected building. The report considers the roosts to be used on an infrequent basis. Active swallows' nests were also found

in the buildings. The report puts forward mitigation and compensation for bats and swallows. The Authority's ecologist also recommends conditions but most of their requirements are included within the report's recommendations so a condition to require section 5 (Recommendations) of the report to be fully implemented will cover the recommendations of the ecologist subject to the addition of a condition to required details of the number and position of bat and swallow nesting boxes or structures to be submitted and agreed.

#### Issue 4: Residential Amenity

The buildings in question are approximately 23m away from the farmhouse at Pump Farm. However the main habitable rooms of the dwelling face northwards and southwards. There are some secondary windows facing towards the barn however due to the intervening distance and the fact that the farmhouse and the application buildings would remain in the same overall ownership and control it is not considered likely that there would be an unacceptable impact on residential amenity as a result of overlooking or through noise and disturbance. However a condition that requires the accommodation hereby approved and the main farmhouse to remain in the same ownership is considered to be necessary because if the office/storage use was sold off separately then there could be a detrimental impact on residential amenity. Other than Pump Farm farmhouse the nearest residential dwelling in third party ownership is School House, some 70m to the north west, but due to the separation distances and the presence of an intervening public highway it is not considered that there would be a detrimental impact on the amenity of the occupants of this property. The proposals therefor accord with policies GSP3 and LC4 in these respects.

#### **Other Matters**

##### Archaeology

The Authority's archaeologist has commented that the site is of archaeological and historic interest and that whilst the scheme is for a sensitively designed conversion in line with advice from Conservation Officers and the conversion will lead to minimum loss of historic fabric, the change of use will inevitably alter the character of the buildings and loss of internal historic features. She therefore recommends the submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a programme of historic building recording, the equivalent of a level 2 building survey.

Officers consider that whilst such a detailed requirement would be useful it is not necessary to make the development acceptable and that a condition to require an internal photographic survey to be undertaken and submitted prior to commencement is sufficient.

There is also a recommendation for a WSI to secure archaeological monitoring of any remains that might be uncovered during the demolition of the modern farm building, the rebuilding of the new extension and any works to the floor of the barn. The archaeologist response identifies that the site is identified as a 19th century farmstead in the Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Character in Staffordshire assessment of 2008 and the farm is depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition O.S. map of 1879. On that basis she considers that the building is a non-designated heritage asset and the proposed WSI is required to record and advance the understanding of the heritage asset.

Officers view is that the NPPF (para 135) makes it clear that the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining applications. In weighing such applications a *'balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'*. It is considered that Pump Farm is not dissimilar to most other traditional farmsteads in the National Park. Whilst it is in the Conservation Area it is not listed or within close proximity of a Scheduled Monument. There does not appear to be any other archaeological interest recorded close the application site. It is not clear why this building is of greater than usual interest. It is not considered that the condition is reasonable.

### Access and Parking

Saved Local Plan policy LT18 states that the provision of safe access arrangements will be a prerequisite of any development.

The application form suggests that parking space for 6 vehicles can be provided within the yard area adjacent to the buildings and in an area to the south east of the extension, enclosed by a new drystone wall. Officers are satisfied that this level of parking can be achieved and will adequately serve the needs of the development. Visibility at the access onto the public highway is within acceptable limits. The proposals therefore accord with policy LT18.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion the proposals to convert and extend the building to provide office and storage space in association with the continued management of the Warslow Moors Estate complies with adopted policies. The proposals would conserve and enhance the traditional buildings and the wider conservation area. All other material considerations have been addressed and the proposals are recommended for approval.

### **Human Rights**

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

### List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil