

## PLANNING COMMITTEE – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**REFERENCE NUMBER:** 22/01164/FL      **Application Expiry Date:** 25/01/2023  
**Application Type:** Full Planning Permission

**Proposal Description:** Conversion and extension of existing barn to form a single residential dwelling and erection of new storage barn (Revised scheme of 21/00713/FL) (Private Drainage System)

**At:** Alice Head Farm  
Alicehead Road  
Ashover  
Chesterfield  
S45 0DQ

**For:** J & A Mason

**Third Party Reps:** 0

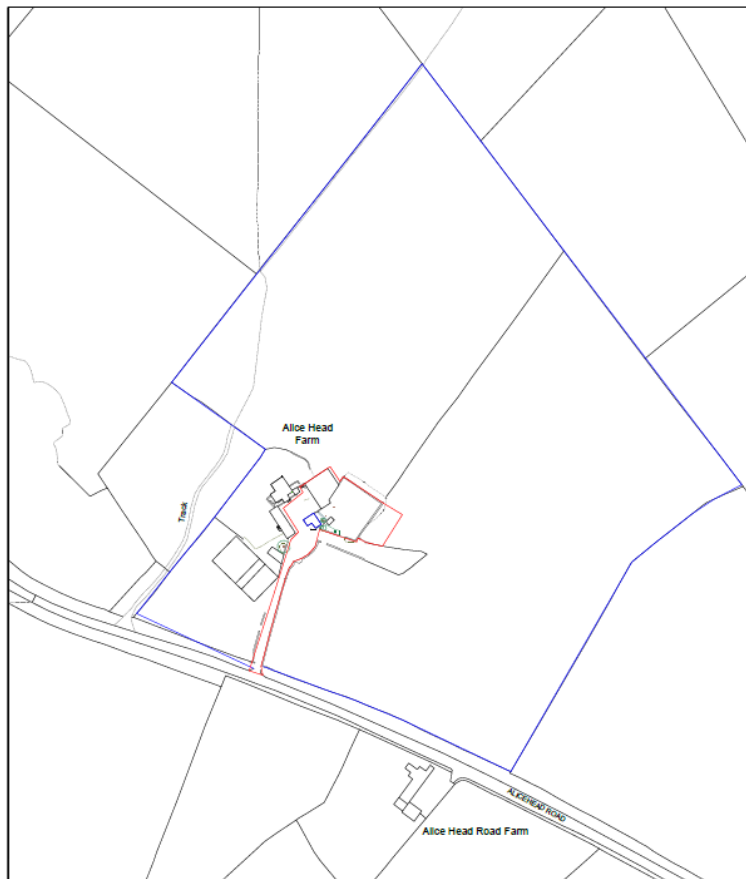
**Parish:** Ashover Parish Council

**Ward Name:** Ashover Ward

**Author of Report:** Case Officer Alice Lockett

**Date of Report:** 24/01/2023

**MAIN RECOMMENDATION: Refuse**



*Figure 1 Location Plan*

## **1.0 REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 This application has been called into committee by Councilor Armitage with the reason being the impact on the landscape

## **2.0 PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This application seeks permission for the conversion to a dwelling of a building which formerly comprised of a traditional barn with a more modern agricultural extension. Whilst indicated on the submitted plans the extension to the barn is no longer in situ and the application site now comprises solely the traditional building.
- 2.2 A storage building is also proposed which would be located to the east of building proposed for conversion within the proposed curtilage/garden of the new dwelling.
- 2.3 Alice Head Farm is located to the north of Alicehead Road, itself accessed of the main Chesterfield to Matlock Road north of Kelstedge. It is a farmstead which comprises the main farm house with traditional buildings forming a courtyard to the front. To the rear of the eastern barn (subject to this application) was a modern agricultural extension). To the south west is a further large modern barn.
- 2.4 Applications were submitted in 2021 to convert both traditional barns to dwellings, the application for the barn to the west was refused consent due to the landscape impact of extensions proposed whilst a permission was granted for conversion of the historic part of the eastern barn (the application site) with a small modern extension to the rear.
- 2.5 This application now seeks consent for the conversion of the building with a significant rear extension that would extend to the limits of the former utilitarian extensions that have now been removed. The application therefore seeks consent for the conversion and extension of the traditional barn.

## **3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1.1 21/00713/FL Decision Date: 28.10.2022 Conversion of existing barn to form a single residential dwelling to include demolition of lean-to cow shed and addition of a single storey extension (Amended Plans) (Amended Title) Conditionally Approved
- 3.1.2 21/00775/FL Decision Date: 21.03.2022 Conversion and extension of existing stone barn to form residential dwelling (Amended Plans). Refused

## **4.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 4.1 DCC Highways: Both the new proposal and the previous proposal is the same as evident from the drawings submitted in support of application 21/00713/FL i.e., scheme shown on the plan AHF\_B2\_BLOCK\_V3 and the revised proposal shown on the plan AHF\_B2\_BLOCK\_V4. Therefore, the Highway Authority has no objection subject to the conditions agreed for 21/00713/FL required to be appended for 22/01164/FL.
- 4.2 EHO: Previous comments made in regards application 21/00713/FL still apply
- 4.3 Parish Council: No Comment
- 4.4 NEDDC Planning Policy Comment: Local Plan Policy LC4 encourages the development of self and custom build dwellings. At the end of the last base period (30th October 2021), there were sufficient self and custom build permissions to meet the demand on the register at 30th October 2021, but without the supply of further self and custom build permissions there will be a shortfall at future years.

## **5.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

- 5.1 No comments received

## **6.0 RELEVANT POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

- 6.1 The Development Plan comprises the Ashover Neighbourhood Plan and the North East Derbyshire Local Plan. The most relevant policies in this case are as follows:

### **6.2 Ashover Neighbourhood Plan**

AP2 Development Proposals outside the Limits to Development  
AP11 Design  
AP13 Landscape Character  
AP16 Dry Stone Walls  
AP19 Dark Skies

### **6.3 North East Derbyshire Local Plan**

SS1 Sustainable Development  
SS2 Spatial Strategy and the Distribution of Development  
SS9 Development in the Countryside  
SDC1 Re-use and Conversion of Buildings in the Green Belt and Countryside  
SDC3 Landscape Character  
SDC12 High Quality Design and Place Making  
SDC14 Land potentially affected by Contamination or Instability

### **6.4 NPPF**

The overarching aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are also material in the assessment of this application and have been taken into account.

## 7.0 PLANNING ISSUES



*Figure 2 Alice Head farm as viewed from Alicehead Road*

- 7.1 Alice Head Farm is located outside of any Settlement Development Limits and is therefore within the countryside for planning purposes. The site is also located within the Enclosed Moors and Heaths Landscape Character type of the Peak District and Lower Derwent Valley Landscape Character Area and within the Primary Area of Multiple Environmental Sensitivity (AMES). As such, it is considered to be within the district's most valued and important landscape. The site is clearly and readily visible from Alicehead Road and from footpath NE1/125/2 to the west and north.

### Principal of Development-Barn Conversion

- 7.2 Local Plan (LP) Policy supports development in the countryside which involved the re-use of building and accords with policy SDC1 provided that acceptable development respects the form, scale and character of the landscape
- 7.3 Ashover Neighbourhood Plan (ANP) AP2 states that land outside the defined settlement limits will be treated as countryside which will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty. This policy supports the reuse of redundant or underused buildings where development is not seriously intrusive in the countryside.

- 7.4 The local and neighborhood plans therefore support the principal of the conversion of the barn to a dwelling. The decision maker therefore needs to assess whether the proposal meets the requirements of the conversion policies and if the resulting dwelling would have an acceptable impact on the valued landscape

#### Suitability of Conversion

- 7.5 LP Policy SDC1 supports the reuse and conversion of buildings in the countryside provided they are:
- a. they are of permanent and substantial construction;
  - b. they are structurally sound, and capable of re-use without major alterations, adaptations or re-construction;
  - c. their form, bulk and design is, or can be made to be, in keeping with their surroundings;
  - d. conversion or adaptation will not be detrimental to the character of the building itself or its setting;
  - e. they preserve the openness and character of the Green Belt and Countryside;
  - f. the new use would not result in replacement farm buildings or inappropriate outside storage of any materials, machinery and / or vehicles that would cause harm to the Green Belt and Countryside; and
  - g. provision is made for nesting boxes and roosts for protected species such as barn owls and bats, where appropriate

#### Criterion (a)

- 7.6 In this case a structural survey has been submitted showing that the retained building is structurally sound. It is therefore considered on that basis that the stone built section of the barn proposed for conversion is of a permanent and substantial construction and in principle there is no objection to its conversion and indeed this has been approved as a consequence of planning permission 21/00713/FL.



*Figure 3 the modern extension proposed for conversion has been demolished*

- 7.7 At the time of the approval of 21/00713/FL it was considered that the utilitarian extensions to the barn were not suitable for conversion due to their poor method of construction and the materials used. This conclusion has been borne out by the fact that the former extension to the rear of the stone building has now been demolished as shown in Figure 3 above. The alternative of permitting a limited extension in their place was at that time considered an appropriate alternative to retaining those structures and consent granted accordingly.
- 7.8 As that element of the building has now been demolished, it no longer, in the opinion of Officers, merits weight being given to its loss.

Criterion (b)

- 7.9 The extension now proposed represents an approximate 60% increase in the size of the building. As a consequence it is considered that the extension represents a major alteration/extension to the building and fails the requirements of criterion (b)

Criterion (f)

- 7.10 Criterion (f) states that the conversion would not result in replacement farm buildings or outside storage. In this case a storage building measuring 7m x 7m height 3m has been proposed located away from the built form to the east of the barn proposed for conversion. It has not been stated what this building will be used to store but it is agricultural in design. As a consequence it is concluded that the proposal would result in a replacement storage building and therefore fails to meet the requirements of policy SDC1.

Impact on the landscape

- 7.11 LP Policy SDC3 only supports new development where it would not cause significant harm to the character, quality, distinctiveness or sensitivity of the landscape, or to important features or views, or other perceptual qualities such as tranquility. This policy expects that development proposals should be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the distinctive landscape areas identified in the Derbyshire Landscape Character Assessment and the AMES and contribute, where appropriate, to the conservation and enhancement, or restoration and re-creation of the local landscape taking into account its wider landscape character type.
- 7.12 LP policy SDC12 states that proposals for development will only be permitted where they: Respond positively to local character and context to preserve and, where possible, enhance the quality and local identity of existing communities and their surroundings. And where they: Create good design which is well-related to its site and surroundings in terms of its layout, form, height, massing, scale, plot size, elevational treatment, materials.
- 7.13 ANP policy AP11 states that buildings and extensions to existing buildings should follow a consistent design approach in the use of materials, design and the roofline. Materials should be chosen to complement the design of a development and add to the quality or character of the surrounding environment.
- 7.14 ANP policy AP 13 requires that development proposals demonstrate that they respect the distinctive landscape character of the area as identified in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent Landscape Character Area. Impact upon the landscape will be assessed having regard to the extent to which the development would cause an unacceptable visual intrusion.
- 7.15 In this case little detail has been submitted as to what materials will be used to construct and finish the proposed extension as a consequence it is not possible to make a positive assessment of their impact.
- 7.16 The building will be visible from Alicehead Road although from these views it will be partially obscured by existing trees. However, the building and extension would be clearly visible for by walkers on footpath NE1/125/2 particularly those heading south (see Fig 4 below). From this view point the large openings in the north east facing elevation and the 8 skylights will be particularly noticeable as would the overall bulk and massing of the new extension.





*Figure 4 view of the site from footpath NE1/125/2 to the north*

7.17 As described above the proposed development represents a large extension on the north eastern elevation of the barn that would be clearly visible from publically accessible viewpoints. Due to its size and design it is considered that the extension would fail to respect the host building and does not appear to be informed by or sympathetic to the valued landscape. Insufficient detail about materials has been provided to make a full assessment as to whether the materials used would have any mitigating effect. As a consequence it is considered that the proposed extension fails to meet the requirements of LP policies SDC3 or SDC12 or ANP policies AP11 and AP13.

#### Fall Back Position





*Figure 5 Approved extension*



*Figure 6 Proposed extension*

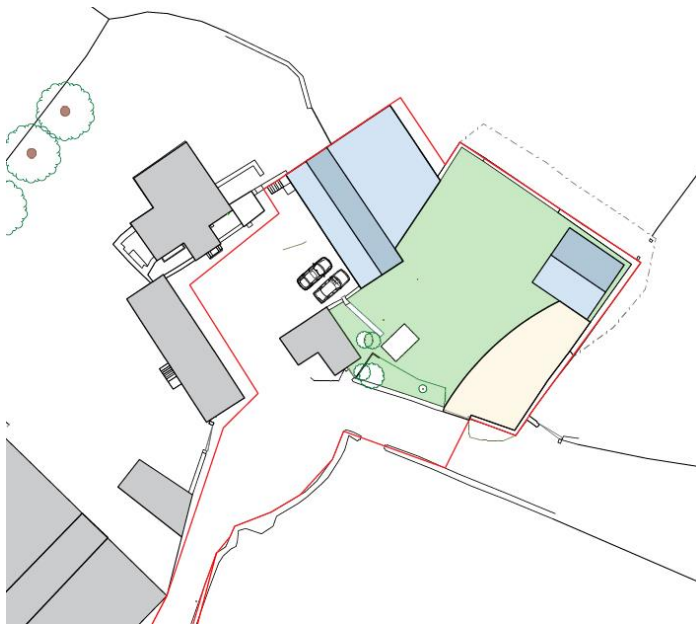
7.18 The applicant has a fallback position in respect of the conversion of the barn with a small extension approved under permission 21/00713/FL. This is shown above in Figure 5. However the extension approved in that case was much smaller than that now proposed (Figure 6 above), particularly in terms of its depth and width and when viewed from the footpath to the rear would have appeared as subservient to the host building. As a consequence it is considered that this fallback position

should be given very little weight in this case as it is significant smaller than the extension now proposed.

### Garden

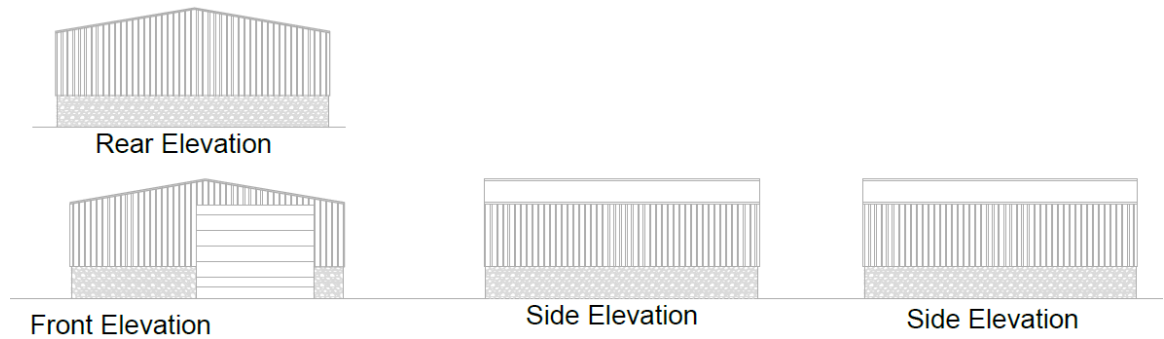
7.19 The proposed garden for the new dwelling is proposed to be located to the south east of the barn. It will therefore be clearly visible from Alicehead Road in particular. This is in contrast to the approved garden which was to the north-west and therefore partially obscured by the building itself. However, it is clear that this area of land is part of the traditional garden which served the original farmhouse and it has the character of a more domestic kitchen garden. The area is bounded by a drystone wall which separates it from the agricultural land surrounding. As a consequence of this it is considered that the use of this area as a garden to any new property would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the landscape.

### New Storage Building



*Figure 7 block plan showing new storage building in eastern corner of proposed garden*

7.20 LP policy SS9 is supportive of development in the countryside if it is necessary for the viable operation of an agricultural business. In all cases development is required to respect the form, scale and character of the landscape. However it is not clear what use the proposed storage building would have. Although it has some elements of an agricultural building (cladding on concrete plinth) it is wholly enclosed with one large opening which gives the impression of a more domestic or industrial use (See Fig 8 below).



*Figure 8 Storage building elevation drawings*

7.21 The building would be located in the eastern corner of the proposed garden separated from all existing built form. Due to its location the storage building would be clearly visible from Alicehead Road as well as from footpath NE1/125/2 to the north and will be read as a separate modern industrial style building.

7.22 As a consequence it would not be well related to the proposed building and due to its scale and design would not appear informed by or sympathetic to the valued landscape in which it would be located. It is therefore considered that the building does not meet the requirements of LP policies SS9, SDC3 or SDC12 or ANP policies AP11 and AP13.

#### Self and custom build

7.23 The new dwelling would represent a self-build unit and so count towards the council's self and custom build targets for which there is expected to be a short fall going forward. However it is considered the limited impact that one new unit would have on the overall aims in respect of self and custom build housing does not outweigh the harms outlined above.

#### Amenity of Neighbours

7.24 The relationship of the converted barn with the host dwelling – Alicehead Farm house has been considered. It is considered that the distance and orientation of the buildings, together with the positioning of the proposed windows are such that the proposal will not adversely impact the amenity of neighbouring properties. The proposed plan is therefore considered to be in accordance with policy SDC12.

#### Highways

7.25 A passing place on the north side of the existing track adjacent to the existing large barn has been provided. The site allows for adequate parking provision. The Highways Authority raise no objection to the

proposal subject to conditions. The proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with Local Plan Policy SDC12

### Contaminated Land

7.26 Given the previous historical commercial use of the site, the Environmental Health Officer recommends that a contaminated land assessment is carried out, and a remediation scheme submitted and carried out if contamination is identified.

### Biodiversity

7.27 Derbyshire Wildlife Trust are yet to comment on the current application, however they did comment on the same ecological report for application 21/00713/FL as follows: *We have reviewed the Bat Emergence survey undertaken by Arc Ecology October 2021. The two surveys were undertaken at the appropriate time of the year and included use of four surveyors. The emergence surveys did not detect any evidence of bat roosts directly associated with either of the buildings surveyed. We consider that the report provides the Council with a reasonable degree of confidence that bats will not be affected by the proposed development. We support the advice provided in the report under the Constraints and Recommendations section and advise that the development should be carried out in accordance with those recommendations.*

7.28 It is likely that the comments of DWT in this case will mirror those previously made. As such, it is considered that should permission be granted these recommendations can be secured by condition as can the provision of bat and bird boxes required by policy SDC3.

## **8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Both local and national Planning policy supports the conversion of buildings within the countryside provided that the buildings are capable of conversion without the need for major alterations or adaptation and providing their design is in keeping with their surroundings and not detrimental to the building or its setting..
- 8.2 In this case although the application is for a conversion, part of the building has been demolished and therefore can no longer be considered as a conversion and must be assessed as a new extension to the remaining barn.
- 8.3 It is considered that due to its size the extension alone comprises a major alteration/adaptation and therefore this element alone means the scheme as a whole does not meet the requirements of Local Plan policy SDC1.
- 8.4 In addition, due to its size, bulk and design the extension does not respect the host building and is not appear to be informed by or sympathetic to the host building or the landscape character of the area. As

such it fails to meet the requirements of Local Plan Policies SDC3 and SDC12 and Ashover Neighbourhood Plan policies AP11 and AP13.

8.5 The size and scale of the extension weigh heavily against the scheme as a whole therefore, even though the conversion of the original stone barn has some. Officers place little weight on the fall back of the permitted extension to the barn due to its limited size and scale and its obviously subservient character to the main element of the building.

8.6 The exact use of the proposed storage building is unclear however even if it is for agricultural use policy SS9 of the LP requires that it should respect the form, scale and character of the landscape.

8.7 Due to its size, design and siting away from other buildings it is considered that the proposed storage building represents an unacceptable feature in the local landscape. This too is considered to be contrary to policies SS9, SDC3 and SDC12 of the LP and Ashover Neighbourhood Plan policies AP2, AP11 and AP13. This adds weight to the Officer conclusion on the scheme as a whole.

8.8 Therefore, as a whole, it is considered that the application is not acceptable and contrary to the relevant policies of the Development Plan and there are no other factors that outweigh that conclusion in this case. Accordingly, it is recommended that the application be refused.

## **9.0 RECOMMENDATION**

9.1 REFUSE the application for the following reasons:

1. The application is considered unacceptable as, by reason of the size, scale and design of the extension put forward, the proposal would result in major alterations and adaptations taking place to the building in a manner that is not in keeping with its surroundings and be detrimental to the character of the building exacerbated by the prominent and visually prominent location of the building close to the local public right network.

As such, it is contrary to policies SS1, SS9, SDC1, SDC3 and SDC12 of North East Derbyshire Local Plan and policies AP2, AP11 and AP12 of the Ashover Neighbourhood Plan and there are no other material factors that outweigh that consideration.

2. The application is considered unacceptable as, by reason of the size, scale and design of the new storage building proposed and its location away from other built development it would unacceptably impact on the character of the area.

As such, it is contrary to policies SS1, SS9, SDC1, SDC3 and SDC12 of North East Derbyshire Local Plan and policies AP2, AP11 and AP12



of the Ashover Neighbourhood Plan and there are no other material factors that outweigh that consideration.